

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
2004

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Psalm 40 — A Psalm of Thanksgiving

1.0 Introducing Psalm 40

- Psalms 37–40 all present pleas for deliverance from suffering brought on by the psalmist's sin.
- Trouble is the theme of Psalms 37–39, but triumph is the theme of Psalm 40.
- “[M]uddy times may be the experience even of the greatest saints and slimy pits the lot even of kings and preachers.”—James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 1:347.
- Psalm 40:13-17 are identical to Psalm 70:1-5.

2.0 Reading Psalm 40 (NAU)

A Psalm of David.

- 40:1** I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me and heard my cry.
- 40:2** He brought me up out of the pit of destruction,
out of the miry clay,
And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.
- 40:3** He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God;
Many will see and fear
And will trust in the LORD.
- 40:4** How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust,

- And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood.
- 40:5** Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done,
And Your thoughts toward us;
There is none to compare with You.
If I would declare and speak of them,
They would be too numerous to count.
- 40:6** Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired;
My ears You have opened;
Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.
- 40:7** Then I said, "Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book it is written of me.
- 40:8** I delight to do Your will, O my God;
Your Law is within my heart."
- 40:9** I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation;
Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O LORD, You know.
- 40:10** I have not hidden **Your righteousness** within my heart;
I have spoken of **Your faithfulness**
and **Your salvation**;
I have not concealed **Your lovingkindness**
and **Your truth** from the great congregation.
- 40:11** You, O LORD, will not withhold **Your compassion** from me;
Your lovingkindness and **Your truth** will continually preserve me.
- 40:12** For evils beyond number have surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see;
They are more numerous than the hairs of my head,
And my heart has failed me.
- 40:13** Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
Make haste, O LORD, to help me.
- 40:14** Let those be ashamed and humiliated together
Who seek my life to destroy it;
Let those be turned back and dishonored
Who delight in my hurt.
- 40:15** Let those be appalled because of their shame
Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"
- 40:16** Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
Let those who love Your salvation say continually,
"The LORD be magnified!"
- 40:17** Since I am afflicted and needy,
Let the Lord be mindful of me.
Do not delay, O my God.

For the choir director.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 40

3.1 Outline

- I.** Patience Rewarded (vv. 1-3)
- II.** Blessing Recounted (vv. 4-5)
- III.** Obedience Required (vv. 6-8)
- IV.** Good News Reported (vv. 9-10)
- V.** Confession Registered (vv. 11-12)
- VI.** Deliverance Requested (vv. 13-17)



3.2 Notes

- **vv. 1-3** Five Consecutive Divine Actions
 - 1. God noted his trouble.
 - 2. God listened to his prayer.
 - 3. God lifted him out of the pit.
 - 4. God set his feet on a rock.
 - 5. God placed a new song in his mouth.

- **v. 3** “a new song”
 - See notes on Psalm 33:3.

- **v. 3** “see and fear”
 - The two words are very similar sounding in Hebrew.
 - The play on word highlights the fear of the Lord.
 - Exodus 20:20 – being afraid vs. fear of the Lord.

- **v. 5** “wonders ... thoughts”
 - The wonders are a reference to God’s past miraculous deeds on behalf of Israel.
 - The thoughts refer to God’s plans on behalf of His people.

- **vv. 6-8** Messianic Prophecy?
 - The primary message is that obedience is better than sacrifice.
 - 1 Samuel 15:22
 - Isaiah 1:10-17
 - “Ears” (plural; v. 6) rules out the practice of voluntary slavery demonstrated by the practice described in Exodus 21:6, since both ears were not pierced in that ceremony.
 - Compare the Servant’s open ear (indicating obedience to the Word) in Isaiah 50:4-6.
 - Hebrews 10:5-10 quotes Psalm 40:6-8 and attributing the recital of the words to the Messiah.

- Hebrews 10:5 substitutes “body” for “ears” as a more suitable equivalent in Greek for the Hebrew idiom.
- David could not fulfill these words as fully as the Messiah in the superceding of the sacrificial system.
- **v. 6** Sacrifices and Offerings
 - The first two celebrate communion with God.
 - The second two deal with the removal of the effects of sin.
 - Together the two sets mark the extremes of the entire sacrificial system and thereby represent it as a whole.
- **v. 7** “roll of the book”
 - Best understood as the book of the Law of Moses.
 - It could be a more limited reference like Deuteronomy 30.
- **vv. 9-10** Proclaiming Good News
 - The news of salvation is to be proclaimed, not stored up.
 - See Psalm 107:2.
- **v. 11** “You, O LORD”
 - The emphatic “You” introduces the psalmist’s declaration of the means of his salvation.
 - In verses 5 and 9 also employ the same emphatic pronoun.
- **vv. 13-17** Repeated in Psalm 70
 - Compare 40:17 with 70:5.
 - What accounts for the differences?
 - A discontinuity due to fitting it into a new context in Psalm 40?
 - A refinement during editing for use in Psalm 70?
 - Overlapping language (vocabulary) and repetition of style indicate a single unified Psalm 40.
- **v. 16** “The LORD be magnified!”
 - In this exclamation we see the true concern of David in this psalm.

4.0 Singing Psalm 40

He Keeps Me Singing

There’s within my heart a melody
Jesus whispers sweet and low,
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still,
In all of life’s ebb and flow.

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
Sweetest Name I know,
Fills my every longing,
Keeps me singing as I go.*



All my life was wrecked by sin and strife,
Discord filled my heart with pain,
Jesus swept across the broken strings,
Stirred the slumbering chords again.

Feasting on the riches of His grace,
Resting 'neath His sheltering wing,
Always looking on His smiling face,
That is why I shout and sing.

Though sometimes He leads through
waters deep,
Trials fall across the way,
Though sometimes the path seems rough
and steep,
See His footprints all the way.

Soon He's coming back to welcome me,
Far beyond the starry sky;
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown,
I shall reign with Him on high.

– Words & Music: Luther B. Bridgers

5.0 Praying Psalm 40

- Lord, help me to wait patiently for You in the midst of my problems. [v. 1]
- Teach me to delight in doing Your will. [v. 8]
- Open my mouth to speak the good news concerning Your salvation. [v. 9]
- Lord, be magnified and glorified. [v. 16]
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6.0 Applying Psalm 40

- Life can truly be the pits, but God hears our prayers for help.
- God desires obedience more than sacrifice.
- Those who are saved should proclaim the good news and give thanks to God.