

The One Who Came to Do What God Requires

Psalm 40:1-10

10:30 AM Halifax: 2 April 2023

Introduction:

Today I am resuming our sermon series in the epistle to the Hebrews.

- According to our custom, I am going to introduce to you a new Psalm of Focus that we will sing as we work our way through the rest of Hebrews chapter 8 (we left off at chapter 8, v. 6), on through chapter 9, and into chapter 10.

The Psalm I have chosen is Psalm 40, verses 1-10.

- Some of you may remember that we had Psalm 40:10-17 as our Psalm of Focus when we covered Hebrews chapter 5 and most of 6 where it speaks about the compassion and intercession of Christ who pleads both *with* us and also *for* us.
- We took Psalm 110 for Hebrews chapter 7 and the first part of chapter 8 where it speaks of Jesus being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
- The portion of Hebrews we come to now (Heb 8:7 to 10:18) presents our Lord Jesus as our gracious, powerful redeemer who lifts us from sin and condemnation into a better covenant with a better sanctuary and a better sacrifice.

Listen now as I read Psalm 40, vv 1-10.

- This is God's word. Please give careful attention to it.

Psalm 40:1-10: «To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.» I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. ² He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my steps. ³ He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see *it* and fear, and will trust in the LORD. ⁴ Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. ⁵ Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works *which* You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more

than can be numbered. ⁶ Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. ⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law *is* within my heart.” ⁹ I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. ¹⁰ I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

Thanks be to God for His holy and infallible word!

- May the Lord add His blessing.

In seeking to open this Psalm to you, I want to begin by reminding you of something that is true about the Psalms, but sadly, often forgotten.

- The Psalms are a collection of songs that the LORD has given to His church, His covenant people.
 - Let's remember what we are as we sing them—we are one holy catholic (or universal) church.

- We are the body of Christ—He only has one body, and these songs are about us as one church with Christ as our head.
- That means that when we sing them, we need to understand that they are about our corporate experience in Christ.
 - As those united to Him, we can sing about the righteousness that we have because of Him, and He can confess sin because He is united to us.
 - Together we can sing about being under severe trials, and at the same time about our incredible victories because what pertains to any one member pertains to us all.
 - If you have a broken hand, you say, “I have a broken hand.” At the same time, you might add, “but the rest of me is okay.” That does not take away the fact that *you* have a broken hand.
 - If some members are being persecuted, or if they have been, we can sing about that because if any of us are, we, in a sense, all are.
- We tend to always think of ourselves in isolation, but we need learn to think of ourselves as members of one body with all the saints who have ever lived and who ever will live, and most of all with Christ.
 - Before He came, when people died, they were said to be gathered to their people, or to Abraham. Now that He has come, we are said to depart from here to be with Jesus.
 - It does not mean that our individual identity gets lost or confused with other people. To use the body illustration again, when you say that your hand is part of your one body, you don’t get it mixed up with your other hand or your feet.

This becomes very important in a Psalm like Psalm 40.

- When we sing it, we need to realise that it is the testimony of the whole church of which Jesus Christ is the head.
 - What we do profoundly affects Him (sends Him to the pit).
 - What He does profoundly affects us (lifts us all out of the pit).
- These songs are primarily His songs as our King and Head, but they are our songs if we belong to Him.
 - It is because of us and our sin that He goes to the pit and it is because of Him and His righteousness and sacrifice that we are raised out of the pit.

I. The Psalm opens with the marvellous testimony of God’s deliverance (40:1-2).

- A. The imagery is that of deliverance from a horrible pit.
1. It is a vivid picture of sinking into the filth and misery of sin.
 - We were being swallowed up by it to utter ruin.
 - We were unable to escape.
 2. It is a picture of desperate pleading.
 - We are seen to cry out to God with patience—without relenting.
 - **“Waiting I waited”** is what the original says.

- It is not a passive waiting, but an enduring cry for deliverance that will not be silenced—like Jacob when he said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”
3. It is a picture of glorious deliverance.
- The LORD took notice of us.
 - Beautiful words, from middle of verse 1: **And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.**
 - Notice the actions of God—
 - “He inclined to me.” He took notice!
 - “He heard my cry.” He heard it so as to answer me.
 - “He set my feet on a rock.” He completely delivered me from the pit!
 - “He established my steps.” He gave me an entirely new walk, an entirely new life.
 - Now, instead of sinking into oblivion in our filth and sin, we are able to walk in communion with God, to know Him and to live with Him forever and serve Him forever as His people—His own house.
 - It is a radical deliverance for Christ and His people.
- B. The deliverance described here is the deliverance of Christ and His people as one church and one body.
1. As a body, we were condemned because of our sin. The whole church was.
 - We were sinking in the filth of our sin into utter ruin with no way to get out.
 - We were utterly defiled and unclean.
 - We were dead in our trespasses and sins, under the wrath and condemnation of our Creator, a situation where God’s honour called for our destruction in hell.
 2. But as a body, we are also a body that has been gloriously redeemed.
 - Christ, the head of the body, joined Himself to us as we were sinking deep in sin.
 - As our head and representative, He went into the very pit—He experienced the pains of hell because He bore our sins.
 - He waited patiently for the LORD and the LORD inclined to Him.
 - He cried out to God and He was heard.
 - When He was delivered, the whole church was delivered.
 - We were as one man, one body, with Him as our head, bearing our sin, that He might deliver us all.
 3. He was raised from the lowest pit to the highest place in glory.
 - He is set on the rock, seated at the right hand of the Father in glory.
 - We who believe are raised with Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places.
 - His steps are established, and His steps are our steps.
- II. In verses 3-5 of this psalm, we sing and celebrate our deliverance from the horrible pit, Christ leading us in praise to the Father.**

A. First, we say, “He [God the Father] has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God.”

1. The fact that we are now singing is His doing in two ways.
 - a. First, because by His grace He has taken what used to be a rebellious heart of stone and has given us a new heart that warmly responds to Him!
 - If He had not worked in us by His Spirit, we would never have praised Him.
 - Now we are joined to Christ, and in Him we live and worship our God.
 - b. Second, that by delivering us with so great a deliverance, He has done something so grand and glorious for us that it puts a song in our mouth.
 - How can we be silent when we were sinkings away in the filth and defilement of our sin and He delivered us from the miry clay and set our feet upon a rock?
2. Notice the content of the song: “Praise to our God.”
 - What a transformation.
 - Before we were full of cursing and bitterness as we sank in the mire, but now we are full of praise to God—as we walk before God.
 - Christ Himself as the head of the church leads us in this praise.
 - As He says in Psalm 22 according to Hebrews 2:12:
 - **“I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly, I will sing praise to You.”**
 - Jesus fully entered into our sin and misery when He became our head that He might enter the pit for us.
 - He leads the way in praising God for accepting us and delivering us.
 - He experienced the deliverance just as much—even more!—than we did.
 - Each Sunday, He calls us together to sing praise to our God for it.

TRANS> Praising God in the assembly is a tremendous privilege!

- What an important thing it is for every member who is redeemed!
- It also has an evangelistic impact.

B. As we praise God for our deliverance, **“Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.”**

- That is what verse 3 goes on to say.
1. There is an evangelistic outcome when people see how God has delivered us in Christ from the horrible pit.
 - They see it and they fear God—they come to accept that He cannot be ignored or trifled with—that He is the one who holds our destiny.
 - They see how He has delivered us and they come to trust in Him too.
 - They believe on the LORD Jesus and are baptised into His body, the church.
 - They come to Him that they might be delivered from the horrible pit and He delivers them too.

2. In verse 4, we describe these persons who come to trust in the LORD when they see His glorious deliverance.
 - **Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.**
 - a. No longer are they clinging to the lies of man—the empty promises and the vain philosophies that do nothing to deliver sinners from the miry clay.
 - Now they are trusting in the LORD.
 - Now they are with the people who have been delivered from the horrible pit.
 - Now they are established on the rock with Christ our Saviour.
 - How blessed they are—now they have a sure hope, a beautiful Saviour, and a new song of praise to God.
 - A chain reaction is set off.
 - Now still others will see and turn to the LORD.
 - Their spouse, their children, and others that God may call!
 - b. We each have our individual testimonies of how we were sinking in the miry clay and of how the Lord delivered us.
 - Our experiences are very different, but if we are in Christ, we know that we have been rescued from the horrible pit of sin by Him.
 - 1) Some of us have a dramatic story where we were in hard rebellion against God for years until He rescued us.
 - He humbled us and showed us our sin and He showed us the deliverance that is in Jesus so that we came to Him and were saved.
 - 2) Others of us were rescued before we can even remember—what a glorious thing: some of us were filled with the Holy Spirit from our mother’s womb.
 - These have been looking to God and resting in His saving work for as long as they can remember. They have been experiencing the power of grace to deliver us daily.
 - Some of them are even more mindful of their deliverance than those who had a more dramatic story because they have known God longer.
 - But sadly, sometimes, they are shallow and don’t see how much they need Christ... they have grown cold and indifferent.
 - 3) Still others were perhaps going along in outward conformity, deceiving themselves, until God brought conviction and they repented and were saved.
 - That is much the way I was. I was almost unreachable because I thought I was saved even though I never really repented and turned to Christ.
 - If God had left me, I would have been swallowed up in the pit of hell.
3. An important question for each of you. Have *you* been delivered?
 - Are you this hour someone who knows that you are sinner who, apart from God’s deliverance, would be obliterated in the pit?
 - Are you this hour one who is resting in Christ who died to take away His people’s sins? Do you believe that He is the Son of God who came to save sinners and do you trust in Him alone for your salvation?

- Do you praise God for delivering you out of the horrible pit?
 - This is the story of all the redeemed—whatever our individual version of the story may be.
- C. And now in verse 5, this song turns from speaking about God to speak to Him. We address Him with words of praise and adoration:
- **5 Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.**
 1. This is one of the best ways to praise our God.
 - By acknowledging to Him that His wonderful works are wonderful—too glorious for us to comprehend!
 - How could it be that He should rescue those who were sinking in their own wretchedness?
 - What wondrous love is this? What mercy? What grace?
 2. We know that our words will become jumbled up and inadequate if we even try to express what He has done.
 - It is too much for us. We are clearly out of our depth.
 - We stand before Him lost in wonder, love, and praise.
- III. And now we come to the most striking part of the whole Psalm—the testimony of our glorious head, Jesus Christ, in verses 6-8.**
- With Him we sing, verses 6-8: **Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. ⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.”**
 - This is a very unique testimony!
- A. He is the One written about in God’s book, the One spoken of in the oracles of God!
- God’s law is within His heart.
 1. In a certain way, I suppose every converted person may say something like that.
 - When God renews our hearts, we are transformed.
 - God declares that He writes His law on our hearts so that now we want to please Him.
 - It is a marvellous transformation—a transformation that we have in Christ by the baptism of His Spirit.
 2. But this is something quite different here—quite unique.
 - He is the testimony of the prophets.
 - He came from somewhere else, and He came to do the will of God when all the rest had failed.
 - There are not many who are written of before they come as one who will come to do the will of God.
 - There are prophecies given after men are born that tell of what they will do—and in the case of King Cyrus, and some of the kings Daniel prophecies about, we are told of men who will come in the future.
 - But here is one who comes expressly to do the will of God.

3. God's book is full of oracles about Him.
 - a. We have the ones up until this Psalm was written.
 - 1) The One God called the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head after man fell.
 - 2) The Son that was promised to Abraham who would bless Abraham and his seed as well as all the families of the earth.
 - 3) The Lion of the tribe of Judah from whom the sceptre would not depart.
 - 4) The Prophet that Moses wrote about that all must hear lest we perish.
 - 5) The Serpent lifted up in the wilderness so that whoever looked upon Him would be saved.
 - 6) The Son promised to David who would sit on His throne forever and not see death.
 - 7) The One David called Lord and saw sitting at the right hand of Yahweh.
 - Those are but some of the prophecies given up until the time that David wrote this.
 - b. But because prophecy is not bound by time, we could speak of the many oracles that came after the time this Psalm was written—
 - 1) That He is the bridegroom of the Song of Solomon.
 - 2) That He is the one to be born of a virgin who would be called Emmanuel.
 - 3) That He is the Son given to us who would be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace—the increase of whose government would never end.
 - 4) That He is the Branch of righteousness.
 - 5) That He is the One whose goings forth are from everlasting.
 - 6) That He is the Servant of the LORD by whose stripes we are healed.
- B. But what is most remarkable of all, when Psalm 40 speaks of Him coming to do the will of God, it speaks of doing the will of God in connection with the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Covenant!
 1. Four basic kinds of sacrifices are mentioned that seem to represent the whole system.
 - **Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.**
 - *Sacrifice* and *offerings* are general. They include expressions of gratitude and represent fellowship and communion with God.
 - *Burnt offerings* were given to represent the complete dedication that was due from the worshipper—of which the worshippers all came short—hence the animal took their place as completely given up to God.
 - *Sin offerings* were the offerings required under the law to atone for sin that the worshippers might be forgiven.
 2. The emphasis here, however, is that these were not what God required.
 - He appointed them in His law—they were to be offered faithfully—but they certainly could not and did not provide what was needed for God's people to deliver them from the horrible pit of sin and misery.
 - Not a burnt offering, but real dedication was what was required.

- What animal by its death could provide real atonement for a sinful man?
 - The people knew that these rituals were symbolic.
 - They showed what was needed, but they were not what was required to deal with sin.
3. But here is the One who comes to do what God requires as represented by these ritual offerings and sacrifices.
- He is coming to fulfill the law's demand that we might be delivered from our sin and guilt!
 - He is going to fulfill all of those offerings.
 - To put it in the language of this Psalm,
 - He is going to do what was required to bring His church out of the horrible pit, from the miry clay, to set us upon a rock and establish our steps.
 - He is going to provide what must be done to redeem His people!
 - He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
4. The portion of Hebrews that we are approaching in our sermon series testifies that this is indeed about our Lord Jesus who came to die for our sins.
- Hebrews 10:5-14 says: **Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.' "** ⁸ Previously saying, **"Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"** (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, **"Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."** He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. ¹¹ And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.
 - We will look at this more closely when we get to it in Hebrews, but you can see how the scriptures testify that Christ came to do what the offerings could only symbolised.
 - He is the one who actually did the will of God—what God's law required for sinners to be lifted out of the miry clay and established upon a rock.
 - It is by Him that the whole church is lifted out of the horrible pit.
 - He came that He might go into the pit for us and bring us out.

IV. Now that He has done this, He proclaims the good news to us.

- Look at verses 9-10: **"I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly [that is, *the church*]; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. ¹⁰ I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly."**

A. There is a vibrancy here!

- Clearly, He is eager to tell His people, the whole church, what He has done.

- He says, “I proclaimed the good news... I do not restrain my lips... I have not hidden... I have declared... I have not concealed.”
 - He wants His people to know that He has rescued them from the horrible pit!
- B. But notice what seems to drive Him most of all!
1. He wants His people to behold the glory of His heavenly Father.
 - It is the good news of God’s righteousness...v. 10 says, “your righteousness...”
 - It is the declaration of the Father’s faithfulness and salvation...
 - It is the revelation of the Father’s lovingkindness and truth.
 - His passion is that we would know His Father.
 - That is what delights Him most of all.
 - He loves the Father and He wants us to love Him too.
 - He knows that that is what will delight us forever.
 2. What He did—God’s whole plan of salvation by Him—was designed to reveal God’s glory to us.
 - a. By this salvation, we see the Father’s righteousness.
 - When we see what was required for our acceptance and pardon, we see how uncompromising God’s righteousness is.
 - For sinners like us to be reconciled, it required nothing less than His Son, bearing our sins on the cursed cross—sinking into the pit for us.
 - Nothing else could take away our sin but this because God is of purer eyes than to behold evil.
 - Sin will not dwell with Him.
 - He is a holy consuming fire to all that is impure.
 - To try to be saved by some other way than by the offering of God’s Son is to deny the righteousness of God.
 - It is highly offensive to God and to His Son.
 - Nothing but the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, can take away sin.
 - b. By this salvation, we see the Father’s faithfulness and salvation.
 - The Father made a promise that He would save a people for Himself.
 - He went all out to keep that promise.
 - He would not be thwarted.
 - He sent His only Son to bleed and die—to bear the curse in His own body on the tree.
 - Here is uncompromising faithfulness.
 - To doubt His word is inexcusable. He is utterly faithful.
 - c. By this salvation, we see the Father’s lovingkindness (hesed) and truth (amen).
 - These words, “hesed and amen,” are paired repeatedly in the Psalms to praise the steadfast, unchangeable love of our heavenly Father.

- To consider that He should take such measures as He has to save those who had wickedly rebelled against Him speaks of a love beyond our comprehension.
 - Perhaps we should go back to verse 5 & 6: **Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works *which* You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; *if* I would declare and speak of *them*, they are more than can be numbered. 6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.**
- C. If Christ has so much delight in showing us the Father, should we not take delight in beholding Him?
1. How ashamed we should be our indifference when it comes to learning of His glory.
 - How wretched we are.
 2. But take heart. He will not fail to show us His Father's glory.
 - His heart is ravished with but one look of our eyes—one look of love.
 - He knows that there would be none of that but for His saving work.
 - And He knows that by His grace, that tiny spark will grow into an ardent flame!
 3. The rest of the Psalm, as we learned when we looked at it several weeks ago, is His faithful intercession for His people as they stumble along in sin and indifference.
 - His heart fails Him at times because of us... but He continues to pray.
 - He knows that all those that the Father has given Him will come to Him.
 - He knows that we are predestined to be conformed to His likeness.
 - And He knows that His prayer in verse 16 will be answered:
 - **Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"**
 - He has brought us out of the pit, and soon we will be in glory with Him, beholding the glory that He had with the Father from before the foundation of the world.
 - He is the one who came to do what the Father requires.
 - He has done it.
 - He will see His salvation fulfilled in us, His church—all who have fled to Him for refuge will be saved and gloried forever.
 - They have been brought out of the horrible pit and established on rock to praise God forever.
 - Thanks be to God.