

Key Sentence: David recognises God as his Saviour and wants the assembly to know deeper spiritual truths

Text: Psalm 40:1-17

- 1. The Initial Prayer showing David's hindsight, present response and response expected by God**
 - a. Verses 1-3 – The problem in the past
 - b. Verses 4-5 – David's response in present
 - c. Verses 6-8 – The response expected by God

- 2. The emotional depths as seen in the assembly, in himself, his enemies leading to a response to God**
 - a. Verses 9-10 – The response proclaimed in the Assembly
 - b. Verses 11-13 – The problem in ourselves
 - c. Verses 14-15 – The problems around us needing God's protection
 - d. Verse 16 – Our response

- 3. The Final Realisation and request of God**
 - a. Verse 17 – The truth revealed.

Introduction:

Illustration – Camping stuck in the mud

In today's Psalm, we see King David remembering being stuck in the mud with God rescuing him, and so he lets the Kingdom know through a Song-Prayer

This Psalm follows a kind of liturgy that can occur in a song to be sung. The opening 3 verses are an introduction to his prayer looking to what God has done in the past, then from verse 4 onwards, the song continues with that prayer in the present.

Today we will look at this psalm **firstly** showing David's hindsight, his present response and **response expected by God**.

Secondly, we will see David going deeper emotionally, in the assembly, in himself and with his enemies, this will lead to a **response to God**

Finally we will see David's realisation and his **request of God**

Main Points:

This passage allows us to see that David knows God from previous experiences, he knows that he has to be patient and spend time crying out to God, he knows that when he has done this in the past, God has heard him and lifted him out of the slimy pit of mud and mire.

David has been in troublesome places but he knows God will give him a firm place to stand, a rock that is away from the troubles and this leads David to sing a new song, a hymn of praise. David also knew that when this happened, others would see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him. This song, this psalm begins with this reminder, God has helped us in the past, when things seemed desperate, God was in control.

As we begin to look at this psalm, we must, as did others who sang this song, stop and look at our lives. David, very wisely, uses mud to describe something in the past, and each of us can look back at some pit we have been stuck in.

Maybe you have at some point been stuck in a pit of sin, a sin that Hebrews 12:1 describes as sin which clings so closely. You know there was no way for you to break its hold on you, but Jesus could and did.

Maybe you got caught in a pit of circumstances. Things around did not work out the way you wanted and everything seemed helpless and hopeless, but Jesus was there in that time and carried you through, He sought you out like a parent carrying their child out of those desperate times and now you can look back and praise Him for it.

When you look back at those times, maybe you too like David want to sing a new song to God, and this hind sight of God's faithfulness carries you. **It leads others to recognise God being with you.**

This psalm begins in the past in order to help David in the present, and so as David remembers the deliverance that he received from God, he now prays to Him in the present, verses 4 and 5 and begins a prayer moving away from calling God, *He and the Lord*, to addressing him in person, *You and my God*.

⁴ Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.

⁵ Many, LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.

David is now getting personal with God, this song may have been for public use but David moves from, "Blessed is the One," to, "the wonders done for us," coming to, "were I to speak of your deeds",

These verses move from seeing God blessing all who repent from following false gods, to the assembly, that David is a part of, and then to Him personally.

For us, this reminds us of our personal faith with God? How are we seen in our church and neighbourhood as a Christian, to how we are seen in our home and in our family, in speaking about the wonders of God? And then how are we seen by ourselves, when we are all alone? Are we recognising God's deeds to ourselves, do we have personal times of prayer and devotion?

As David, comes to this point in his prayer, he now says something that must have sounded so strange to the nation who came to God through sacrifices and offering given at the tabernacle, he says in verses 6-8

⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire –
but my ears you have opened; –
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

⁷ Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come –
it is written about me in the scroll.

⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart.'

I can almost imagine the priests and teachers of theology coming to him and saying, No, you are wrong, read Leviticus, it is burnt offerings and sin offerings that God requires, what are you going on about?

Then David turns to them, and says: "Did you forget what Samuel said to King Saul when he sinned?" in 1 Samuel 15:22

²² But Samuel replied:
‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the Lord?
To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

It may have seemed strange but it was the truth, but a truth that became fully true in Jesus, you see although David wrote these words, the author of the book of Hebrews says they were actually about Jesus, in Hebrews 10:1-10. This can be found on page 1208 in the church Bibles, please do turn and read with me, if you can leave a finger or bookmark in Psalm 40

¹ The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ² Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. ⁴ It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;

⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.

⁷ Then I said, “Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my God.” ’

⁸ First he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them’—though they were offered in accordance with the law. ⁹ Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The reason for reading a full ten verses from Hebrews is because they allow us to see that although in David’s time these verses were difficult to understand, they are actually fulfilled in Jesus, although the system of sacrifices was set up by God, they were merely a representation of the true and needed sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, they were just a shadow of the good things God had planned, verse 4 is such a good reminder of the entirety of God’s plan. The offering and sacrifice could not take away sins but rather they allowed people to show their heart’s commitment to obey the law as verse 8 says and in fact God was not even pleased with them. What is effective then against sin? Verse 10 tells us that we have been made holy through the sacrifice of Jesus once and for all.

What a wonderful Bible we have, in a time when all the Jewish religion focused on the tabernacle and on sacrifices and offering, even before the first temple was built by Solomon, David prophesies about his descendent Jesus, who would desire to do the will of God and remove the need for sacrifice and offerings.

This then is the part of the song and prayer we can understand far deeper than the hearers of the day, because we have the knowledge of the gospel. We know that we are all people who do wrong by nature, which the Bible calls sin, we know that nothing we can do can fix that or bring us into a relationship with God, but we also know that Jesus came for that very purpose, to sacrifice himself and reconcile us back into a relationship with God.

This is the truth we hold most close to us and if you would like to know more about that the truth of the gospel, please do speak to myself or Bart.

Let’s now look at our second point:

After those brief verses, David now continues his prayer-song by revealing the depths of his emotions, and he starts by saying what he does in the public assembly in verses 9-10

Here David uses an interesting tool of song where he shows the things, he does not do in private means he does them in public:

⁹ I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;

I do not seal my lips, Lord,
as you know.

¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;

I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.

I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness
from the great assembly.

David here shows us the importance of encouraging one another. I have been so encouraged to see people talking again after the Service each week, I look forward to times where we can share a meal together as a church, I love the home group that I am a part of where we can hear about what God is doing in each other's lives and pray specifically and intentionally for each other. David here shows that he does not hide what God has been doing but proclaims it in the great assembly, not hiding about what God is doing, about his love and faithfulness but building up others faith in God by sharing what has been happening, and although he is speaking about the righteousness in his heart, he knows there still is a problem in the present, which he then addresses in verses 11-13

¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord;
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

¹² For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.

They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.

¹³ Be pleased to save me, Lord;
come quickly, Lord, to help me.

David recognises and knows, as we should too, that we cannot be good, our sins have overtaken us, more than the hairs on our heads, our hearts always fail us. We need the mercy of God and the salvation of God. Our biggest problem in life is ourselves, our selfishness, our sinful nature, As David does, before we look at others, we need to look at ourselves, we need to ask God for his mercy to forgive us. How quick are we to complain or judge others, when we ourselves miss the mark of godliness? We need to use our prayers and new songs as time of introspection, asking God to forgive us. After David has recognised his own sin, he then looks around at the problems around him that need God's protection in verses 14 and 15

¹⁴ May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;

may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

¹⁵ May those who say to me, 'Aha! Aha!'
be appalled at their own shame.

David knows that God can protect and will, and so after he has confessed his sins and knows he is in a place of salvation with God, he also knows that those who come against him will have no truth to disgrace before God and will be shamed at their attempts.

It is a wonderful place to be in, where we can know as we confess our sins, that God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and all unrighteousness, like David, we can know that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death.

In this prayer-song David doesn't ask for eye-for-an-eye vengeance but rather for shame, confusion and disgrace. The passage doesn't say why he does that but it is possible those enemies are family, and as we read the Bible we know how David's own sons' were against him. When I think of these verses, although they don't speak about forgiveness I think about Corrie ten Boom in the book, "*The Hiding Place*" where she met one of the guards from Ravensbruck concentration camp when she had been sent. This was just after a church service where she had been sharing and he came forward and asked for her forgiveness and although emotionally she did not want to forgive him, she forced herself, lifting up her hand woodenly to shake his and once she started the process, the emotional forgiveness followed and she was able to truly forgive him and know God's love because of it, which then leads perfectly into verse 16 showing our response:

¹⁶ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
'The Lord is great!'

The Lord is great. What a wonderful response to people who are against us, instead of desiring vengeance, David desires rather that they seek God, rejoice and be glad in Him. To know that those who have tried to harm us in the past are now a part of the family of God should always lead us to say The Lord is great.

David then finishes this after recognising that God is great, he moves out of the prayer and finishes the song looking at himself, seeing the truth revealed and realising his deepest need in verse 17

¹⁷ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.

I am poor and needy, I have nothing to offer, my works are as meaningless rags.

Lord, think of me, help me, deliver me.

You are my God, do not delay

Let's pray