

Trust Rewarded, Trust Renewed

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Well, I consider it a wonderful privilege to be able to gather together with you, to come out from the chaos that is in the world and look to the pure and wonderful light of the word of God and to be able to be refreshed by Scripture rather than weighed down by the things that are going about us in the world and Psalms is certainly a great place to go for that. You know, as you study through the Psalms time and time and time again, you just have the theme of trusting God reinforced to you over and over again, kind of a similar theme repeated and restated in many many different ways, and as you come to Psalm 40, I want to show you something that you might miss if you were just reading it in isolation, Psalm 40 comes kind of as a climax of three prior Psalms, the three prior Psalms, 37, 38 and 39, and just by way of a little bit of reminder, Psalm 37, 38 and 39, there is a continual call to wait on the Lord that is repeated in each of those Psalms and I just want to show you this. Look at Psalm 37:7 and you get the sense as you go through these three Psalms that much of spiritual life, much of Christian living, is going to be a time of waiting patiently on the Lord in the midst of difficulties and struggles that seem to have no resolution, and yet you do not lose heart, you do not sag down under the load but you renew your strength remembering who God is and waiting on him to display his faithfulness to his children.

Psalm 37:7 for example says, "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way." So you see the theme there: wait on the Lord, wait for him patiently. Psalm 38:15, you see this theme repeated as well where David says, "I hope in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God." He's looking forward. He doesn't have an immediate possession of the joy and deliverance that his heart longs for. He's waiting for it and he expresses his confidence saying, "Lord, I know that it will come because I know who you are but right now I'm waiting in the midst of struggle, waiting for you to act and to help me." Then in Psalm 39:7, you see the theme repeated again, "And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You." And in verse 12, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears." So 37, 38, 39, you see these themes of waiting and so let that just be an initial encouragement to you maybe as you're looking on at the world or as you're going through difficulties in life, to realize that this time of waiting, this time of tension, is an expected natural part of biblical spiritual life and they who teach us that God is just waiting to give you immediate deliverance if only you have enough faith, do a great disservice to the people of God to condition them to think that way. God leads us in a way that often

requires us to wait, to be patient. It is how he teaches us to trust him. It teaches us to humble ourselves before him. It teaches us to set our heart and affections for things which are still future rather than expecting your best life now as some might tempt you to believe.

So we see this theme of waiting laid out for us, and one of the wonderful things and I wish we had more time to really develop it, maybe sometime in the future we'll do that, the fact that Psalm 37, 38 and 39 are like that and then we see what Psalm 40 does, you get a little bit of a picture, it's kind of a foggy hazy outline but you see that somewhere along the line whoever the final compiler of the Psalms were, had something in mind as he was doing that. The Psalms weren't put together back-to-back in a random order. There is a thematic sense to them that kind of goes in sections that sometimes you can identify. Well, here what we see in Psalm 40 is that Psalm 40 answers that theme of waiting that we've seen in the prior three Psalms. God brings us to trials in which we must wait, he sometimes delays his deliverance to teach you – I'll make it second person singular that way – to teach you to persevere in trust and then he graciously brings us through them and brings us into a point where we give him thanks for the long-awaited deliverance from whatever the heavy weight of things was. Psalm 40 expresses this cycle.

Psalm 40 expresses the outcome of the waiting and we're going to break it down into four sections here this evening. First section, simply stated, first point if you're taking notes: you see trust rewarded. Trust rewarded. After a long Psalm, 37, 40 verses, after 22 verses of Psalm 38, of 13 verses of Psalm 39, "Wait. Lord, I hope. Wait. Wait." Finally in Psalm 40 you get an outburst, you get a fireworks of an answer and it is a joyful thing indeed to see trust rewarded. After all of this waiting, God had rescued David from his trouble.

Look at the first two verses here in Psalm 40.

1 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry.
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.

David says, "I want to tell you, God answered my prayer." He is joyful. He says, "You know, I went through this time of waiting. It just seemed so long at the time and the answer was never evident on the horizon and yet I waited on the Lord and what did he do? He intervened. He blessed my waiting. He rewarded my patience. He honored my trust in him. God gave attention to me and to my circumstances. He lifted me up out of that circumstance that I found myself in." Notice in verse 2, he describes it as miry clay; it's as if his feet were bogged down in really thick mud and he just couldn't move and yet the Lord reached down and lifted him up out of that, speaking poetically. And not only lifted him up out of it, but set him in a place on a, look at verse 2 with me again, "upon a rock making my footsteps firm." He says, "God delivered me out of that slog of life and set me on a place where my footsteps were firm and once again I had a place to stand and to move forward in life." God established him, God delivered him and David's heart is bursting with praise as we open up this Psalm.

He goes on there in verse 3 and he says,

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.

What David is saying is that this fresh deliverance, this new work of God in his life, gave him new reasons to praise God and he voices his satisfaction; he voices his honor and his praise to God with a new song prompted by new circumstances that renewed his praise and thanks to God. Now surely if you're a Christian, you know something about that, don't you? Don't you know something about, can't you look back on your life and say, "Man, that trial, that difficult situation, that difficult relationship went on for weeks, went on for months, went on for years." And sometimes your shoulders sagged under the weight of it all and yet the time came when God acted and the relationship was altered or the circumstances changed and suddenly that burden was gone and it was obvious that it was never going to come back again. Well, in that time, your heart is filled with joy and, "O God, thank you! God, bless your name!" Well, part of what you need to see in that time is that God has providentially ordered things and has honored your trust in him for you to see that trusting God is never in vain; that it is never a waste of effort; it is never a waste of patience but that God honors those who look to him and patiently wait on him. David says, "My heart is bursting with gratitude over this deliverance and I praise God," and here's the thing that he says there at the end of verse 3, he says, "As I am giving my testimony and praising God, others are going to see this and join in the fear and the trust of God as a result of what he's done." As the people of God give testimony to the faithfulness of God to deliver them, others see the reflected glory of God in the way that he has been faithful in their lives, and as you are faithful to give honor to God when he has rewarded your trust, others are strengthened to trust him as well.

So we see, don't we, beloved, we see that we are meant to think about life spiritually, that we're to look through, as it were, to look beyond, look through and look beyond our circumstances and see the hand of God providentially ordering things in our lives. It's not that – and I trust, I can't say this to you on the live stream because I don't know you like I know the people in this room, I trust that you here in the room would never say anything, "Well, I got lucky on that one." That's not a Christian way to speak at all. That's a pagan way to speak and you really should purge that out of your vocabulary if you still speak that way as a Christian. If circumstances have turned to your good, if you have been relieved from a stress that was on your life, you need to look through that and remember, "Do you know what? God is the author of my circumstances. God is a God who answers prayer and God has worked in this situation and delivered me from a pressure, from a sadness, from a grief, from a conflict that I was feeling and weighed down. It's gone now. I attribute that to the goodness of God to direct and bless his people," so that you are giving praise to God as you see your life unfold.

Do you see the cycle? Do you see how this works out? God brings you into relationship to himself through faith in Jesus Christ. Someone shared the Gospel with you and you were awakened to the fact that you were a sinner who had broken God's law. You were guilty before him, hopeless, helpless to do anything to save yourself. Poor in spirit and

denying yourself. You come humbly to Christ with nothing in your hands, no claim on God other than the fact that he promises his mercy to those who come to Christ. And so you asked for that mercy and Christ saves you and you're born again and you enter into a new life. God imparts a new nature to your heart. You are awakened to spiritual reality. God's word becomes alive to you and your life starts to change. That's a sweet thing, isn't it, to be born again? Man, it's been a long time for me, it's been a lot of years but I look back and I still treasure the memories of those early days, living by myself and just the greatest days of my life up to that point were sitting alone with an open Bible in front of me and just reading God's word and having it reverberate and echo in my mind, "This is true! This is true! This is true!" and seeing it transform my life. That was awesome. Those were some of the greatest days of my life and I know that if you've been born again, you know something about that, something of the joy of new birth, the joy of new life in your heart.

Well, here's the thing, beloved, in context of what we're talking about here in this Psalm, is for you to recognize that as you move into that life, as you are awakened more and more to the reality of the truth of Scripture, the reality of Christ, the reality of the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, that now life has a completely different perspective for you; you understand that God is sovereignly working in your life and directing your circumstances. Well, here's what you do with that, all of a sudden you humble yourself before God as life unfolds, when trials come. It teaches you to go to God and to wait on him and say, "God, help me through this circumstance. Help me through these difficulties. Help me through the conflict here. Guide me through it." And then when the change comes, when the deliverance comes, you recognize that this is a further outworking of the plan of the purposes of the work of God in your life and rather than just going on as if nothing had happened, rather than just saying, "Oh, fate was good to me this time," no, you realize that this goodness, this blessing, this spacious deliverance that has been given to you is a gift from God and what do you do with that gift from God? You look at it and you give thanks to the gift just as if some human friend, human family member had given you a gift, you say, "Oh, thank you." Well, when deliverance comes, you realize that God is the author of your circumstances and you say, "O God, thank you for delivering me."

You know, some of you young people that are just on the front part of your life, let me give you advance notice that sometimes the trials that will come are going to be those that last a very very long time; that last not three weeks or two months but that go five years, 10 years, maybe 20 years. I've had trials like that. And just be aware of the fact, don't buckle under the weight of the discouragement. Just let your mind come back to Psalms 37 through 40 and say, "Okay, God's word has plowed a path for me to follow here. I know what to do as this trial grinds on further. I just continue to wait. I continue to hope in God. I continue to look to him and ask him for his help with a certain confidence that sooner or later my God will manifest his faithfulness to me and display a deliverance to me which will give cause for me to give praise to him just like it did in the first three verses of Psalm 40 for David." Here's the thing, beloved: don't, don't, don't shy away from those extended trials. Don't let them turn that into which would cause you to question God and doubt what's going on. Just come back to verse 1 of Psalm 40, look at it

with me again, and realize that this is the stage that God has given to me to wait patiently on him, and one day I'm going to be in a position where I can say with David, "He inclined his ear to me and heard my cry and delivered me." Never, beloved, never, never, never, never, never will your trust go unnoticed and unrewarded by God. You might have to wait but our Lord Jesus is one faithful Savior. He is one good Lord to his people and so we wait. I know some of you, you've waited on seeing the Lord turn things in your family, haven't you? You've waited and you've waited and you've prayed and you've cried and you've waited and now you see the fruit and the Lord has turned that. Well, let Psalm 40 give voice to the gratitude as you look back on that and say, "Lord, you did hear my cry and, Lord, I renew my song of praise to you." Oh, beloved, we ought to be people of sound joyful praise because of all of the ways that the Lord has blessed us like that just represented here in this room. Trust rewarded.

Secondly, we're going to see trust encouraged. Trust encouraged. And David here, remember David is writing as a king of a theocratic nation. He's leading them not only politically and militarily but he's also providing spiritual guidance to them as well. And the occasion of his personal deliverance of which he seems to be speaking in the first three verses, now he looks outward and he calls others to join in trusting God and giving them encouragement in order to trust him. Sometimes that's just what you need, you need someone to come alongside you and say, "Hang in there. It's worth it. God will be faithful to you." And someone comes and kind of braces your knees and strengthens your legs and you go on a little bit further. Well, David here is giving a general call encouraging those who would hear him to trust in God themselves.

Look at verse 4 with me. He says,

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.

David is stating a general principle of blessing here, one that would do well to be placed on a door-place mantle in someone's home. "How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust." Oh, beloved, I never get tired of saying these kinds of things. Those who trust the God of the Bible, those who trust our Lord Jesus Christ, are supremely blessed. They are in a position of privilege. They are in a location where good things will happen to them. Why? Because God does good things for them. Because God rewards their trust. No one has ever trusted Christ in vain. Do you understand that? In the 2,000 years since Jesus Christ walked on the face of the earth, no one who has truly trusted him and given themselves over to Christ did so in vain, did so to their detriment. In every single instance, the halls and the books of church history resound to this again and again and again, that those who trust Christ are blessed. They find the favor of God on their lives without exception. And what David is saying here is, he's saying that, "My case," in the first three verses, "My case was not an isolated exception. My case is the way that God deals with everyone who trusts him, and God manifests his faithfulness through a complex multiplicity of different circumstances in the lives who know them. The common principle that joins it all together is the faithfulness and goodness of God bringing them through their trials into a place of blessing. No exceptions."

So if you're standing on the outside looking in, you're separated from God, you don't know this God, well, the promise of his blessing should invite you in, should encourage you and lead you to repentance and faith in Christ. That's what it should do.. Why wouldn't you want...when Scripture lays it out so clearly, you can't help but almost laugh at the folly of rejecting Christ. Why would you reject Christ when he gives a blessing without exception to everyone who comes to him? Why wouldn't you want that for your life? Why wouldn't you want the blessing of God? Romans 2 says the kindness of God leads us to repentance and we are quick to emphasize to everyone that all men are guilty sinners, that there is none righteous, no not one. But understand also that Scripture invites men to Christ with promises of blessing as well. It's not simply the threat of judgment that runs people to Christ but there is this simultaneous promise of blessing that God gives. He says, "Come to me for forgiveness of your sins," and you come for the negative reason of escaping judgment, we're mindful of that; you also come because God promises blessing on those who repent, on those who trust him. I mean, it's kind of two sides of the same coin, the blessing of forgiveness, a call to repentance and turning from sin, and a promise that God will bless you if you do. "How blessed," look at verse 4 with me again, "How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust, instead of turning to the proud or to those who lapse into falsehood," a word that often speaks of idolatry and false religion.

Now, as a further encouragement to trust, we said that this is trust encouraged, whether you're on the outside looking in or you already belong to Christ, verse 5 should be a wonderful encouragement for you to renew your trust. I know some of you have come in at the end of a really long and hard and difficult day, you maybe had some conflict in the car on the way over here. I get that but set all of that aside and drink the fresh water that you find here in verse 5 that encourages you to trust. How is it that you know that God is able to bless you, to bless those who trust him? Well, you see it in verse 5. God is able to bless because he is a God of great works. He is a God of a great mind with great intentions.

Look at verse 5 with me here. I mean, we just come and we stand like thirsty animals around a fresh pool of water and we drink it in and we lap it in and we feel refreshed by the mere idea of who God is. Verse 5,

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.

David is saying, "God, what you have done in the history of your operation of the universe is too great to describe. There have been too many wonders to be able to enumerate them. God, your mind is so vast that I couldn't begin to describe it. O God, the plans of goodness that you have for your people are infinite in scope and dimension and I could never begin to exhaust it."

Let's plumb this just a little bit. It reminds me a bit of the hymn I think the Gaither's wrote, "The Love of God," but it's where he talks about if the whole sky was parchment and the ocean was filled with ink and every man was a scribe and they tried to write the love and the goodness of God across the skies, they'd run out of ink; they'd run out of room before they exhausted everything that God was and everything that deserved his praise. At the end of the Gospel of John in chapter 20, the Apostle John describes the life and ministry of Jesus this way and says, "There were many other things that he did and I suppose if they were written in detail, the world couldn't contain the books that would be written about the greatness of Christ." Well, we just kind of enter into a little bit of that poetic description, the scriptural description and see that the vastness of God on display is incalculable, and honestly, we can't exhaust it. Just remember that this earthly life which we are living as Christians is simply the narthex, it is the brief small vestibule before we enter into the eternal blessings that God has stored up for us which we will enjoy without diminishment with Christ forever and ever and ever, amen. Vast plans that he has for us. Wonderful marvels of goodness and grace and if we did try to declare and speak of them, just too many to count. You know, our problem is in part that we forget even in life, we forget the things that God does day by day and we lose track of it even in the life that we live. David here is encouraging us to remember the vastness of the mind of God, the vastness of his purposes for his people, and to recognize that they are all good without exception.

This is what God does for his people and, you know, at that time, David at best had only the foggiest sense of the fact that his Lord, that his Son who would come from his physical loins, the Son of God, how vast were the thoughts of God? So vast that he had determined a plan before the world began to send his Son into the world to be a Redeemer of mankind, to be a Redeemer who would bear your sins and mine on the cross, take on infinite guilt into his infinite person, suffer the wrath of God on your behalf so that your sins could be forgiven and he could share his righteousness with you so that you could be right with a holy God. Whoever thought up something like that? Just the mind of God. So vast, so good are his thoughts to us that he took it upon himself to plan in advance to deal with your sins, iniquities and transgressions that would otherwise have separated you from him.

Beloved, are you starting to get the sense that we are in the presence of a vast God? A wonderful God? A God of infinite goodness, of infinite mercy, of infinite purpose toward his people and you belong to him through faith in Christ? Isn't that like wonderful? Isn't that like tremendous? Well, all of that should gather up and say, "That encourages me to trust him." David's point is, the multiplicity of these things is designed to draw you into a very simple point, "Then I should give my trust and confidence over to God. I should have confidence in the way that he is leading me in life." One writer said it this way, "The past is full of his miracles and the future full of his plans." Your past, beloved, is full of the faithfulness of God to you, isn't it? Your future is filled with greater plans of blessing that he has in store. I say we trust him, don't you? To be under the care of a God like that is a blessing indeed.

Now, that leads us to another question as we follow the flow of the thought of this Psalm. It brings us to our third point, we'll call it trust expressed. Trust expressed. Now, stay with me here and realize what we've been talking about and where we've gone. David has had a great deliverance, God has rewarded his trust. It has brought David to a point where he wants to encourage others to trust God by reminding them of the greatness of the blessing and the goodness and the trustworthiness of God and now here's the question for you, this is really personal, this goes to the very center of your being, your affections of why you exist, of what you consider to be important, of how you respond to this God and how you respond to the circumstances of life. And what a joy it is to tell you this what I'm about to say, especially in a region where the outward rituals of Roman Catholicism have long dominated people and kept them in darkness. What a blessing it is to say this very thing that I'm about to say right now. What does trust look like? Trust is manifested – oh, watch this. I love this. It should become my favorite verse. Trust is manifested, the reality of confidence and faith is shown not through outward ritual but in the inner man, through an inner response.

David, let me remind you, lived in the Old Testament economy with its sacrificial rituals that were laid out in the law of Moses, and in verse 6, he addresses this and this is a very powerful statement that shows us that even in the Old Testament the reality of an inner vital faith was recognized as the key to the response to God, not simply going through the motions of sacrifices. In verse 6, David says,

6 Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.

And what David is speaking here, he speaks about these four different offerings and it's kind of using them to sum up and to represent the entirety of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. The sacrifice and meal offerings were celebrations of communion with God. The burnt offering and the sin offering symbolized the removal of sin and its effects. Stay with me here because this is really important. Those four sacrifices, David uses them to represent the totality of that Levitical system, the totality of the Old Testament system of sacrifices. What David is saying here in verse 6 is that God has opened his ears, in other words, God has opened his understanding to a vital spiritual insight that applies to us still today. It is this: that that outward form, going through the motions of an outward form is not an adequate response to the greatness of the God that he had just been discussing in verses 4 and 5. He says, "God, this outward sacrificial system isn't enough if it is not accompanied by a heart attitude of love, confidence and submission to you, of adoring reverence and fear to you."

Look, I did this in my pre-Christian past. I know that many of you if not all of you to one extent or another did it if you grew up in any kind of a church environment, and even if you didn't do it, you know people who have, who have done stuff like this: live a life of sin during the week, go to church on Sunday in order to try to compensate for it. I remember one time when I was in my early teenage years and said, "I've got to go to church tomorrow to make up for what I did tonight." Oh, oh, I can't tell you how abominable that thought is and the fact that that came out of my mouth and my heart at

that time is a stab of grief as I remember it as I stand before you. What an awful way to think about God, to think that you could live your life in sin, in disregard to the holiness of God, and then you could just kind of waltz through a little external thing that you didn't even care about or understand and think that that compensated for the sinful rebellion of your heart. What an awful way to be and how awful it is that there are religions that inculcate that, that teach that to people as a proper response to God and say, "You can be okay with God." It's not just Catholicism, is it? It's all those churches that say, "Pray this prayer and then you're okay, and if you don't change, don't worry about it. You said the prayer, you're good." No. No. No. That is really sinful. That is dark to think that the greatness of this God whose thoughts toward his people are too innumerable to count, whose plans for goodness to those who trust him have infinite dimensions that we could not begin to comprehend as we stand here today, or in your case as you sit here today, and to think that you could throw a couple of bucks into an offering plate or throw a lamb on a grill, so to speak, and that that would compensate for a sinful life and would be a proper way to respond to this God, that can't be it. David sees it here as he writes in verse 6 and he says, "God, you have opened my eyes. Actually, you dug out my ears so that I could understand this." It's more than the outward form that is the response that we are to make to God.

Look over at 1 Samuel, to the left in your Bible. Prior to Chronicles, prior to Kings, you'll find 1 Samuel 15. What are we talking about? We're talking about what it means to be a disciple of Christ, that's what we're talking about, and to be a true disciple of Christ is to love him from the heart with all of your heart, soul, strength and mind. The greatness of this God requires the fullness of response of your inner man. In 1 Samuel 15:22, King Saul learned this the hard way when he didn't obey God in his victory. He didn't exterminate everything like God had told him to do. He said, "I'll save some of these animals and then devote them to the Lord in sacrifice," and Samuel rebukes him in verse 22 and says to Saul, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." To have a heart geared toward obedience to do what God says from a heart of love and fear and worship and response to God, that is worth 10,000 times more than going through the outward ritual when your heart is not in it. The ritual was just meant to express an inner reality and without the inner reality, the sacrifice is meaningless, in fact, it's even worse.

Look over at Isaiah. I hadn't thought about this passage until this very moment but in Isaiah 1, oh, do we need to see these things. Isaiah 1. Beloved, note that this is in the Old Testament and that there is not this big dichotomy between what God required from Old Testament saints from what he requires from us today. The same God looking for the same response. He says in Isaiah 1:11, "'What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?' Says the LORD. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies--I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from

you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow." God says, "You repent. Turn your life away from your wickedness and if you won't, then stop with the external ritual because it's meaningless to me when you bring it with bloodstained hands." Apparently this inner response is important to God. Apparently this is what real trust looks like. This is how trust is expressed.

Look at verses 7 and 8 as we go back to Psalm 40 now. In verse 7, David says,

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; Your Law is within my heart."

When David refers to the scroll of the book, he's likely referring to the book of Moses, the first five books in our English Bible. What he's saying is, "God, I've embraced this with my heart. Your law is a reflection, it is a mirror of the desires of my own heart. I'm swimming in the direction that your stream is going," you might say. "Your word is what I joy in, it's what I delight in." Oh beloved, mark this, the true Christian, the one who truly knows this God is the one who delights in his word from the core of their inner being; that loves it, that response to it, that welcomes it. For those of you that know something about what it's like to love God's word, to find your greatest joy in it, there is no greater affirmation of the reality of your salvation than that's what's in your heart. David is laying before us what the true response is. This is central to responding to God, a heart that is aligned with his word. Forget the outer ritual, look at the heart.

This passage here in verses 6 and 8 is applied to our Lord Jesus in Hebrews 10. Watch this, beloved. We won't take time to turn there, we probably should, but David's delight in the will of God, David's delight, King David 1,000 years before the time of Christ, that David, his delight in God's will pointed to, it shed light toward the greater David who would come 1,000 later and delight perfectly in God's will; who delighted in God's will in the incarnation and in the cross and found the fullness of his desires. He said it was his food to obey the will of his God. So in Christ we see the ultimate fulfillment of this, that Christ loved God's will, loved God's word enough to carry it all the way to the cross. And through – watch this – through the perfect delight and perfect obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, those sacrifices of which David spoke in verse 6 would ultimately be put away. He fulfilled to perfection a delight in God's word. He fulfilled to perfection the obedience that God's law required and therefore those sacrifices find their fulfillment in Christ. When we come to saving faith in Christ, there is no need for those sacrifices. Why? Because a greater sacrifice of Christ has been offered on our behalf. That's why we don't carry on the Old Testament traditions, they have been fulfilled in Christ. Something greater has been done that the Old Testament could never do. The blood of bulls and lambs could never take away sin, Christ did.

So David here, notice in verse 8, he's speaking to God as he says, "I delight to do Your will; Your Law is within my heart." I love the precious intimacy of this. David is so

surrendered to God, his heart is so tender, his heart is so submitted to God that he just speaks in these affectionate terms and says, "Lord, I love to do your will. Lord, I love your word. This is the sweetest thing, this is honey to my lips." And he expresses this trust not only to God but to God's people as well. Look at verse 9. You see, when your heart is filled with the word of God, filled with this kind of delight, somewhere, somehow, someplace, you find an avenue, you want to tell somebody else about it. Verse 9, David says,

9 I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O LORD, You know. 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.

Watch this, notice this in verse 9, you see, "I have proclaimed in the great congregation." At the end of verse 10, "the great congregation." It's that inclusio, that envelope, that bookend technique of poetry that David is using, showing that this is what was delivered to the people of God. What David is saying is, "God, your greatness must be proclaimed. I have to speak of those things," and he multiplies words to show the eagerness of his heart. Look at it there in verses 9 and 10 with me. He says, "I have proclaimed. I will not restrain my lips. I have not hidden it. I have spoken. I have not concealed it." Multiplied references saying, "Lord, I have spoken this. I proclaim it. Your law, your will, your nature, your person is so much the delight of my heart that I not only treasure it inside, I have to speak it with my lips so as many people as possible will hear of it. People have to know," he says, "how great you are, God." And it's not a meager description, a halting stumbling description of a couple of things about God, no, he's laying forth the whole fullness of the counsel of God. He says, "God, your righteousness, your faithfulness, your salvation, your loyal love, your truth, that's what I've spoken of." Theme after theme after theme after theme of the greatness and the goodness of God, David says, "I have proclaimed it." Can you imagine, oh, my goodness, how wonderful it would be to have a national leader like that, that took the people under his rule, David of course, the theocratic king, and declared the greatness of God and exhorted people to obey and trust him and honor him and worship him. One day in heaven.

You can see why David trusted God. He trusted God because he knew God and he spoke to God's people so that they also would enjoy this goodness and greatness of God and enter into the realm of the blessing that belongs to those who trust him. You see, that's why you make the effort to talk to people with stony hearts that refuse to listen. That's why you talk to your children. That's why we talk to each other. That's why we preach God's word. We want God to use that to open hearts, to open eyes like he did with David, opened David's ears. We have to speak of these things. We can't do anything but speak of these things because they so overwhelm the affections of our heart. We have to talk about these things, don't we? This has to come out. You can't contain the infinite goodness inside and not have it burst forth somehow. I'd like to think that that's what our church does. You know, we gather together as a congregation of people with shared conviction and as a church we speak these things out. Why? Because as a church these things fill our

hearts together and so we proclaim them. We want others to enter in. We don't want to keep this to ourselves. We would proclaim it to anyone who would hear.

Now, that's a high point. You might expect the Psalm to end right there. I mean, where do you go, how can you move beyond where the lofty realms where David has taken us, this internal response of worship to an infinitely great and infinitely good God? You would expect there to be a stamp that says, "Amen. Blessed be the name of Yahweh forever and ever, amen." The Psalm doesn't end there. It's interesting that way and it's actually a reflection of life that will help you, I believe, when you think about it.

As a Christian, you've had, I trust, those times of soul rapture where you're just overwhelmed with the goodness of God and you're joyful and encouraged and you are blessing his name. You've had those, haven't you? But you also know that you don't stay in that realm forever. Life goes on and then other trials come and you are engaged in the battle again. You find yourself on the battlefield again. David is no different and this Psalm encourages you to realize that when the battle comes back, it doesn't mean that anything has changed or that anything has gone wrong, it's just a time for point 4: trust renewed. Trust renewed. The first 11 verses of Psalm 40 have provided the foundation upon which David now appeals for further help in new trials. This section is highly personal. Look at the first-person pronouns in verse 11,

11 You, O LORD, will not withhold Your compassion from me; Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me.

Verse 13, "Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; Make haste, O LORD, to help me." Closing verse 17, "Since I am afflicted and needy, Let the Lord be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God." I, me, my. It's personal. David is, once again his inner man is engaged but the trials have come back in some manner or another.

So he's appealing to God for further help and he's starting to struggle with this perspective as you look at verse 12,

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.

Wow, after the lofty posture of those first 11 verses, we see that he wasn't immune from future struggles. He is troubled by past sins, maybe his own, maybe national sins. But, beloved, remember this: it is right, it is good and we should take our thoughts into that elevated realm of the first 11 verses, but we're also mindful that we are fallen, that we live in a fallen world, that our desires are not yet perfected, that we have not been perfectly sanctified so that we never sin again. The battle goes on even in the midst of the context of this great God who blesses those who trust him. So Psalm 40 teaches us to humble ourselves and to seek God again when new troubles come up and to realize that that's going to happen.

So David in verse 13 renews his prayer for deliverance from this new trouble that has come up. He says,

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; Make haste, O LORD, to help me.

And he cast a glance in the direction of his enemies that are seeking to harm him in verse 14. He continues to pray. He says,

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.

"God, deal with these people who are trying to harm me, who hate me." Verse 15,

15 Let those be appalled because of their shame Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

You know, it's one thing, isn't it, if God humbles you. It's one thing if God brings circumstances into your life, things that humble you, it's another thing to be the object of human opposition from people who are just full of malice in their hearts against you. If the rebuke comes from God, I can accept that, that comes from his heart of love and his design for my blessing. The opposition of wicked men who simply want to bring you down is irritating. It's frustrating. It's annoying. David says, "God, protect me from men like that."

And as he goes on in verse 16, he expands his prayer. He turns his eyes off the enemy and he's now back to the people of God. There is just such a breadth and a fullness to David's heart as you find him repeatedly seeking God's blessing on God's people. Look at verse 16, he says,

16 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let those who love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"

So David is in his distress, he says, "Lord, deal with my enemies but, God, let me remember the people of God. I pray that you would have your blessing on them."

And he closes with this final appeal for God's help in his own situation. Verse 17,

17 Since I am afflicted and needy, Let the Lord be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.

Let me say a word that I hope will encourage some of you, if not many of you. You have a lot of conversations as a pastor and a lot of times I feel sorry for earnest Christians who are going through trials and they are discouraged and they say, "Oh, I know I shouldn't feel this way." In one sense I know what they're saying there but notice what God would

say to us through the closing verse of Psalm 40 here and the discouragement almost becomes a means that you step back from trusting God. He step back saying, "I shouldn't be this way," and you start to feel a sense of self-condemnation. If that's you tonight, draw encouragement from what David says. He was feeling his weakness. He was under providential discouragement. His circumstances were hard and he needed help and he felt the weight of it. He's not on the mountaintop but in the valley as he's closing this Psalm, and notice the trusting earnest plea that he makes to God. He says, "Lord, I'm afflicted and needy. Be mindful of me. You're my help and my Deliverer. Do not delay, O my God." Rather than sinking into a pit that says, "Oh, I shouldn't feel this way," don't go there. That introspective stuff never helps anything. Rather, let it be that which would cause you to pivot and look beyond yourself and say, "Lord, here I am, afflicted and needy. Help me. Lord, here I am discouraged, tainted with sin once more. Be my God. Be my Deliverer. Be merciful to me." And trust him to do that. And as you trust him to do that, do you know what you'll find? You'll find that he brings you back into the realm of blessing. Why? Verse 5, look at it with me again, verse 4 I should say, look at verse 4, "How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust." You go to him in your affliction, you go to him in your discouragement, you go to him when you don't know where else to turn, you go to him when you can't articulate thick theological thoughts and you're just overwhelmed with it all and grab hold of verse 17 and say, "Lord, I come to you with my afflicted and needy heart. God, on the basis of this word, I ask you to help me. Deliver me. You're my God and, God, don't be late because I need the help right now." In our New Testament dispensation, we trust Christ for this. His righteousness, his blood are your perfect plea as you come to God, and you come in the name of Christ, you come in the name of your Lord Jesus and say, "O God, in his righteousness, in his shed blood, I present my plea."

Four very quick points of application here as we close. Very very quick. We're going to strap on our seatbelt and punch the accelerator here. Has God recently answered a prolonged prayer of yours and given you blessing? Look at the first section of this Psalm and give him thanks and praise. "God, thank you!" Be quick to return thanks for the blessing given.

Secondly, have you maybe lost sight of the greatness of God in the midst of your trials? Do your fears about the future multiply? Does your discouragement over the present sink your feet into the miry clay? Do you look at the future of Western culture and say, "This isn't going to come out too good"? Whatever the case may be, beloved, remember the wonders and the greatness and the thoughts of God, the plans for his people. Not his plans for America, there's nothing like that in the Bible, but his plans for his people. Surely, beloved, surely the God who redeemed you at the cross plans to do good for you throughout all of eternity. This present sorrow is temporary no matter how long it might last.

Thirdly, is your heart single-minded in its devotion to Christ? Beloved, put away the world. Don't get caught up in the headlines. Don't be called away from your Lord into sin. Renew your delight in the word of God and in the will of God. There is your joy. There is your delight. You hold in your lap the key to joy in your life. You hold in your hand the

secret that allows you to overcome the world as you trust in Christ and give yourself over to this word.

Finally, have problems reared their ugly head again that you thought had been put away? Oh beloved, beloved, take heart. God has helped you in the past, hasn't he? God will help you again in the future.

Let's bow together in prayer. Scripture says that in this world you have tribulation, Jesus said, "Take courage. I have overcome the world."

O Lord, give your people that are gathered together here this evening a sense of confidence in you. Father, those that are hanging by a thread trusting you when everything inside and outside tells them to give up, O God, bless their trust and reward it and strengthen them even in this hour. Father, give us individually and corporately as a church, give us opportunity to express the greatness of God and to express our trust in you that others might be encouraged to follow you and to lean on you and to worship you as is only right. And Father, let us renew our trust in the midst of our sorrows and difficulties, O God, as the cycles of life, of trial and deliverance, and trial come and go, Father, bring us always back to this center: our God is great. Our God is good. Christ has died and risen again to save us and deliver us from this wicked world; to deliver us from our own sins; to come back to that anchor, to come back to that foundation and look to you with a certain confidence that you are my help. You are my Deliverer. We ask you, O God, to be faithful to that and to not delay. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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