

Psalm 40

A. Introduction

1. David is the author
2. Written as a song (“For the Choir Director”)—quite possibly for use in corporate worship
3. Vs. 13-17 are nearly identical to Psalm 70
4. Structure
 - a. Praise (1-3)—refers to God in the third person and is directed to the congregation
 - b. Transition (4-5)
 - c. Prayer (6-17)—refers to God in the second person and is directed to Him
5. Poetic elements:
 - a. Word pictures (pit, miry clay, rock)
 - b. Comparison (sins compared the number of hairs on his head)
 - c. Chiasmic structures (vs. 9-10)

B. David Praised God for Answering His Cry (1-3)

1. David cried out to God and then waited intently (1)
 - a. **“I waited patiently for the LORD”**—the Piel form indicates intensity so “to wait intently” is a better rendering than patiently, possibly with hope or expectation

Maxx waiting at the entrance to the kitchen every morning for Amy

- b. So, what was David waiting for? He had cried out to the Lord:
 - 1) Best understood as a cry for help
 - 2) See vs. 11-12
2. God answered his cry (2-3):
 - a. David uses five phrases to describe God’s response:
 - 1) **“He inclined to me...”**--means to stretch or reach out
 - 2) **“He heard my cry...”**--simply means to hear but in this context it clearly implies responding to what one has heard
 - 3) **“He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay...”**
 - a) This refers to God rescuing David from his enemies (mentioned in 13-15)
 - b) But, it also refers to God rescuing David from his own iniquity and sin (mentioned in 11-12)
 - 4) **“He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm...”**—implies stability, firmness, a solid foundation as opposed to the miry clay above
 - 5) **“He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God”**
 - 6) Notice that David uses one phrase to describe his action but FIVE to describe God’s; the emphasis is all on God.
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3. God’s work in David’s life had an evangelistic affect (3b): **“Many will see and fear and will trust in the LORD”**

C. Transition (4-5)

1. These verses serve as a transition as David moves from praise to prayer
2. In verse 4 David declares a truth known well to him: **“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”** (4)
3. In verse 5 he reflects on just HOW blessed that man is:

- a. **"Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done"**--in fact, too many to count (see the end of verse 5)
- b. **"And [many are] Your thoughts toward us"** (5)
- c. God wonders and thoughts toward us are so great that **"There is none to compare with You"**
- d. Ephesians 1-2 give us a picture of the wonderful things God has done for us:
 - 1) He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3)
 - 2) He chose us to be holy and righteous even before the world was created (1:4)
 - 3) He predestined us to adoption as His sons (1:5)
 - 4) He redeemed and forgave us (1:7)
 - 5) He revealed His will to us (1:9)
 - 6) He gave us an inheritance (1:11)
 - 7) He saved and sealed us with His Holy Spirit (1:13-15)
 - 8) He made us alive in Christ and raised us up with Him (2:5)
 - 9) And this is just the TIP of the iceberg!

D. David Prays for God's Help (6-17)

NOTE: This section is now David's response to what he just said/wrote above.

1. He reaffirms his desire to do God's will (6-8):
 - a. God's ultimate desire is not for us to practice religious ritual (6):
 - 1) **"Sacrifice and meal offering you have not desired"**
 - 2) **"Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required"**
 - b. His ultimate desire is for us to delight in doing His will (7):
 - 1) David said God opened his ears (6b): **"My ears you have opened"**
 - 2) What he discovered was that God's word prescribed what God desired:
 - a) David says, **"In the scroll of the book it is written of [prescribed for] me"**
 - b) This was possibly a reference to what we find in Deut 17:19-20
 - c) David's response to those words:
 - (1). **"I delight to do your will, O my God"**
 - (2). **"Your Law is within my heart"**
2. He reflects on his faithfulness in proclaiming God's works (9-10):
 - a. Notice the chiasmic positive-negative then positive-negative structure of these two verses
 - 1) **"I have proclaimed...I will not restrain my lips"** (9)
 - 2) **"I have not hidden...I have spoken..."** (10)
 - b. Notice also the words David uses to describe God and His works:
 - 1) **"righteousness"**
 - 2) **"faithfulness"**—actually the word for reliability
 - 3) **"your salvation"**
 - 4) **"loving-kindness"**—loyal love or covenant loyalty
 - 5) **"truth"**—a synonym to #2 above and better understood as faithfulness
3. He reassures himself of God's compassion (11-12):
 - a. We now know why David was able to wait so patiently and hopefully (v. 1) when in such distress (11):
 - 1) **"You, O LORD, will not withhold your compassion from me"**
 - 2) **"Your loving-kindness and your truth (faithfulness) will continually preserve me"**
 - b. His confidence in God was in spite of his current distress and his own sin (12):
 - 1) He was surrounded by **"evils"**
 - a) It is unclear what this refers to
 - b) The word is plural so it is not evil per-se but "evil things" or "evil people"

- 2) He was overwhelmed by his own sin:
 - a) **"My iniquities have overtaken me so that I am not able to see"**
 - b) **"They are more numerous than the hairs of my head"**
- 3) He was in distress: **"my heart has failed me."**
- c. Ultimately, his confidence was based in God's character, nothing else.
4. He requests God's help (13-17):
 - a. The primary imperatives are found in vs. 13 and 17 (serving as book ends):
 - 1) **"Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me"** (13a)
 - 2) **"Make haste, O LORD, to help me"** (13b)
 - 3) **"Do not delay, O my God"** (17d)
 - b. David has in mind deliverance from two things:
 - 1) First and foremost, his own sin and iniquity (above in verses 12)
 - 2) Secondly, deliverance from his enemies (14-16)

E. Conclusion

1. We will close with David's final words, where he ends on a very poignant and personal note:
"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." (17)
2. This psalm reminds us of the Gospel: we are afflicted and needy and only God can deliver us, both eternally and in this present day