

The Heart of Worship

Session 3

February 2, 2025

The Attitude in Worship

Session Passage: Psalm 40:1-11

Psalm 40:1-5

Connection to the Point. David acknowledged how far God had brought him and that the joy he experienced was because of his trust in the Lord.

Background. If verse 6 reflects the incident between King Saul and the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 15:22, then the historical background of this song would have been early in David's career when he was still fleeing from King Saul. The psalm has messianic elements as the writer of Hebrews used verses 6-8 and applied them to Christ (Heb. 10:5-9). Verses 13-17 appear as a separate psalm in Psalm 70. "The choir directorThe director of musicThe chief Musician" was the leader who was responsible for keeping the hymn collection and who led the people in worship (1 Chron. 15:21, rendered "to lead").

I waited patiently for the Lord (v. 1). The psalm begins in the first person. Verses 1-4 are testimony. In them David told about God and what He did. David consistently used the third person in verses 1-3 in reference to the Lord. The psalm does not become a prayer until verse 5. *Waited patiently* literally is "I waited waited." The expression indicates David waited for a long time. The duplicated word also denotes an impatience rather than a patient endurance. David was in a bad situation and desperately needed *the Lord*—Yahweh, the covenant God—to act.

TurnedInclined unto me, and heard my cry (v. 1). These terms picture the Lord bending down to David and listening to him. His *cry* shows he was in a situation of major distress. Notice David's use of the personal pronoun in this psalm: *my cry* (v. 1), "my God" (vv. 5,8,17), "my helper" (v. 17), and "my deliverer" (v. 17).

Brought me up from a desolate pitLifted me out of the slimy pitBrought me up also out of an horrible pit (v. 2). The *pit* could refer to a trap for a wild beast (1 Chron. 11:22) or to a dungeon (Isa. 24:22). The expression recalls the experience of both Joseph (Gen. 37:20-28) and Jeremiah (Jer. 18:20,22; 38:6). The word also pictures a person brought close to the grave (Ps. 30:3). We do not know whether David meant these words literally, as with Joseph and Jeremiah, or figuratively.

Out of the muddymiry claymud and mire (v. 2). Literally, a "miry bog" or "mud of mire" (see Ps. 69:2). Perhaps this slime was at the bottom of the pit if the pit were a cistern. Broken cisterns would have muddy, slimy bottoms from water that seeped through cracks in the walls. *MuddyMiry clayMud and mire* suggests depressing surroundings, darkness, and helplessness.

Set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure and gave me a firm place to standand established my goings (v. 2) is the antithesis of having one's feet stuck in a miry bog. David spoke of his deliverance as being on a rock. In the Psalms the Lord is the rock (Ps. 18:2). The image is not that of a rock in the middle of the water or mud but of a cliffside or mountain. Such a firm foundation makes one's steps secure in contrast to David's previous situation. The Lord didn't just leave David in a safe spot, he provided for David's security.

A new song in my mouth (v. 3). *New song* might refer to new meaning to an old song—a new reason to sing. It might refer to singing an old song with a deeper understanding. Or it might refer to a totally new composition, a fresh song, perhaps verses 4-10 that follow.

A hymn of praise to our God Even praise unto our God (v. 3) David's new song was a song of *praise* for God's deliverance. In verse 3 David referred to his *mouth* and to others' eyes—"many will shall see." *Our God* implies there were others praising the Lord with David.

Many will see and fear, . . . and . . . trust Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust (v. 3). This is the result. People will *see . . . fear . . . trust*. David was not merely attracting attention (*see*); he was advocating *fear* of the Lord so people would *trust* in the Lord.

How happy is anyone who has put his trust in the Lord Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust (v. 4). It is a *happy blessed* or "blessed happy" experience for those who put their *trust* in the Lord. The word *anyoneman* means a strong person, suggesting such a one is not strong in himself but only when he trusts in the Lord. *Trusts* is continued from verse 3 and recalls Jeremiah 17:7. David switched from the verb form (v. 3) to a noun form here, thus indicating trust is both an action and an attitude, committing oneself in relationship. The only one worthy of such trust is *the Lord*.

Has not turned Does not look Respecteth not (v. 4). Turned back or swerved, indicating turning in the wrong direction. The word primarily is used of turning away from God and towards idols (Deut. 29:18; Hos. 3:1).

To the proud (v. 4). The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, understood this term to refer to false gods or idols. *The proud* is also used of the arrogant or defiant who think they are self-sufficient, those who assert themselves.

Those who run after lies Those who Such as turn aside to false gods lies (v. 4) further defines *the proud*. *Lies* could refer to false claims and those who spread them. However, in Amos 2:4 the word is used of false gods and thus *False gods* can also be rendered *lies* and refers either to idols or idolaters. David announced there is no help or deliverance for those who turn either to false gods or to lies.

Lord my God, you have done many things Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done (v. 5). Now, using the covenant name for God, David addresses the *Lord* directly for the first time and his psalm becomes a prayer. *You Thou* is emphatic. The statement means God's works were too numerous to list. *Wonders Wonderful works* is a standard term to refer to all God's saving deeds in Israel's past. In the Book of Psalms, the Lord is portrayed as the only one who does wonders.

Your wondrous works (v. 5) is a standard term to refer to all God's saving deeds in Israel's past. In the book of Psalms, the Lord is portrayed as the only one who does wonders.

Your plans for us The things you planned for us Thy thoughts which are to us-ward (v. 5). David's personal experience reminded him of many other wondrous things the Lord had done for His people—for *usto us-ward*. The change from the singular to the plural indicates this song was meant for others to use in their thanksgivings to the Lord.

None can compare with you (v. 5). Yahweh is the incomparable God.

They are more than can be toldThey would be too many to declareThey are more than can be numbered (v. 5). Ironically, David determined to declare God's works even though he said they were *more than can be toldtoo many to declaremore than can be numbered*. David's expression could refer to their number, or this may refer to their greatness.

Psalm 40:6-8

Connection to the Point. David was committed to obedience and finding his joy in doing God's will.

You do not delightYou didThou didst not desire (v. 6). Verse 6 begins with a negative, pointing out what God did not want from David. *DelightDesire*, or "desiredelight" or "want," is in the perfect tense, meaning God consistently did not want. The same word is in verse 8. Verse 6 only seems to contrast with other direct biblical statements that the Lord does delight in sacrifices and offerings (Gen. 8:20-21; Lev. 1:9; 2:2; 23:18). David's point was that all such offerings have no value unless the worshiper's heart is in it. The whole thrust of the sacrificial system was that God deserves obedience from His followers, not just ritual performances. Verses 6-8 are quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7 from the Septuagint and applied to Jesus.

Sacrifice and offering (v. 6). In verse 6 David used four specific terms that together comprehensively refer to the whole sacrificial system—these are the first two. *Sacrifice* refers to slain animals, specifically the thanksgiving offering. Whenever an Israelite brought a sacrifice to the Lord, it was to be accompanied with praise—the "sacrifice of praise." Accompanying their sacrifice was the dedication offering (Lev. 2). *Offering* usually refers to the grain offering (Lev. 2).

Open my ears to listenMy ears you have openedMine ears hast thou opened (v. 6) includes not merely the notion of listening but also of obeying. *Opened* literally is "pierced" or "dug." This makes for an open passage to hear God's instructions and to receive and understand them. *Ears* does not refer merely to the physical organs but to the ears of the heart. The expression recalls Isaiah 50:4-5 for awakening one's ear for perception and obedience. The reverse of this is found in Isaiah 48:8. Priests were symbolically reminded of this at their ordination when Moses placed blood on their ear (Lev. 8:23-24). (When this clause involving open ears is quoted in Hebrews 10:5, it follows the Septuagint and refers to preparing a "body." Probably the Septuagint translators substituted the whole for the part, a common expansion.)

You do not askYou did not requireHast thou not required (v. 6). This may be the message David heard. *AskRequired* or "request," is in the perfect tense, meaning that God had not kept asking. God did not need these animals, He already owned them (Ps. 50:7-14). What the Lord did ask is found in Deuteronomy 10:12 and Micah 6:8.

A whole burnt offering or a sin offeringBurnt offerings and sin offerings (v. 6). The *whole burnt offerings* were to atone for personal and national sins (Lev. 16:23-24). It symbolized total dedication of the worshiper to the Lord (see Ps. 51:15-17). The *sin offerings* were for intentional and unintentional sins, moral or ritual, whether known or unknown (Lev. 4:1-6:30). It brought propitiation and reconciliation of the sinner and restoration to the Lord and the community.

Then I said, "See, I have come"Then I said, "Here I am, I have comeThen said I, Lo, I come (v. 7). *SeeHere I amLo* is a Hebrew particle normally translated "Behold" or "Look." *I have come* is a servant's response to a master's call and recalls Samuel's response in 1 Samuel 3:4-10. It is the response of an inferior upon coming into the presence of a superior. It expresses willingness to respond to the call. Here it calls attention to the fact David was going into the Lord's presence, perhaps into the sanctuary, to

declare his intention to do the Lord's will. The words recall Isaiah 6:8-10 and are quoted in Hebrews 10:7,9 where they are placed in the mouth of Jesus.

In the scroll volume of the book (v. 7) refers to a parchment. Literally this two-read phrase reads "in the roll of a book." The phrase is used elsewhere only in Jeremiah 36:2,4 and Ezekiel 2:9. *ScrollBook* (or *scroll*) refers to a written document. If this is a royal psalm, then the document might refer to the king's roll as stated in Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

It is written about of me (v. 7). This could mean "prescribed to me" to obey or "laid upon me" as a duty. If this is a royal psalm, then this refers to the instructions for the king in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. If this means "it is written by me" then it refers to a worshiper writing out his praise and the account of the Lord's deliverance and depositing it at the place of worship—much as Jews still do today at the Wailing Wall.

I delight desire (v. 8) is the same word as in verse 6. However, verse 6 varies from verse 8: Verse 6 states what the Lord did *not* delight in desire (sacrifice and offerings), verse 8 tells us what David *did* delight in desire (to do God's will). For David, conforming to God's requirements was not a hard or bitter task—rather, as in Psalm 1:2, it was David's *delight desire*

To do your thy will . . . and your thy instruction law (v. 8). This is what the Lord approves of (Ps. 19:14; Prov. 15:8). One must know what God's *will* is to carry it out. *InstructionLaw* refers to teaching. It is the word for *torah*, as in Psalm 1:2.

Is deep within me within my heart (v. 8). The Lord's instructions were not only written on the scroll but on David's inner being. The Hebrew term refers to "bowels" or "entrails," which based on Hebrew thought refers to the seat of one's emotion and the core of one's being. David not only heard the Lord's instruction with his ear, he had placed them *deep within* his *heart*. This was God's demand for Israel—Deuteronomy 6:6—and it is a characteristic of the righteous (Ps. 37:31; Isa. 51:7). This is what Jeremiah prophesied about in the New Covenant (Jer. 24:7; 31:31-34; 32:39).

Psalm 40:9-11

Connection to the Point. David did not hold back in his public proclamation and worship of God.

I proclaim righteousness your saving acts I have preached righteousness (v. 9). *ProclaimPreached* refers to using a loud voice that everyone can hear. David's proclamation is the Hebrew term for "bringing good news" (see Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 61:1). *Righteousness* was the theme of David's proclamation. God's righteousness is what causes Him to deal well with David and with all those who seek to follow the Lord faithfully.

The great assembly congregation (vv. 9,10). This could have been the actual congregation gathered for worship, or symbolically it could refer to the whole nation of Israel. Perhaps this was on the occasion of a great festival as in Jeremiah 26:2. Either way, this was public praise in *the great assembly congregation* where the Lord's people gather for worship (Pss. 22:25-26; 35:18).

I do not keep my mouth closed I do not seal my lips I have not refrained my lips (v. 9). David's expression literally is "I did not keep my lips closed." In verse 10, David put it positively, "I spoke about speak of have declared." David was no coward when it came to making a public testimony about what the Lord had done in his life. He would not hold back.

Lord, as you know, Lord O Lord, thou knowest (v. 9). David appealed to the Lord's omniscience (see Ps. 69:5). David had confidence the Lord was fully aware David had been faithful to testify in the assembly to all the Lord had done for him.

I did not hide . . . I spoke about speak of . . . I did not conceal have not hid . . . I have declared . . . I have not concealed (v. 10). David already had stated in verse 9 that he did not keep his mouth closed and that he had made his proclamation in the great assembly. These words suggest not only doing so loudly, but repeatedly over a long period of time.

Your Thy righteousness (v. 10). That is, God's righteous acts (see v. 9). *Righteousness* along with the other qualities mentioned in verse 10 ("faithfulness," "salvation saving help," "constant love loving kindness," and "truth faithfulness") all relate to God's covenant character (see also Ps. 36:5,6,7,10). David could describe the character of the God who delivered him and who performed wondrous acts in Israel's history.

In Psalm 119:11 and other places, hiding God's "word" or other quality in one's "heart" is seen as a good thing. In such places, the hiding reflects a treasuring or storing up in one's own life. But here, not hiding God's *righteousness within my heart* speaks not of failing to treasure or store it up, but of keeping it from others. David indeed treasured God's righteousness so much he refused to keep it to himself.

Your faithfulness (v. 10). This could also be translated as "your truthfulness" since *faithfulness* and the word for truth come from the same root word.

Salvation Saving help (v. 10). Or "deliverance," it refers to the Lord's past acts. David referred to his own experience of God's deliverance in verse 1 (see also Ps. 25:5), but it also relates to God's acts of salvation in Israel's national history.

Your constant love and truth Your love and your faithfulness Thy loving kindness and thy truth (vv. 10,11). David referred to God's steadfast love (see Pss. 23:6; 25:10; 36:5,7,10). The two words *constant love loving kindness* represents the important Hebrew term *hesed*. For its meaning and use, see the notes on last week's study on Psalm 25:6. David used this word here and again in verse 11. *Truth Faithfulness*, which also David repeated in verse 11, refers to firmness, reliability, stability. It translates a different but related Hebrew word to that which is rendered "faithfulness" earlier in verse 10. God's *constant love loving kindness* and *truth faithfulness* often are mentioned together (see Ps. 25:10; 26:3; 57:3) and should be sought after.

You do not withhold not (v. 11). *You* An untranslated *you* begins verse 11 and thus is emphatic. This is not a petition; it is so while it reads in English as a prayer, it could indeed be a statement of confidence. As David did not restrain his lips (v. 9), so he knows God will *not withhold not His compassion . . . constant love and truth mercy . . . love and faithfulness tender mercies . . . loving kindness and thy truth* from David.

Compassion Mercy Tender mercy (v. 11). This Hebrew word refers to a mother's womb or inner parts, reflecting pity and mercies (see Pss. 25:6; 51:1; 69:16; 103:4; 119:156).

Will always guard me Always protect me Continually preserve me (v. 11). or "will continually guard me." *Guard Protect Preserve* means "preserve guard" or "keep safe." The word comes from a military background and presents the image of complete security. In Proverbs 24:12 God is described as the One who protects a person's life, or keeps his soul.

