

TEXT: Psalm 40:1-17

TITLE: PATIENCE AND PRAISE FROM THE PITS

**BIG IDEA:**

**ANTICIPATING DELIVERANCE FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER ALLOWS US TO PRAISE HIM FROM THE PITS AS WE WAIT FOR HIM TO RESPOND TO OUR CRIES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Father's Day Message – we are to learn of our heavenly Father from analogy to our earthly father. Let's imagine that we are 7 years old and we happen to fall into some terrible quicksand – no way that we can rescue ourselves. But we call out to our father for help and deliverance. What is our expectation? What type of heavenly Father do we imagine that we have?? One who is deaf to our cries? One who is powerless to help? One who would stiff us when we ask for help? And yet we remember that our father did not always give us everything we wanted when we asked for it – had a bigger picture in mind; had his own timing and wisdom that was more mature than our selfish desires for immediate gratification.

We need to understand this beloved psalm on its many different levels:

- First there is the personal experience of David, the psalmist.
- Then there is his role of leader over God's people so that deliverance can be seen on a wider scale.
- Then there are the numerous Messianic references. Clearly the many NT quotations identify this as a Messianic Psalm; however, just as clearly the references to personal sin do not allow us to treat the entire text from this perspective.
- Then there is the personal application to our own experience and the variety of pits that we find ourselves in from time to time.

**6 CONSTANTS IN THE EQUATION FOR DIVINE DELIVERANCE – SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE**

**I. (:1-3) PATIENCE IS STILL A VIRTUE -- ANSWERING THE COMPLAINT OF THE IMPATIENT DESPARADO**

Key = we need to “*Wait patiently for the Lord*”

**Illustration:** old Sunday School lesson taught by Julie and I: “*Patience is a good thing*” – keep coming back to that simple principle

Patience does not mean giving up and doing nothing –

**Cole:** It's not a passive, ho-hum kind of waiting, like you do at the doctor's office when you thumb through a bunch of magazines to pass the time

here the Psalmist is actively praying and seeking the Lord – takes effort and concentration and discipline and focus

Most of all it takes maintaining the right type of positive attitude – still holding on to the

character of God and being thankful

**Illustration:** our testimony of waiting on the Lord to have children  
Instant society – we want it now; don't want to have to wait for anything

3 Lies of the Devil that will lead us to despair: Answered here by the faithful anticipation of the psalmist:

**A. (:1) The Lord has Forgotten Me** = I am all Alone; abandoned; deserted (remember last message)

*“He inclined to me”* Picture of God leaning down to listen and respond; love relationship; cf. the movie -- “You’re leaning” --

*“and heard my cry”*

Cf. the plea of Christ from the Cross – *“My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”*

**B. (:2) There is no Way Out** – I am sinking in quicksand – No Hope

*“He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay”*

*“He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm”*

**Cole:** Your pit could be poor health, the loss of your job, former friends that turned against you, an unfaithful mate, rebellious children, or any other overwhelming problem. You may be responsible for being in your pit, or you may be a victim of the sins of others.

Resurrection Theme

If you struggle and thrash around violently in the quicksand you just sink faster

**Illustration:** think of joy of coal miners being rescued from some devastating cave-in; buried alive but somehow protected and preserved and delivered by the grace of God

**C. (:3) I am a Defeated, Loser** – I have no Testimony; I am a Laughing Stock

*“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”*

I am just going to shut up and be sullen and a negative person

**Spurgeon:** [Of the song of triumph of Christ in His resurrection:]

Justice magnified and grace victorious; hell subdued and heaven glorified; death destroyed and immortality established; sin overthrown and righteousness resplendent; what a theme for a hymn in that day when our Lord drinketh the red wine new with us all in our heavenly Father's kingdom! Even on earth, and before his great passion, he foresaw the joy which was set before him, and was sustained by the prospect.

Think of the new song that accompanied our **salvation experience** – talk about lifting us up out of the pits – we were dead in our trespasses and sins

The impact of our testimony and our praise on others is significant

**II. (:4-5) PROVIDENCE IS STILL AT WORK –**

## THE FUTILITY OF SEEKING HELP FROM ANYONE BUT THE LORD

*“How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust”*

But you say he does not look all that blessed when you see his circumstances – but look at the peace in his heart – “It is well with my soul”

Similar to the tone of **Psalm 1**

### A. (:4) All Other Options Promise But Can't Deliver

1. The Proud – Boasts of being able to help  
*“and has not turned to the proud”*

**Cole:** The proud are those that boast in their own abilities. They don't recognize or admit any personal weakness. Rather, by their own ingenuity and effort, they will get out of their crisis on their own.

Think of the pride of **worldly humanism** with all of its esteemed professors – offering the self help mantra – the power is within you; just believe in yourself; you can do anything you set your mind on; unleash the power

**Is. 2:11** *“The proud look of man will be abased and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.”*

2. The Liars – Make all types of false promises; any type of idolatry  
*“nor to those who lapse into falsehood”*

Think of the **false gospels** that are out there today – promising health, wealth and fulfillment in life – but totally oriented around a self-centered world view rather than one that magnifies the one true God

**Is. 5:18-21** 6 woes or judgments leveled against the unresponsive people of Israel

**Is. 47:13** *“You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you.”*

**Is. 66:2** *“But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.”*

Those are the alternatives to putting our trust completely in the Lord – not very impressive **Satan** is the ultimate Arrogant One; the ultimate Liar – just as he approached Adam and Eve in the Garden to deflect their trust away from their loving Heavenly Father; He is actively trying to do the same in our lives – make us exalt our will over God's; make us believe in a lie instead of the truth revealed by God

### B. (:5) God's Marvelous Providential Care has No Rivals

1. His amazing Providential Care

*“Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders which Thou hast done,”*  
*“And Thy thoughts toward us”*

We see His wonders in Nature – What is man that thou art mindful of him?? An amazing thing  
**Psalm 8** – the majesty of the Lord and yet His establishing of the dignity and worth of man

We see His wonders in our own experience in terms of past deliverances – God remains faithful and will help us today

## 2. No Comparison

*“There is none to compare with Thee”*

*“If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count”*

Lot of arithmetic in this short psalm – keep this thought in mind when we come later to our sins which are also beyond counting

**Is. 46:5, 9** – none can compare with the true God

## **III. (:6-8) PLEASING GOD IS STILL THE MOTIVATION – RELIGIOUS FORMALISM CANNOT BE SUBSTITUTED FOR JOYFUL OBEDIENCE**

### **A. (:6) Rejection of Religious Formalism**

*“Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired”*

*“Burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required”*

The people had come to put their faith in what had only been intended to be symbolic and a shadow of the true sacrifice that Christ would offer up:

- once for all (rather than continually)
- effectual (rather than symbolic)
- the blood of the perfect God-Man (rather than the blood of animals)

All about just checking the box and performing external acts

**Isaiah 1:10-17** – Sometimes the Lord gets fed up and has had just enough of religious hypocrisy

**William Barrick:** v. 6 Sacrifices and Offerings

- The first two celebrate communion with God.
- The second two deal with the removal of the effects of sin.
- Together the two sets mark the extremes of the entire sacrificial system and thereby represent it as a whole.

What type of religious formalism are people trusting in today?

### **B. (:7-8) Joyful Obedience from the Heart in Response to the Revealed Will of God**

#### 1. Enlightenment

*“My ears Thou hast opened” (:6)*

Too many people live their lives with their ears plugged with spiritual wax; can't hear the message that God wants to deliver to them; not interested in discerning God's will  
Revelation is only half the equation; we must have our ears opened to understand and receive the message

**Daniel Cresswell:** The literal translation is, *mine ears hast thou digged (or pierced) through;* which may well be interpreted as meaning, "Thou hast accepted me as thy slave, " in allusion to the custom Ex 21:6 of masters boring the ear of a slave, who had refused his offered freedom, in token of retaining him. [Unlikely translation, because a different Heb word is used in that case.]

**Barrick:** "Ears" (plural; v. 6) rules out the practice of voluntary slavery demonstrated by the practice described in Exodus 21:6, since both ears were not pierced in that ceremony.

Understanding of God's revealed will:  
"In the scroll of the book it is written of me"  
"Thy law is within my heart"

2. Willingness to Obey (even to the extent of dying on the cross)  
"Behold, I come"  
Supreme commitment

Look at the response of God's servants down through the ages: Abraham responded to the call of God; Samuel listened to the voice calling him in the nighttime; Isaiah responded: "Here am I, send me" – but all of these responses of joyful obedience from the heart pale in comparison to the resolve of the Son of God Himself

3. Joy in Obedience  
"I delight to do Thy will, O my God"

"Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2)

### **Messianic Significance – Heb. 10:1-7**

**Spurgeon:** Herein is the essence of obedience, namely, in the soul's cheerful devotion to God: and our Lord's obedience, which is our righteousness, is in no measure lacking in this eminent quality. Notwithstanding his measureless griefs, our Lord found delight in his work

## **IV. (:9-10) PUBLIC TESTIMONY IS STILL THE RESPONSE – (THE METHOD FOR COMMUNICATING THE GOODNESS OF GOD TO GOD'S PEOPLE) HIDING GOD'S GOODNESS TO US WOULD BE UNNATURAL**

### **A. Righteousness**

"I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation;"  
"Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest."  
"I have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart;"

Not enough to just have a good attitude in our heart; how will God get the glory from His providential care of us ... from enabling us to persevere in difficult times ... from delivering us from impossible afflictions?? We must open our mouth and give testimony to His grace and love and power in our own experience

Our focus should be on the attributes of God and how He has proven them out in our experience

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?? God taught this lesson to Abraham

**Gen. 18:25**

Has God done what is right and just in your experience ... or is your testimony that God treats you unfairly or harshly?? What are you saying about the Goodness of God in how you respond to your circumstances??

**B. Faithfulness and Deliverance**

*“I have spoken of Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation;”*

**C. Lovingkindness and Truth**

*“I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.”*

Look who the **target audience** is for this testimony – it is the Lord’s people who need the encouragement to persevere and continue to wait patiently for the Lord’s deliverance in their experience – emphasis here is not on evangelism but on building up the saints

**V. (:11-12) PRESERVATION IS STILL NEEDED – THE DANGERS AND PRESSURES OF SIN NEVER CEASE IN THIS WORLD**

**A. (:11) Preservation Guaranteed by God’s Gracious Character**

1. Compassion

*“Thou, O Lord, wilt not withhold Thy compassion from me;”*

2. Lovingkindness

*“Thy lovingkindness”*

3. Truth

*“and Thy truth will continually preserve me.”*

**B. (:12) Preservation Needed Because of Man’s Sinful Character**

1. Countless Sins

a. Sins of others and calamities in general

*“For evils beyond number have surrounded me”*

b. Personal sins

*“my iniquities have overtaken me”*

*“they are more numerous than the hairs of my head”*

2. No Hope

*“so that I am not able to see”*

*“and my heart has failed me”*

**VI. (:13-17) PETITION FOR DELIVERANCE IS STILL APPROPRIATE**

**A. (:13) Urgency of the Petition for Deliverance**

1. Based on God’s Will

*“Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me”*

2. Based on My Circumstances (no time like the present)

*“Make haste, O Lord, to help me”*

**B. (:14-16) Effect of Deliverance**

1. Shame God’s Enemies

*“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.”*

*“Let those be appalled because of their shame Who say to me, ‘Aha, aha!’”*

2. Encourage God’s Friends

*“Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee.”*

3. Glorify God = the Ultimate Goal

*“Let those who love Thy salvation say continually, ‘The Lord be magnified!’”*

**C. (:17) Urgency of the Petition for Deliverance**

1. Based on my Need

*“Since I am afflicted and needy, Let the Lord be mindful of me.”*

2. Based on my Faith

*“Thou art my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God”*

**CONCLUSION:**

So as you celebrate Father’s Day today, let’s give some thought to praising our Heavenly Father for His marvelous care and deliverance of us from whatever might be the pits of our earthly experience.

- Let’s wait patiently for our Heavenly Father to act in our circumstances
- Let’s put our trust only in the Lord and in His Providence – not looking to the proud or to liars
- Let’s examine our motives to make sure we are pleasing God from the heart rather than just going through some religious rites
- Let’s be quick to give public testimony to God’s people of the new song He has put within our hearts
- Let’s remain humble in understanding our constant need for God’s preservation in light of our own sins and the pressures of the evil world around us
- Let’s continue to petition the Lord for deliverance with the goal that He would be magnified

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**DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Do we grow bitter when the Lord asks us to patiently wait?
- 2) Do we envy unbelievers for their status or possessions, etc.?
- 3) Do we recognize obedience and commitment to doing the will of God as acts of worship?

4) God always looks at the heart – at our sincerity and faith. Do we try to impress God with religious form and external observances rather than allowing God to search our hearts and bring us to our knees in repentance?

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### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Piper:** “One of the great benefits of reading the Psalms is that they present us with patterns of life that the godly go through in every age. And in doing that they encourage us that we are made of the same stuff as the saints of old and they give us guidance how to follow the pattern of godliness through to the end.

One of the patterns of life recurring in the Psalms is getting in the pits and getting out again. And my favorite statement of this pattern comes from David's experience found in Psalm 40....

Verses 1-3 present a pattern of life at least part of which every Christian knows about first hand. My goal tonight, though, is that we all be enabled to follow the whole pattern all the way through to its exciting conclusion. David leads us through six stages of his experience and I want us to follow him closely. First, David is in a muddy pit; second, he cries to God for help; third, he waits for the Lord; fourth, God draws him out of the pit to safety; fifth, God gives David a new song to sing (probably the one we are reading); sixth, many others come to trust God when they see this pattern of life. The king's pit, the king's cry, the king's patience, the king's rescue, the king's song, and the king's influence.”

**Stott:** “Salvation provokes within us, however, more than a God-ward response of spiritual worship and moral obedience; it teaches us also to care for our fellows, that they too may hear of God's grace. So the psalmist asserts repeatedly that he has not concealed God's *love* and ... *truth* (that is, faithfulness) *from the great assembly* but has publicly declared it (verses 9-10). When God sets our feet on the rock and puts His law in our ears and in our hearts, we cannot keep our lips from making His goodness known.”

### **Spurgeon:**

Mark the figure of inclining, as though the suppliant cried out of the lowest depression, and condescending love stooped to hear his feeble moans. What a marvel is it that our Lord Jesus should have to cry as we do, and wait as we do, and should receive the Father's help after the same process of faith and pleading as must be gone through by ourselves!

### **Steven Cole: When You're In the Pit**

When you're in the pit, wait intently on the Lord and proclaim His goodness when He answers.

#### **Application Questions:**

1. How can we determine the balance between trusting completely in the Lord versus using legitimate means or methods?
2. Why is pragmatism (“if it works, it must be okay”) dangerous? Do ungodly methods sometimes “work”?
3. Study Genesis 41:1 and Acts 24:27 in their contexts. Why does God make His choice servants wait, especially when they could accomplish so much if they were free?
4. Read the story of King Saul (1 Samuel 15). Why was he tempted not to wait on the Lord, but



to take matters into his own hands? What were the consequences?

**Doug Goins:** Verse 4 talks about the secret of blessedness or happiness. He is saying, "Happy is the person who has learned to trust God for everything in life." That trust means they have made some choices: first, to reject the influence of anyone who encourages them to appeal to personal pride, self-confidence, independence, self-improvement, or natural ability. And second, to reject the influence of those who embrace the lie, or idolatry (these terms are interchangeable), of, say, materialism or education. They have rejected the worship of something other than God, expecting that to give them fulfillment and happiness. Instead, the happy person has learned to depend on God's activity in them and nothing else, including their own resources.

**Ray Stedman: A Song of Resurrection**

That is a beautiful description of the experience of resurrection. None of us has ever been resurrected. There is a great difference between what happened to Lazarus and what happened to Jesus. Lazarus was really resuscitated; he was restored to this life almost as though he had been given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. But Jesus was resurrected. He was the firstborn from the dead. He stepped into a whole new experience of life that God had designed from the beginning for humanity. That is what the Messiah is describing here. The result is, He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

**William Barrick:**

- I. Patience Rewarded (vv. 1-3)
- II. Blessing Recounted (vv. 4-5)
- III. Obedience Required (vv. 6-8)
- IV. Good News Reported (vv. 9-10)
- V. Confession Registered (vv. 11-12)
- VI. Deliverance Requested (vv. 13-17)

**Other Titles:**

- “Out of the Mire and Into the Choir”
- “From the Pits to Praise