

Thoughts from Psalm 40

#0744

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 5, 1982

I have been impressed anew recently with the great privilege we have of receiving each time we meet with God the greatest blessing of our lives up to that point. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this next hour could be the greatest blessing of all your life? I wonder if God has enough to spare. Could He do that? Could He? Do we have a need?

I wonder if it'll happen. Oh, it all depends on our expectation and our opening the way.

"According to your faith, be it unto you" Matthew 9:29.

Now, we're going to sing number 71 [old *Church Hymnal* (1941)] in opening our service this morning, and after that, Brother Lee's going to lead us in prayer. And as he prays aloud for and with all of us, let us all unite with him.

And when his prayer expresses the longing of your heart, what is your response? How can it be indicated? "Amen." That's what "Amen" means. It means, "So be it," "May it be that way."

Oh, I'm so glad that we can join together in asking Jesus to give us the great blessing that He longs to this morning.

"My Maker and my King, To Thee my all I owe;
Thy sovereign bounty is the spring Whence all my blessings flow;
Thy sovereign bounty is the spring Whence all my blessings flow.

"The creature of Thy hand, On Thee alone I live;
My God, Thy benefits demand More praise than I can give.
My God, Thy benefits demand More praise than I can give.

Lord, what can I impart When all is Thine before?
Thy love demands a thankful heart; The gift, alas! How poor.
Thy love demands a thankful heart; The gift, alas! How poor.

O! let Thy grace inspire My soul with strength divine;
Let every word and each desire And all my days be Thine.
Let every word and each desire And all my days be Thine."
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #15, verses 1–4.

[Brother Lee] The psalmist has said:

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker” Psalm 95:6.

As far as possible, let us each reverently kneel as we pray.

Our Father in heaven, thank you that we have this privilege of coming here this morning. We're thankful for this hymn that we've just sung. We want to give you our all, and yet everything that we can give is a meager offering. But we're thankful that you're a merciful, loving Father, and you accept it freely.

We've come here for a blessing, Father. Each of us needs to be guided and instructed so that we'll be prepared for the soon coming of our Savior. We pray that you'll speak through our dear brother Elder Frazee this morning.

Father, may the words that he speaks be just what our hearts need, and may we leave here changed men and women.

We're thankful for our sanitarium, for the privilege that we have of ministering to the sick and to the needy. And we pray that you'll bless each physician, each nurse, each worker there. Bless our patients who are there right now, and may they receive healing not only to their physical bodies but to their spirits and to their minds.

And Father, we pray for those in our congregation, those in our community, those that are near and dear to us who are pressed down by guilt, by sorrow, by bereavement, by uncertainty for what the future seems to hold. We pray that you'll come very close to them during this hour and during this day and in the week to come, that they might know that Jesus is a very present help in time of trouble and need. And may they by faith look to Him and receive the help that they need. We thank you for this, for hearing our prayer and for answering it.

In Jesus' name, amen.

[The audio of this message includes an entire church service, complete with song service, announcements, etc. We have only transcribed Elder Frazee's sermon from it.]

[Elder Frazee] Let us turn to David's psalm, the 40th Psalm. I love the songs, the psalms of David, don't you?

I was thinking of someone several years ago who was talking to Marjorie Lewis Lloyd. Some of you know her. She's the author and composer of a number of beautiful Gospel songs.

And someone who didn't know her that well was talking with her one day and said, "Oh, I wish I could write some songs, too, but I have so many troubles that I never get to something like that."

And Marjorie Lewis Lloyd, in relating it, said, "What does she think songs come out of anyway?"

Marjorie had had her share and some more of the sorrows, and pains, and troubles that are the background from which God leads His children into an experience of praise.

And so, our psalm this morning:

“I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD” Psalms 40:1–3.

Where did David get his song of praise? He got it as he recognized the wooing, winning, drawing power of God in drawing him out of the pit of destruction and sin and its penalty.

Now, let’s notice some of these steps here:

“I waited patiently for the Lord...” Psalm 40:1.

Some of the other translations emphasize this waiting. One of them puts it:

“I waited, waited...” Psalm 40:1 (unknown version).

Another one:

“I waited and waited...” Psalm 40:1 (unknown version).

Waited, waited, waited, that’s the picture. But notice, he did it in patience. Sometimes we wait in impatience. That means that we haven’t waited long enough. Is that right? That’s right. If we think that the way to get over impatience is to end the waiting, we’ve missed the point.

“I waited patiently for the Lord...” Psalm 40:1.

As long as we are seeking to depend upon our own efforts in salvation, as long as God is so far in our thoughts that we are trying to do it on a do-it-yourself basis, we still are not ready for the blessing.

“I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry” Psalm 40:1.

It’s all right to cry if we cry to the Lord. A baby cries to his mother, and Jesus says:

“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you...” Isaiah 66:13.

I heard a baby crying only yesterday and I thought, “Well, the little fella’s developing his lungs.”

Isn’t that the way we all learn? And so it is in our longings after God. But the baby never cries as long as everything it has is just what it wants and the way it wants it. It’s when the pin is sticking it, or it needs to be changed, or it wants some water, or some food, any of those, or a number of other needs or desires can be manifest in crying. And the crying, while it, of course, has the purpose of indicating the baby’s need, it’s developing the lungs. That’s the point. That’s why God allows it.

And so, when you and I have sorrows, pains, disappointments, bereavements, sickness, problems of any kind, those problems are to lead us to do what? Cry to God.

“...He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay...”
Psalm 40:1–2.

I wonder how the old life looks to you, friends. Once in a while we hear someone tell the story of all the sacrifices they’ve made for God, and one might get the picture that they’ve left everything that’s good and entered a barren land just because God has called them.

But it’s the other way around when we get things in true perspective. The old life is the life of the horrible pit, dear friends. Isn’t it? The new life is being set on a Rock and having our feet established.

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit...”
Psalm 40:2.

Unless we see our old life that way, we’re still in it. That’s right. The truly converted soul looks upon his past worldly life of sin as something to be abhorred.

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings” Psalm 40:2.

The picture is one of security and stability, of getting out of something that’s slippery and soft and unstable onto something that is dependable and settled. Isn’t that what God longs to do for every one of His children? Thank God.

“And He hath put a new song in my mouth...” Psalm 40:3.

Here is where the praise comes in.

“God has done something for me,” David says. “I was down, and He’s brought me up. I was in the pit; He’s brought me out. I was in a slippery, dark place; He set my feet upon a Rock.”

“And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord” Psalm 40:3.

There’s nothing more adapted to winning others to Christ than telling them of what Jesus has done for us and of praising Him.

If you were the enemy, what would you do about it? Wouldn’t you try to stop it? And so, when you’re about to praise the Lord when you’re about to say something in private or public, the enemy will suggest various reasons why you shouldn’t.

One is, “You’re not good enough.” What about that one? Here’s another one. “You don’t feel like it.” Here’s another one. “People will think you’re proud.” Here’s another one. “Well, you really haven’t much to tell.” And so it goes, on and on.

Ah, my dear friends, let us put to flight the armies of Satan by saying, “Whatever I have to tell, by God’s grace I’m going to tell it, in public and in private, to the glory of His name.”

You see, if we stop to think about it, every one of us has an infinite amount for which to praise the Lord. What has Jesus done for each one of us? He’s given His life. Is that something to be thankful for? Ah, yes. What’s He doing now for us? He’s interceding for us. Is that something to praise Him for? Yes.

Does He have any angels commissioned to help us? Would it be a good thing to thank the Lord for them? If you’d been a bodyguard for somebody for three years and protected them again and again from assassination or some other peril, wouldn’t you be glad if somewhere along the line they turned and said, “Thank You”?

The angels are watching us moment by moment and preserving us from perils physical and spiritual. To praise the Lord for the ministry of angels is part of the new song.

And then, we all have blessings that are very tangible. You’ve all had something to eat sometime in the last week. I can tell by looking at you. Right? Is that something to thank the Lord for?

I’m thankful for this lovely, little chapel. Aren’t you? I know how it came to be. I know the years of waiting and longing and sacrificing on the part of various ones to provide the funds to make it possible, and I thank the Lord for this place.

Just this week, as I was in here on an errand, I felt to kneel in prayer and thank the Lord for the many precious experiences that He’s given us in this chapel of seeing souls find Jesus and get a blessing. Has He ever done that for you in this chapel? How many say, “Yes”? Thank the Lord. Is that something to praise Him for? Ah, yes. It didn’t just happen, dear friends. God is wonderful. God is wonderful.

“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord” Psalm 40:3.

Now, dropping down to the sixth verse:

“Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” Psalms 40:6–8.

As you will recognize, this is a prophecy of the Messiah. Often in the Old Testament writings, we have mingled the experience of the prophet himself that wrote the words with the experience of Christ as God revealed it to the prophet hundreds of years before the Messiah came. And here we have an example. While David is indeed representing his own attitude here, he’s also speaking prophetically of the Messiah.

What is it that God desires (the sixth, and seventh, and eighth verses)? Not the sacrifice of beasts, not the blood of lambs, and goats, and bullocks, but the doing of His will.

And notice what it brings to the converted heart. The eighth verse, will you read it with me?

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” Psalm 40:8.

Do you know why the converted heart delights in doing the will of God? Because it loves Him. If you love somebody, you delight in pleasing them, don’t you?

Did you ever have somebody you loved so much that you wanted to know what they wanted for a birthday? And you set about to contrive to find some way to find out what they needed or what they’d like. Or maybe it was for Christmas or some other occasion. My point is, the more you love somebody, the more you want to do what? To please them. And that’s the attitude of the converted heart.

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” Psalm 40:8.

Now, Christ came as this Messiah, messianic prophecy indicates, to reveal this attitude and to show us how to live this life.

Turn to John, please, the 6th chapter and the 38th verse. Perhaps you’d like to read this verse with me when all have found it. All together:

“For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” John 6:38.

What did Jesus come for? What did He not come for, does it say? Well, didn't He always want to do good things? That isn't the point, friends. The point is, He came to please His Father, not to please Himself.

Selfishness is manifested in other ways than doing wicked things, bad things. Selfishness may be manifested in wanting the biggest apple on the plate, boys and girls. It isn't a bad apple. But if we love father and mother and brother and sister, who do we want to get the biggest apple? Or are we hoping they'll all take the smallest one and leave the last one for us? Do you see what I'm getting at, dear friends?

Selfishness, I repeat, can be manifested not simply in wanting bad things but in desiring our own benefit, our own way, our own will. And Jesus came from heaven to demonstrate a life of utter self-renunciation. And so, all through His life, He was continually looking to His Father to find out what? The will of His Father.

Now, that met its climax in Gethsemane. What was that thrice-repeated prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane? What did He want? He wanted to be relieved of drinking that cup. The cup was the cup of separation from the Father that He must drink if you and I were to be saved. But in His human nature, He shrank from it. He longed to not go into that darkness of separation.

And so, He prayed:

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless..." Matthew 26:39.

What?

"...not as I will, but as Thou wilt" Matthew 26:39.

Was His prayer heard? Yes, it was heard. Did He drink the cup? Yes. But oh, thank God, in drinking it, He brought salvation to every one of us.

Could Jesus have wiped the bloody sweat from His brow and gone back to heaven instead of drinking the cup? Yes. Would He have been lost? No, but we would have been lost, but we would have been lost. Our salvation hung in the balance there.

Oh, I'm glad He kept on all through His life, even to the very last moment persevering in that purpose to do His Father's will instead of His own will. What do you say?

And oh, if that prayer was appropriate for the Son of God, how appropriate it is for you and me.

"...Not My will, but Thine, be done" Luke 22:42.

"...Not My will, but Thine, be done" Luke 22:42.

How many problems this decision settles in psalms; this is the new song of victory and praise.

“He brought me out of the miry clay,
He set my feet on the Rock to stay;
He puts a song in my soul today,
A song of praise, hallelujah!”
Christ in Song, #192, chorus.

This is what made it possible for 50 million martyrs to go to the stake or other places of execution and feel happy in giving the life a thank offering to God. They had settled in their souls that the reason for their living was not to please themselves but to please Jesus, please Jesus.

Oh, it's a wonderful thing when self is lost sight of in the earnest desire to please God.

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” Psalm 40:8.

Will you repeat that with me again?

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” Psalm 40:8.

Where is it? In the heart. What does that mean? It means we know it, we love it, we embrace it. It's our desire. And if we find out what Jesus wants us to do, that's what we choose to do.

“For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” John 6:38.

Turn to Romans the 15th chapter first three verses. Here it emphasizes a similar thought. What two kinds of people are mentioned in that first verse? The strong and the weak. What are the strong to do? Help the weak.

“...Bear the infirmities of the weak...” Romans 15:1.

And what are the strong not to do?

“...Not to please ourselves” Romans 15:1.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” Romans 15:1.

In the society of this world, riches, power, strength are so many means of getting what the person who has them wants. If he has a lot of money and wants a big, dashing car, he gets a big, dashing car. Why? He has the money; loves to

show off. Other people have other ways of showing off—their strength, their money, their position, their status.

But Paul says, and he's writing by inspiration, that the ones that have those talents or gifts or blessings are not to do that, not to please themselves, but to do what? Help others.

See how he puts it in the second verse:

“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” Romans 15:2.

Notice, we're to please others for what? For their good. That doesn't mean we'll give the baby the scissors when he cries for them. He might punch his eyes out. That wouldn't be for his good.

So, we're not to grant the request of every person, but we're to seek in every situation in life to be pleasing others. Why? Because that's God's way of developing His character of love in us and revealing His character to others.

The more we show the unselfish love of Jesus to others, the more they see what God is like, and there is awakened within their hearts a desire to share in that joy.

But notice, we're back again to the example of Jesus in the third verse:

“For even Christ pleased not Himself...” Romans 15:3.

Read that line with me, please.

“For even Christ pleased not Himself...” Romans 15:3.

Again:

“For even Christ pleased not Himself...” Romans 15:3.

Why does it say “even” Christ? Why, he was the King, the Leader. And even *He* pleased not Himself. He sought to please His Father and to please others.

And so, the life of unselfish love, of choosing the will of God instead of our own way, is revealed to us in example by Jesus and passed on to us from Scripture as the example for us. Let's embrace it. What do you say? This is getting out of the pit of selfishness, friend. Oh, it's a horrible pit.

Someone has said that a man that's wrapped up in himself makes a very small package. It is very confining.

I've read somewhere that in the dark ages, among the other instruments of torture they had, was one in which a room was made of iron, and the prisoner was

put in it. And it was so arranged that every little while it'd get a little smaller, little smaller, little smaller, little smaller, till finally, it crushed him to death.

Can you imagine the fear that must have come upon the mind and the heart minutes, hours, perhaps days, I don't know how long they took with the torture, but that's a picture, friends, of the man who is wrapped up in himself, who is living for self. Every day whether he realizes it or not, whether he thinks of it or not, he's getting more confined as selfishness closes in on him.

Oh, let's thank God He wants to bring us up out of that whole selfish experience. What do you say?

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit... and set
my feet upon a rock, and established my goings"
Psalm 40:2.

Where I can sing the praises of God, where I can live in unselfish service for others. Oh, that Jesus may give us all this blessed experience. I want to enter into it more, don't you?

You know, around us is a weary world. I'm impressed that in recent weeks it seems there are more tragedies, more sorrows, more bereavements, more sickness, more pain, more problems, at least that come to my attention. Maybe some of you are aware of it. And the sorrows of this poor old planet are increasing, aren't they? From one end to the other, north, south, east, west, tell me, where do you find a tranquil spot? Not for very long.

What I'm saying is this. We need not go far to find somebody that needs the peace, the love, the joy, the service that we can share. And if we will ask Jesus, He will help us to find the word in season to speak to the weary one.

"Ah," somebody says, "I hope they find me because I'm so needy."

Dear one, if you're here this morning and what your heart is longing for is somebody to minister to you, I hope they do, too. But listen, listen, listen. If you want the *real* joy, the *real* blessing, ask Jesus to help *you* to find somebody to minister to, somebody that needs help more than you need help, somebody that's in greater pain, greater sorrow, greater need than you have, and your soul will be blessed. I know it's true, dear ones. I know it's true.

I was telling somebody just the other day, there's no way of getting water through a pipe without the pipe getting wet. The banks through which the river runs are always green. And those who allow themselves, their hearts, their lives, their thinking to be the channels of ministry to others are blessed.

And so, the Scripture says:

"...He that watereth shall be watered also himself"
Proverbs 11:25.

That's why Jesus, although He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" because He took on Him the woes of a weary world, nevertheless was "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows" [a paraphrase of Isaiah 53:3 and Psalm 45:7], where He was utterly emptied of self-caring, self-pleasing. Emptied, therefore, of the things that make people worry and fear.

He was perfectly willing to be led as a Lamb to the slaughter. He had settled this one thing. There was just the one thing He desired, and that was His Father's will, and He knew His Father was going to get it done.

And so, the song says:

"Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go,
Anywhere He leads me in this world below..."
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #508, first stanza (partial).

Oh, let us join in that utter surrender—that full, unreserved giving of our lives to Jesus, to please Him and please others.

Now, this morning, let's turn back to that 40th Psalm, and notice what this leads to. The very next verse, the ninth verse:

"I have preached righteousness in the great
congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD,
Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within
my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy
salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and
Thy truth from the great congregation" Psalm 40:9–10.

And so, I pray this morning that God will open our hearts and unseal our lips and make us glad to speak the praises of our Lord for His lovingkindness.

I want to come down here and stand with you and invite each of you to think, "Have I got something to praise the Lord for this morning?"

And I hope we can have at least a score of people just one after the other to be on their feet to say a word of praise in testimony to the glory of our Lord.

[Testimony meeting followed.]

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