

What A Faithful God

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. It's always good to be over at Bellis Hill. And once again, I would continue just to bring you the greetings of Calderwood Baptist Church. We continue to pray for you as a church and for fellowship, to pray regularly for all that God is doing in your midst. And it's good this morning, as Stephen Routa said, to have not just one of the leaders there, but two, because Russell leads in the church there, and Mandy is our family's worker. So it's good that when we're able, different folks are able at times just to come and to encourage you in all that God is doing in your midst. Thank you to those who have led us into God's presence and praise and in adoration. I think some of the most beautiful words we hear Sunday by Sunday are the words, let us worship God. And we need to rediscover just something of the wonder of that, something of the beauty of that, something of the fullness of that, what it is to be a people who are marked because of Christ by that deep desire to be a worshipping people, to be a people who want to magnify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this morning we're going to be doing that in the Old Testament hymn book. We're going to be doing that in the Psalms when Cal was putting together their little summer series. He tapped into a little evening series in Calderwood as well, and he said, to preach Psalm 40. So we're going to be looking at Psalm 40 this morning. But let me, as well as bringing you the greetings of Calderwood, pass on our love and thanks. Some of you were out midweek for your prayer gathering. You were praying for Julian, Thomas's wife, and just to report that she was taken into, in the end, Whishaw. She went from hair mask to Whishaw and had emergency surgery, which has all gone very, very well. And she is back home. She got home just on Thursday. I think it was Thursday she got back home. So she's back home and recovering. Well, a little bit sore, but recovering. And so we're very thankful to God for all of that. And I know Thomas appreciated those of you who were praying for that as well. Let's just bow our heads in prayer before we open up Psalm 40 this morning.

Our gracious Father, the words of the praises of our hearts in worship are still very much to the front of our hearts. What a faithful God we have.

Father, we just reflect for a moment in prayer on what it is to have you as our rock, as our fortress, as our deliverer. And Father, our hearts, as well as overflowing with praise and adoration, do that from a position of humility, that you would stoop so low to lift up someone like us. And so we pray, Lord our God, that as we open your Word this morning, that your Word would open our eyes, and that your Word would open our hearts, and that your Word would open our minds, that we might see, that we might hear, that we might understand more of who you are and of all that you are calling us to become. And we pray, Lord our God, that you would apply your Word to our hearts and lives, that we might live in the fullness of it, for your honor and for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, turn with me, if you will, in your Bible to Psalm 40. Thank you, Emmanuel, for reading that and reading it from the King James. It's a long time since I've heard that read in the New King James.

And it was good to hear some great old words in there, do not tarry. You know, it's a great little word just to summarize that cry of David that God would not delay in bringing him deliverance.

[5 : 21]

Well, we're going to look at Psalm 40 this morning. Just as a means of getting into that and understanding all that's gone on, it's a psalm of David. David, we know, was the great psalm writer of the Old Testament. He was also King of Israel. He was the greatest king, and he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was pointing, Jesus is born of David's line, and he is the Messiah that would come from David's line. And so, so much of what David would write and pen would also look forward to that day. He himself, of course, was only writing by the inspiration of the Spirit of God and could not see clearly everything that we now understand of our Lord Jesus Christ. But from time to time in his writings, his psalms would sometimes move not just into praise and adoration of God, but also a little bit into a prophetic announcement of the coming Christ. And Psalm 40, while it's really about David's life, and in one respect, a story of where he was and thanksgiving to God for his deliverance in the midst of it, there's also in this little psalm a little prophetic section that looks towards the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we'll think about that as we unpack our focus will be in the first ten verses primarily, although we will just encourage our hearts with the latter verses as well as we bring our message to a close. But I don't know what you've been reading over the summer. Summer's always a good time. You know, certainly for a person like myself, I'm reading constantly, but I find in the summer I get more reading time, and I get an opportunity to catch up and read some of the things I've been wanting to read that I couldn't get to read because of the business of regular life, ministry, and activity. And so, I've had good opportunity over the summer period to do some reading. And I love biography. I love biography of any kind, but I particularly enjoy Christian biography because I love to read of the transforming work of God in a person's life. You and I have all got a story to tell if we know the Lord Jesus Christ. We've got a story of the transforming work of God in our lives. And when you turn to the pages of biography, what you find is that you're able to read something of that. So, amongst the many things that I've been reading over this summer period,

I've read a book entitled, A Greater Glory, From the Pitch to the Pulpit. Now, that sounds an unusual title, right? But it's actually the story of Gavin Peacock. Now, Gavin Peacock was a Premier League English football player, played for Chelsea and Queen's Park Rangers and clubs like that. He was exceptional in his day. Some of us are old enough to remember him and, you know, can remember how he played.

But the title of his book is A Greater Glory, From the Pitch to the Pulpit. And after an incredible football career, and if he were around in these days, the salaries he would be earned would be unbelievable. But the reality is that the greater glory is not about his life in football, but the greater glory is about his life transformed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Transformed at an early age, while he was still a footballer. Transformed living for the glory of God in a very unchristian environment. Transformed being faithful to the Word of God and obedient to every word that God has spoken in a difficult environment. And after a football career, he found himself going to train for the ministry. And now, if you were to Google him, you'd find that he's the associate pastor of a church in Canada. And in actual fact, the greater glory from pitch to pulpit, this from a man who ran onto the field in the FA Cup final, this from a man who had people chanting his name, this from a man who hit the crossbar in an FA Cup final, almost winning the FA Cup.

Now, you would think you don't get a greater glory than that. Well, you do. You do. And the greater glory is the transformation that God in Christ brings to any heart and any life surrendered to him.

[10:17] And so, that biography was a great read. I've also been reading the life of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones again, because he's been a great inspiration to me as to what it is to really wrestle with the text of Scripture. And so, I've been working my way through that. And I've also been reading the life of George Whitefield. And George Whitefield's an evangelist. And George Whitefield, as an evangelist, had a great desire for the honor of God and the glory of God. And when you look at his life, he was a man aflame for the good news of Jesus Christ. The secret to that? He was saturated in Scripture. He was soaked in prayer. He was a humble man. But he was a man who had a focus on making Jesus known. As I share those things, I share those things as a way of helping us to begin to understand Psalm 40. Because Psalm 40 is David writing spiritual biography. Psalm 40 is David declaring the work of God, and the grace of God, and the mercy of God, and the faithfulness of God, and the deliverance of God, and his discovery that God and God alone is the only rock and fortress and security that any of us can know. That's what it is. It's spiritual biography. And so, when we look at

Psalm 40, we don't understand all the context in which David was in, but we do know that it's a song about God in the midst of every moment of every experience of life. And when you and I want to write spiritual biography, what we've got to be able to talk about is God in the midst of every experience of life. We often restrict testimony to that day when we first came to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in actual fact, testimony is way more than that. Testimony is about the faithfulness of God, the power of God, the reality of God, the presence of God in the midst of every moment of all of life's experiences. And so, David here, as he writes Psalm 40, is telling us something of the story of that faithful God in every moment of his life. And you and I need to learn to be those who not just acknowledge that in our own lives. But we need to be those who learn to speak of that in our own lives.

Because when we speak of that, particularly to those who don't know Jesus Christ, it can be taken and used of God powerfully for the salvation of souls. And so, we need to learn what it is to not only acknowledge the faithfulness of God in our life, but to speak of the faithfulness of God in our life, to speak openly of the faithfulness of God in our life. And so, here we've got David, and I want you to turn with me, look at the text of Scripture there, the opening three verses. You get a little bit of his testimony to all that God has been doing for him. Now, we don't know what context David was in, but you know enough about the life of David. You know enough about the life of David to know that he didn't have to look far for his troubles, did he? Now, there were many of those things that he brought upon himself. That's the same for you and I, right? Many of the things that we bring upon ourselves, that principle of what we sow was true in the life of David. His sin had brought upon himself all manner of difficulties and problems, you know, his adultery with Bathsheba, his arrangements for the death of her husband, you know. And of course, God didn't miss, did he, when he sent the prophet and said, you're the man. You know, so God looked into the heart of David and said, you know, here is a man after my own heart. But God doesn't ignore the sins of a man whose heart is fixed on him.

God challenges that. God brings about change. God does not miss and hit the wall. And he certainly didn't with David. So David could, you know, testify about that. But he can also testify to what it is to have many enemies. Even when God revealed to him that he was going to be the king of Israel, and when he became a harp player or whatever it was he played for Saul, right? You know, Saul was trying to nail him to the wall with spears. His own son rebelled against him and wanted to take the kingdom from him. You know, he's a man that didn't have to look far for his problems. This is the man who's saying, you are my rock. You are my trust. You are my deliverer. We can be very honest about what it is to live life for God. We don't have to dress it up and say, everything in the garden is rosy. We can say, everything in the garden is not rosy, but God is my rock, God is my trust, and God is my deliverer. And that's the reality of David. And David writes in Psalm 40, look at the language of this. I waited patiently for the Lord. Actually, what the original says this is, waiting,

[16 : 01] I waited. You know, we say waited patiently because we're trying to capture it in English, but in actual fact, we don't capture the full force of this. Waiting, I waited. That's what he's saying.

Waiting, I waited. And you know, the incredible thing about this is David reveals in this cry to God, in this psalm of praise, he reveals a truth that you and I, I suppose certainly I can speak for me. I can't speak for you, but I can speak for me. We desperately need to learn this.

What it is to wait patiently for God? What it is to give something to God and wait for God's word, God's action, God's deliverance, God's trust? Because you and I, for the most part, by nature, we don't like waiting. By nature, we like to take action. By nature, we love to be in control.

By nature, we want to try and sort it out ourselves. We kind of say, you know, I'm talking to God about it, but you know, can't wait that long. And David says, waiting, I waited upon the Lord. And one of the great things about learning what it is to wait upon the Lord for what he is going to do is that when the action comes, it is for the glory of his name. Because look what he says, he says, God inclined to me, God heard my cry. And I love the language of this. It is God who draws him up out of the pit of destruction. It is God who draws him up out of the miry bog. It is God who puts a new song in his mouth. It is all the action of God in the deliverance of his child. It is beautiful.

In actual fact, I want to say to you that if you've got a testimony about conversion and the Lord Jesus Christ being Lord of your life, these opening verses, 1, 2, 3 of Psalm 40, describe it.

[18 : 06] Because you and I, every single one of us, a little bit like Jeremiah and the quicksand, right? Every single one of us, we're sinking in the pit and bog of destruction. We are helpless and hopeless without Christ. Our sin and our rebellion, sin is simply missing the mark. And every single one of us have missed the mark. We've missed the mark. Some people like to grade sin. You know, John McKinnon, he missed the mark massively. I mean, he missed the mark by, you know, a country mile. But I, I just missed the mark. Well, let me tell you something. We both missed. That's what sin is. Missing the mark.

And you and I, because of our sin, we're sunk deep in the pit of destruction. Damnation was hanging over our head. We were in a position where we could do nothing to save ourselves.

All of the Old Testament speaks the name of Jesus Christ. It points toward the deliverance of God.

There was a people set apart for the glory of God, and in the rebellion, they missed the mark. But they were awaiting a Messiah. And in Jesus Christ the Messiah, deliverance comes. In Jesus Christ the Messiah, we are lifted up out of the miry bog. It is God who delivers. It is God who saves. It is God who takes us from the gutter, and he sets our feet upon a rock. He makes our way secure. He makes the road in which we walk solid, secure, stable, enduring, lasting. Isn't that the promise of God in Christ?

That in actual fact, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Nothing. We're in solid ground with Jesus. He is my rock. He is my fortress. He is my deliverer.

[20 : 37] And he puts a new song. He puts a new song in our mouth. And what is the song? It's a song of praise. It's a song of praise to our God. That's why let us worship God ought to be the most precious words for the people of God when they gather, because they should come through those doors, whatever life is thrown at them. And we know what life was thrown at David, knowing that the Lord is our deliverer.

And he puts a new song in our mouth. And here's what I love about that song. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. You know, that's what the song of deliverance ought to be, that we long, as John prayed for the people of Belchill this morning, that they may see, that they may hear, that they may fear, and that they may put their trust in the Lord our God. And so, David gives his testimony. I want to say, is that your testimony? Is that your testimony in the midst of every experience? Or do you find yourself like the people of old, still mumping and moaning and complaining against God? Or are your eyes lifted up to see your deliverance, to see what you've come from, to see in Christ where you are going, where you are going?

Well, you know, what's beautiful at this is David then turns in his psalm, and he begins almost in his psalm of praise to recount and to recall the grace of God, the mercy of God, the presence of God, the power of God, the reality of God in every sphere of life. You know, my friends, this has got to be our testimony. The reality of God in every sphere of life. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. He does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie. You know, pride is just a descriptor of man's rebellion against God. That's what pride is. It's a description of man's utter rebellion against God, man's self-obsession with himself, man's belief in the lie that somehow man can work this out and deliver himself. He cannot. He will not. He is incapable of that.

Only the grace of God in Christ can remove the scales from the eyes. And David, by faith, saw Jesus Christ. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust.

You know, that word blessed, the Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount said, blessed, blessed, blessed. And sometimes we just, you know, make it as happy. I hesitate to use that word because our society has an insane, you know, sort of lust for happiness at any cost.

[24 : 05] blessed. But blessedness is way more than happiness. Blessed is the knowledge that in Christ Jesus we are delivered. We have forgiveness. We have relationship. We have peace. We have eternal life. Blessedness is so much more. It is the deep contentment of a life at peace with God. And David sings about it because he knows that the person who learns what it is to put all their trust in the Lord is truly blessed. And so he testifies, you have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts towards us. None can compare with you. And then he begins to say what he's going to do about this. And that's why I said it's not just that we can sit with thankful hearts, but we need to proclaim this, right? I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. Isn't that beautiful? That the testimony of the people of God is that we should be able to say how blessed it is to be one who trusts in the Lord, and what I'm going to do about it, although they are far more than I can tell, right? I'm going to tell about the goodness of God. I'm going to tell about the greatness of God. I'm going to tell about the faithfulness of God.

I'm going to tell about the deliverance of God. I'm going to proclaim the reality of the presence and power of God in my life right now, today, this past week. Are you doing that? Do we find that we're able to turn the conversation from just the everyday ordinary and make it extraordinary, because we talk about the reality of an extraordinary God in our lives? That's what David was doing.

That's what David was doing. You know, I love that little part at the end of John chapter 21, where John says, I suppose if everything about Jesus Christ was to be written in a book, the world is not big enough to contain the books. And some people go, my goodness, that's got a serious bit of rhetoric. Think about it. If everything that Jesus Christ has done in your life were written in a book, and in a life of the person beside you, well, that's going to fill your house alone, at least, if not beyond, right? Start to think about it. If everything that God in Christ has been doing, the world is not big enough. The world is not large enough to contain the power of God.

My friends, this is why when we come through that door, let us worship God. God, my goodness, that should set us afire. And that should fill us up so that we want to go back out and say, I'm going to proclaim, and I'm going to tell of them, even although I know that my best will still actually not tell everything that I could say, and could tell, and could make known about our God.

That's our God. That is our God. And then in the midst of this psalm, this is where we get that little prophetic insight into the coming Messiah, the coming Savior in Psalm 40. It says, In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, Behold, I have come in the scroll of the book, and it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. Now, there's two applications here. One is, first of all, David. David has had a great deliverance, and then he confesses. He confesses that he hasn't actually offered up the sacrifices that he ought to have offered in praise of God. He just lists the regular sacrifices from the Old Testament.

[28 : 19] He says, But I do delight to walk in your law, to be obedient to your ways. So, in actual fact, David has perhaps got in his mind that little text of Scripture which says, you know, behold, the Lord delights in obedience rather than sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrifice. That's perhaps David's testimony. But in actual fact, we know that this is also taken and applied to our Lord Jesus to the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the Holy Spirit inspires the writer of Hebrews, in Hebrews chapter 10, to take these same verses and to apply them to the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ.

How do we know something is messianic? It is the Holy Spirit's testimony to the coming Christ. There in Hebrews chapter 10. Christ sacrificed once for all. So, it's Jesus, who then, these words are given reference to Christ.

Behold, I have come to do your will. He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And so, here in Psalm 40, as we enter into David's experience of deliverance, and we think, how can we know that deliverance even within the Psalm?

God, the Holy Spirit, writing Holy Scripture, establishing the canon of Scripture, in actual fact is showing us how all of this is pointed to Jesus Christ. And the Old Testament sacrificial system is all pointed to Jesus Christ, and it finds its fulfillment in Christ.

[30 : 12] And David is a type pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. And from David's line comes the Messiah, the Savior, the Savior. Christ is the once-for-all sacrifice that we need to believe in and trust and obey.

Jesus came and delighted to do the will of God. He was the fulfillment of the law. You know, a wonderful, a few weeks back, I had the wonderful privilege of spending a day with Charles Price. Some of you will know Charles. Charles has preached at many, many Christian conventions, the length and breadth of the country, and he's been the minister. He was the minister. He's still, I think, Minister Emeritus or something of the People's Church in Toronto, where he ministered for many, many years. And the opportunity to spend a day with him was on a boat in the Clyde, not the Waverly, a private boat in the Clyde. And I was, you know, going down there and spent a day with him. Good day it was. And later that evening and the next evening, I got an opportunity to hear him preaching. And part of his sermon was about Christ being the fulfillment of the law.

And, you know, one of the most beautiful things he said was this. He said, he said, the Ten Commandments we can hear as commandments. Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not lie. And we hear them as commandments. He says, what we've got to realize, he says, that in Christ the commandments become promises. And so, the Christ who has sacrificed for us, that the Holy Spirit might sanctify us and set us apart for God's glory, you start to hear the commandments, the fulfillment of the law differently through Christ, because he then says, you will not kill. And you hear a commandment as a promise, because the promise is that by the Spirit of God, you will have no desire in your heart to kill. By the Spirit of God, God will take that natural instinct within you, which hates, and he will make you one who is ever increasingly becoming

Christ-like. Now, that's not an overnight. There's a process involved there, because you know the process of the Spirit of God making you the kind of person that is characterized by love, joy, peace, faithfulness, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentle self-control. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, missed out patience, bad one for me to miss. Right. But at the end of the day, that's what God does. And so here in Psalm 40, there's this wonderful little insight into the Messiah deliverance of all those who will trust in Christ through Jesus, that perfect sacrifice, that substitutionary sacrifice in your place and in mine.

And David says, I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. Now, this is David. How much more? Those who have the full revelation of God in Christ, I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. I have told the good news of Jesus Christ in the great congregation. Behold, I have not restrained my lips. You know, sometimes we need to read the spiritual biography of old in order to loosen the lips that we have that do not speak often enough of the goodness of God towards us. We can give countless excuses for restraining our lips. But we've got the greatest release by the Spirit of God to letting our lips cry forth in songs of praise and in words proclaiming the glad news of deliverance. Look what he says, I've not hidden your deliverance within my heart.

[34 : 41] I love that. You know, there are many people in actual fact claim the name of Jesus Christ, but you would never know it. He is so hidden. The deliverance of God from all their sin, hidden. The freedom in Christ, hidden.

The good news that I'm a child of God, hidden. Oh, I've got it hidden deep in my heart. And they say it in a very pious and spiritual way. It's not for hiding. It's not for hiding. It's for declaring. It's for declaring.

I've not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I've spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation.

I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. You know, my friends, just think for a moment here, because time's marching, but think for a moment about some of those things. The reality of God in your life. Has God in Christ delivered you? Do you speak of that?

Do you share that? Do you tell the wonders of that? First place we begin is with our children. That's what the Old Testament says. Teach your children these things, but then speak of them beyond that.

[36 : 04] The great congregation. Do you know the faithfulness of God? Do you know the faithfulness of God in your life? And we sing about it. What a faithful God have I. Speak of how God is faithful to you. Share the faithfulness of God with others. You know, we can say, I could never get through this experience if it were not for the faithfulness of God towards me in Christ. It is only God and His faithfulness that keeps me. You know, Gillian, when she was saying thank you to many people just for her prayers, she just said, I was so aware of the presence of God and the faithfulness of God and being in His hands in surgery that she didn't know what the outcome would be. Hallelujah, it's good.

That's the faithfulness of God. That's the faithfulness of God. But testify to it. Testify to it. Do you know the salvation of God? Well, testify to it. Do you know, you know, I love this little one, you know, the salvation of God. Here's this one. I have not concealed your steadfast love.

Are you not overwhelmed by the love of God? God is love. Isn't it good to know that when God's coming after you, something of His character?

The steadfast love of God. See, what's happening here is David is looking back on his life.

He's looking back, and he's just thinking about, you know, the past blessings. He's thinking about the present reality of the blessing of God. What does it do for him?

[38 : 01] What it does for him is it drives him into the presence of God in prayer. It drives him into the presence of God for his security. It drives him into the presence of God to say, God, this is all true. Therefore, I know.

Therefore, I know. Therefore, I know. That there is nothing. Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ. That's how Paul would have put it, right?

Same thing. Past blessings of God, present reality of God. Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ. That's what's going on here. And so, you can look at this a little bit yourself. But verses 11 through 17, he begins just to call out to God, to cry out to God, but in the assurance of reality of all that God has been doing. Read this.

How about that?

How about that? Steadfast love and faithfulness will ever preserve me. You know what I love about David's prayers? Evils have encompassed me. We know that beyond number.

[39 : 20] But listen to this. Here's a man in tune with his God. My own iniquities have overtaken me. You know, there are times when I find myself in tough places because of my own sin and stupidity.

I lift up my hands, Lord, says David. I lift up my hands. I love what he says about his own iniquities.

They're more than the hairs of my head. My heart fails me. But be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. Lord, make haste to help me. Some of what David's facing, he's facing persecution from others.

He says, let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who sneak to snatch away my life. Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my heart. Let those who want my downfall be appalled because of their shame.

He takes those that are pursuing him into the presence of God. He's unafraid of that. But here's the beautiful little prayer as it finishes. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.

[40 : 32] You know, sometimes you've got to do some serious praying about that which is not right in the world. Sometimes we've got to look for God to intervene and to judge. But always tinged with a desire for salvation.

But let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. May those who love your salvation say continually, great great is the Lord.

You want a little word this week to begin your sentences with? There it is. Great is the Lord. Try and begin every sentence with it.

Just for a week. Great is the Lord in His goodness towards my family. Great is the Lord in His bountiful provision for me.

I have way more than I ever merit or deserve. Great is the Lord in the reality of His presence with us in the midst of this very difficult situation.

[41 : 40] Great is the Lord in the midst of the uncertainty of all that I'm facing in the midst of this illness. Great is the Lord in the joy of new birth or of graduation or of achievement.

Great is the Lord. And then David's little testimony at the end.

As for me, I am poor and needy. But the Lord takes thought for me.

The Lord takes thought for me. You know, children of God, brothers and sisters, God takes thought for you.

God is thinking about you. God, the Lord, takes thought for you are my help and my deliverer.

[42 : 54] Do not delay. Oh, my God. Well, great is the Lord and to Him and to Him alone be all the glory.

God, God, Thank you.