

# Christ Obeyed

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, I want to echo James' welcome, and you may notice that we've made a liturgical change in the middle of the service because of the hot weather, so it feels much better.

I'll try to keep this short, too, because I see everybody waving fans. So we're looking at Psalm 40, and Psalm 40, which you should turn to, I think it's in your pew Bibles on page 468.

It's a beginning of a series on the Psalms, just a short series. This Psalm is a Psalm of amazing trust, as many of them are.

It has a lot to do with our own lives. It's central to our lives as Christians. The idea of trusting God with everything that we have in even the worst circumstances is part of our life.

It's something that we're growing in all the time. In verse 2, King David vividly recalls that he was in a pit of destruction, as he puts it, and in a miry bog.

[ 1 : 06 ] They're really intense images. In the original language, the pit of destruction was like this deep well. At the bottom of it, instead of having placid water, there is a hurricane there.

David says, that's where I am. He talks about a miry bog. I feel like I'm in quicksand. And it's going to all go over my head. It's overwhelming me. So it's talking about these circumstances that threaten to take over his life that are turbulent.

When you feel absolutely helpless. We don't know what David was going through. It might have been an illness. It might have been a time when King Saul was trying to kill him over a number of years.

It might have been the death of his child. It might have been a time of deep grief or broken relationships he had in his family. His own personal sin, which he was a professional at, it seems. But it's helpful in a way that we don't know because we can relate to this psalm in our own pits, in our own miry bogs that we experience.

[ 2 : 14 ] And amazingly, as David goes through this and describes this vivid image, he says, I waited patiently for the Lord. It's quite a picture.

And that word, patiently waiting, doesn't mean something that's passive. It means trusting God actively in that time of crisis.

In fact, in the original language, it says, instead of waited patiently, it's, I hoped hopefully for him. You see, it's intensifying the seeking after God.

It is a trust that Jesus showed. The night before he was to die, remember in Gethsemane, he prayed. He knew he was going to die on a cross. He says, Father, if it is possible, let this cup of dying on a cross with the weight of sin, the world's sin on him, let that pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. The seeking after God. And he repeated that prayer that night. He's earnestly seeking God.

[ 3 : 24 ] He is God the Son, looking at God the Father. Bringing him his greatest need. And at the same time, wanting what God wants. And in that prayer, he shows humility and hope.

That is patient waiting. And I know a number of you in the past have patiently waited for God in this way. In your own pit. In your own miry bog.

And God has delivered you. And you are actively trusting God for only the things that only he can give to you. And I know that right now there are some of you who are in that pit right now.

That you don't have that sense of security and comfort yet. It doesn't mean that you don't believe in God. That you know that he is there. But there is this great challenge that you face.

That Jesus himself faced. Of learning to trust God completely. It's an ongoing lesson for all of us. And David puts before us, as we are seeking after God in the pit.

[ 4 : 33 ] That everyone who believes in God and trusts him receive a great blessing. There is a blessing in doing that.

And Psalm 40 wants to show us what it means to grow in that trust. To know that blessing more and more of entrusting your life to God.

Particularly in our times of darkness. He says three things David does in this psalm that shows us how we can grow. He calls us first of all to delight in the Lord.

In verses 1 through 5. He calls us to speak of God and his deliverance in us. In our lives. And thirdly he calls us to seek the Lord.

In our time of trouble. For his future rescue. And I want to look very briefly at those three things. So first of all David delights in the Lord in the first five verses.

[ 5 : 29 ] Listen to how David says God worked in his darkness. He inclined to me. Meaning I know that God drew near to me. He heard my cry. He heard the prayer that I was praying to him.

I know that that was true. He drew me up from the pit and the bog. And he set me upon a rock. So there's this incredible change that took place within his crisis.

And that word rock means a cliff. A sheer cliff going up towards a mountain stronghold. It's not like a rock that's in the middle of a flowing stream.

It's a cliff that David needs to climb. And I think that the image here is that there is danger in climbing that cliff.

But the verse says here, if you look at it, that God steadies David's steps. He doesn't let him falter. There is a temptation for us to falter when we are taking steps of faith in our time of darkness and hardship.

[ 6 : 36 ] Because often our timing is not God's timing. It's the hardest thing about trusting God in our time of hardship. We want to be done with the pit.

We want the bog to be finished with now and in our terms. And Jesus knew that temptation too in Gethsemane. That's why he prayed, let this cup pass. God knows this about us.

And yet we see his love and his goodness and his kindness in helping us to trust him. It's because he knows us. He lifts each of our steps as we climb to his place of refuge.

To his stronghold. To the place of blessing. Where we know this strong sense of God's nearness and his help. We see God's grace and his goodness in our darkness.

And that's why God next gives to David a new song in verse 3. It's a song of praise to God.

[ 7 : 36 ] I thought it was so good that we heard Owen's piece that ends with, I'm making all things new. You see, when God gives us his deliverance, that is a picture, a small picture of the newness that God will give us on that last day when he makes all things right.

All things new. And it is new for David because in a new hardship, God has saved him. He's delivered him from trouble in a new way.

And so God, David has seen God's power working in his life. Bringing him out of a specific dark place. And bringing goodness to it. And David delights in that in a new way.

In God delivering him step by step. God has done this in a personal way. It's a new way I can give thanks to God. And that song is ours too. Each of ours.

Because all of us have experienced the deliverance of God. Bringing us out of the pit. And that is the pit of spiritual death. To new life with him.

[ 8 : 41 ] He has brought, if you believe in Jesus, he has brought you out of darkness into his glorious life. That you might sing his praises. And we should every day take delight in knowing that Jesus has permanently saved us.

He has lifted us from the pit of separation from God. Into that place, that rock of eternal safety. Of being his child forever.

But that's not the only deliverance you have experienced. All of you have had many smaller rescues that have taken place in your lives. Probably throughout your life. Lamentations 3.22.

Which I hope you memorize. And you may have before. It's well known. It says, That's so helpful for us.

Because we can be very forgetful of God's mercies to us. Of the many times he delivers you. And I hope that this summer, this is an invitation to you. That in a practical way, you can work on this.

[ 9 : 52 ] That you can work on this by writing down, How has God delivered you in your past? To look over your life and think of the different ways that God has done this.

How has he lifted you out of a pit? Every morning, the Bible guides us, if we are reading it, To remember those mercies. And he invites us, in our time of prayer, each day, To mull over the new mercies of God in your life.

How has he answered your prayers? How has his promise changed you? What do you have to give God thanks for? It really does change you.

It brings a new song in your heart and in your mouth To see God's mercies. To see the little and big deliverances in your life. To meditate on those things Is true meditation.

You know, we have lots of counterfeit meditations in our culture. With yoga and mindfulness and so forth. It is a meditation on yourself. On nothingness. On just emptying.

[10:59] But here is a meditation on the one who has created you. The one who has redeemed you. The one who gives you life every day. The one who will make all things new.

Who walks with you. Who has a purpose for your life. To meditate on that. Is goodness. It is a delight. It changes our lives. And that's why as David meditates on God's saving work.

He actually sees more and more of who God is. How big he is for him. How much he has rescued him. How deep his grace is for him.

Look at verse 5. You have multiplied, O Lord, my God. Your wondrous deeds and your thoughts towards us. None can compare to you. See, that's the change that comes with that kind of meditation.

You see more and more the goodness of God. And it brings thankfulness with it. It's such a marvelous vision of God. And because we know Jesus. We actually know far more than David.

[12:03] Of God's wondrous deeds. We really can say none can compare to him. Let us delight in him. So that's the first thing this psalm calls us to.

Delight in God. That increases our trust. But secondly, David shows that trust grows as he speaks about God's deliverance. And that's what happens in verses 6 through 10.

Actually the end of 5 to 10. And do you know, I don't know if you noticed this. But when we did the service of morning prayer. In fact, you can just look over there.

It's to the left of where it says sermon. At the bottom of page 10. You actually say in the general thanksgiving. They ask that God would give us a due sense of all his mercies to us.

That's what we pray. So that our hearts might be unfaintedly thankful. Great word for sincerely thankful. Why? So that we can show forth your praise.

[13:00] Not only with our lips. But in our lives. That's what happens for those who know the mercy of God and his deliverance. We show forth his praise. We tell about it. In our lips.

And in our lives. And David does this in his life. Look at verse 6 briefly. It says, God doesn't delight in sacrifice and sin offerings.

Instead, he gives David an open ear. So he can hear who God is for him. And what God wants for him in his life. And that is so God.

So that he can delight in doing God's will. Because he can hear God and his truth. He can live for him. And the way he chooses to live for him. Is to speak about what God has done for him in his life. And that's why at the end of verse 5. It is David's great joy to speak. I will proclaim and tell of these things. Yet there are more than can possibly be told.

[14:03] His mind is just filled with the mercies of God in his life. And I think that he can't keep quiet. It's actually impossible.

Because it completes his delight in God. To speak about what he's done. It's like something would be missing. If he didn't say something about it. C.S. Lewis is really helpful with this.

In the reflections on the psalms that he has. He says that when we speak our praise about anything in our lives. We actually complete our joy. We complete our delight.

It's hard to keep quiet. He says it's frustrating to have discovered a new author. And not be able to tell anyone how good he is. And then he says it's like coming suddenly at the turn of the road.

Upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur. And then they have to keep silent. Because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in a ditch.

[15:02] He says it's like hearing a good joke. And finding no one to share it with. And you see what C.S. Lewis is saying here. He says with David he has experienced the same thing.

The very goodness of God in lifting him up out of the pit. And being able to share that with a whole lot of people. And that completes his delight. His joy.

He can't do anything but speak of it. And that's why in verse 9 it says, I've told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. Behold I've not restrained my lips as you know oh Lord.

And you know in Vancouver we can often imagine or really feel pressure to restrain our lips. So this is helpful for us. I haven't 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 put exclamation points there. He is exuberant. And what happens for that is not only that David's joy is completed.

[16:03] But the people who hear it begin to trust God more and more as well. That's why back in verse 4 it says, Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

Because David has shared how God has delivered him. If God can do that in that person's life.

Maybe he's somebody who is worth trusting. Maybe I will entrust my situation to him as well.

But it really in my experience to be able to recount or to talk about the mercies of God is something that builds trust in myself as well.

You know there are advantages and disadvantages to being a minister when you fly in an airplane. And the disadvantages, if I talk to the person next to me, if you end up talking to them, they'll inevitably ask, What do you do?

And I'll say, I'm a minister. And what can happen is that either that conversation stops right away, and I have a restful journey to Toronto, or I will be talking for the rest of the trip with that person.

[17:18] And the reason is because, I think it's because, they know they'll never see me again.

And so, they can talk about what they believe about God, what their doubts are about God.

They can talk about confession. I've heard many confessions on these planes too. Hopefully people around them don't know who they are. But those conversations, even though they mean no rest for the rest of the trip, have also been invigorating for me.

Because it is a great opportunity for me not to restrain my lips, or to hide God's deliverance in my heart. It always builds my faith when I have been able to talk about the saving work of God in Jesus Christ with them.

And to share how God has delivered me, and shows mercy to me each day. And I can say

whatever I want too, because I'm never going to see them. And they ask for it anyway, right?

So, and you know, my trust, my hope is, is that it will actually create faith in other people. Because God's word and his gospel have the power to save people here and now.

[18:30] And I wonder what the opportunities are in your own life for this. You know, I have kind of an excuse to do it in those situations, but all of you have opportunities to talk about how God has delivered you.

To know the mercies of God in your life. So that you can speak of them. And that will build your trust. I guarantee it. And I want to close by the last thing that this psalm calls us to.

Besides delighting in God, besides speaking of his mercies in your life, the third thing he says is to seek God in prayer. Seek God for his deliverance.

I don't know if you noticed this, but one of the amazing things about this psalm is that David delights in God's salvation and he speaks of it even as he is facing a new danger and a new hardship.

So look at verses 12 and 13. He says, You see, he's facing danger and he is frightened because of people or situations outside of himself, but also because of personal sin within his heart.

[19:57] And there's a consequence he's seeing. And he knows that only God can truly deliver.

The God that he has been delighting in and speaking of, whose trust, the trust in whom has been growing, it's very natural for him to seek deliverance again.

That's the Christian life. It's not like one pit we're pulled out of and then that's it for our life. There are more and more as we go along. But he knows that the God he's been delighting in and speaking of will deliver.

So he says in verse 13, Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me now. It's a simple prayer, a heartfelt prayer. Quickly, Lord, come.

But even as he prays that simple prayer, his trust, his faith is strengthened. And that's why at the very end of the psalm, he says the prayer of faith, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me.

You are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. And as we leave this passage, I really invite you, as you trust God, to see yourself as poor and needy, as he does here, but also to believe that God takes thought of you and for you, that he alone is your help, that he alone is your deliverer.

[21:29] That's the prayer of faith. That seeking prayer is humble because it says, I need my God. I am helpless without him. But it is also filled with great hope in his power to save.

That is the prayer of faith. That is the prayer that strengthens your trust in God even as you pray it. So may David's prayer be your prayer. Knowing that the evils that may encompass you in your life are all surrounded by the power of God whose nature it is to deliver. That your sin, even if it is as numerous as the hairs on your head, cannot possibly stand up to the overwhelming forgiveness of your sins because Jesus went ahead and died for us as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross. Jesus alone delivers and restores. That's why he came. So wait expectantly for him, seeking him and delighting in him. Amen.