

Psalm 40:1-4

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

²He 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.

³And 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.

⁴Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

TESTIMONIES AND TRIALS

Psalms chapter 40 begins with a testimony in which David recounts how the Lord delivered him from a seemingly impossible circumstance.

David begins by saying “I waited patiently for the Lord...”

- I waited patiently for the Lord...
- Sometimes the hardest thing to do is simply to wait upon the Lord.

But, David says, let me testify of the goodness of God...

- I waited on the Lord...
- There were times when it felt like I was getting nowhere.
- there were times when it felt like my situation was only getting worse...
- there were times when I wanted to throw in the towel and just quit...
- but I waited on the Lord!
- Patiently I waited...

Let's be honest, most of us know how to wait on God, because there are many situations when that is the only thing that we can do...

- But very few of us know how to wait patiently.
- We want to be doing something right now.
- We want to be reactive to our circumstances.
- We want to plead our case,
- to rise up against our opposition,
- to take back what we have lost...
- but the Lord says, wait.

We are aggravated by the waiting

- Because, in our minds, we have to be doing something in order for something to actually be happening.

Our lack of patience reflects our lack of faith.

It takes faith to believe that the Lord never stops working on our behalf.

Can I tell you friends that

- Even when I can't see Him, he's working.
- Even when I can't feel Him, he's working.
- Even when I can't hear his voice, he's working.
- Even when I don't see the situation changing, he's working.

Even when it seems as if nothing at all is happening around me...

- The Lord God Almighty
- The Maker of Heaven and Earth

He looks out for me!

- The Ancient of Days
- The Lord Mighty in Battle
- The King in all of His Splendor...
- He fights for me.

So David says... I waited patiently for the Lord.

- I wrestled with my doubts... but still I waited.
- I struggled with my own insecurities... but still I waited.
- I questioned my place in the will of God... yet still I waited.

It looked like nothing was happening.

Though I searched, I could find no ready answers.

My faith seemed to be in vain.

But what I didn't realize is that my waiting was not wasted. You see

- When nothing was changing on the outside,
- *something* was changing on the inside.

Even as my situation remained the same,

- even as my circumstances were frustratingly repetitive,
- even as it seemed as if I had been forgotten...
- something was happening in my heart of hearts.

Every day that I trusted him,

Every day that I waited on him,

Every day that I reminded myself of His goodness

Everyday I reminded myself of His promises...
My faith was growing inside of me...

I waited patiently on the Lord, David said...and ultimately he brought me out.

- Remember... This is David's testimony...
- He's not preaching about what God WILL do...
- He is sharing with us what God HAS done...
- He's on the other side of this trial, and he's already seen the outcome...

And he's sharing his story to strengthen your faith, so that you and I might be encouraged by his story.

And what a story it is...

David was caught in a horrible pit of miry clay.

- He doesn't tell us how he got there.
- He doesn't give us any details on what happened.
- He just tells us that he was caught in a pit...
- which is a pretty terrible situation.

To be caught in a pit—let me tell you what that means:

It means that you have fallen into a place that you are not capable of climbing out of.

In the book of Genesis we read that Joseph was thrown into a pit, before his brothers sold him into slavery.

I'm positive he wanted to escape from that pit, but pits are places that we are not capable of delivering ourselves from.

That's the kind of place that David found himself in.

A horrible pit, he says... of miry clay.

- And the only thing worse than being trapped in a pit,
- is being trapped in a pit of miry clay.

This is where David found himself...

- in a muddy pit... where the more you struggle,
- the deeper you sink...
- And try as you might, you can't even get a grip on anything around you to help try to lift you out of the pit...

And can I tell you friends, it doesn't get any worse than this?

The bible tells the story, in Jeremiah chapter 38, of a time when the prophet was thrown in a miry pit...

- the Bible says that he sunk in the mire...
- there was no way to get free...

In fact, the Bible also says that he would have died there, had someone not stepped in on his behalf.

In the end, when deliverance finally came,

- It took 30 strong men to pull Jeremiah free from the muck and mire.

That's where David was... in a horrible pit of miry clay.

- Circumstances had trapped him.
- There was no way for him to free himself.

The truth is that he really had no other option except to wait, because nothing he could do would ever free him from that pit!

There's no way, really, to know if the writer is speaking in metaphors, using the poetic language of psalms, or if he was actually caught in a pit of miry clay.

However, for the purpose of his testimony, it doesn't really matter.

- Because the testimony is not really about his pit...
- it's about yours.

We all get caught in horrible pits of miry clay...
those terrible circumstances that we can't seem to break free from.

For some people it's the muck and mire of sin...

- It always starts small.
- One small sin leads to another.
- One small step becomes a bigger one.
- And you're not blind.
- You know what's happening.

You tell yourself that this time will be different,

- that this time you won't go so far,
- that this time you will stop short of the pit...

but the muddy mire is so slippery that once you've started down that path, you can't break free from it.

You struggle within yourself, but you don't have the ability to lift yourself out of the muck and mire that has got a hold of you.

That's the nature of sin.

- It pulls you down into a horrible pit
- and you are helpless, by yourself,
- to pull yourself back out of that pit.

You simply do not have what it takes.

No man or woman ever born has what it takes to break free from that pit.

Once it gets a hold of you,

- sin just keeps pulling you further and further down.
- Its pull is unrelenting
- and its grip will not be broken.
- It is the ultimate miry pit.

But, sin is not the only kind of horrible miry pit we fall into.

For some it is the pit of despair.

- It's a pit of hopelessness.

A place where you begin to believe the lie

- that what has always been is what must always be,
- that generational curses cannot be broken,
- that the darkness of past defeats
- overshadows the rest of your life.

It's a mental, emotional, spiritual pit

- that robs you of hope and optimism.
- It brings out the cynic in you

and sees the worst in everything around you.

- It whispers it's deceitful lies in your mind,
- The tales of gloom and despair,
- and it tells you that you are destined to fail.

In that hopeless pit of despair

- Your current trial defines your whole life.
- Where you are now,
- what you are going through now,
- the things that you face in this moment,
- define your past and your future.

The deceiver whispers in your ear and tells you will never be anything more than what you are right now.

He tells you that your time here is wasted,

- that this moment is without purpose,
- that you are stuck here
- and there is no way out.

The mire gets its grip on you

- and pulls you down into despair,
- into the misery of hopelessness,
- into the misery of uselessness
- and it colors the way you look at everything around you.
- It's a slimy pit, that little by little robs you
- of hope and purpose for your life.

It clouds your view of the promise of God
and obscures your confidence that he knows where you are.

It causes you to forget that he ordered your footsteps,

- It causes you to forget that you did not get here on your own,
- It causes you to forget that your life is in his hands
- It causes you to forget that he knows what he is doing!

I'm sure that there are other kinds of miry pits as well.

- How about the pit of bad choices,
- How about the pit of unforeseen circumstances,
- How about the pit of ill-advised decisions...

whatever you want to call it, however you want to spin it,

- that horrible pit of miry clay gets a hold of you
- and pulls you further and further down,
- into a place where you absolutely cannot help yourself.

The only thing you can do in a miry pit is wait...

And that's exactly what David did.

- He waited.

In fact, the Hebrew compounds the waiting.

- It literally says, "waiting, I waited..."

Have you ever felt that way?

- While I'm waiting... I'm waiting.
- My waiting is compounded by even more waiting.

That's the feeling you get

- when you've been waiting a long time,
- but are still caught in the mire
- of the circumstance that tries your soul.

There are some of you, under the sound of my voice,
that can identify with that sentiment...

- waiting, I waited...

I want to remind you, today,

- that this was the beginning of David's testimony...
- not the end.

He heard me...

No one who waits for God, ever waits in vain.

David said:

Psalm 40:1-2

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay

Listen... He inclined towards me...

While I was waiting,

- the Lord moved a little closer to me...

While I was waiting,

- the Lord drew near to my pit...

While I was waiting...

- He drew near to me!

He heard my cry!

My voice was feeble,

- the sound of it was swallowed

by the slimy muck that had me bound...

- but he heard my cry!

My strongest shout was just a whisper...

- but he heard me...

I was almost gone,

- the mire had almost overwhelmed me,

my circumstance was enough to smother me...

- but he heard my cry!

He brought me out of a miry pit...

Come on somebody...

My disaster became my breakthrough...

- my defeat became my victory...
- my pit became my testimony....

David's testimony is not unique.

In fact, it's the common thread that binds us all together...

- You were in a horrible place...
- you were caught in the miry pit...

you were trapped beyond your ability to save yourself...

- you were waiting,
- not by choice,
- nor out of virtue,
- but because there was nothing else you could do...

you were helpless...

- And he heard your cry...
- your feeble voice was lifted to the heavens...
- when you could not help yourself,
- when you could not deliver yourself,
- he brought you out of a miry pit!

David said...

Psalm 40:2b-3a

2... [He] set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.

3 He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise God.

He didn't just bring me out of a miry pit,

- He set me down on stable ground.
- He put me in a sure place.
- He set my feet on a rock that will not be moved.
- He didn't just deliver me and leave me to my own devices...
- He brought me out so he could establish my steps!

Oh, come on somebody...

- Won't he do it?!?!?

David said, he put a new song in my mouth,

- a song of praise to my God!

I just love that old song...

- He brought me out of a miry clay...
- He set my feet on a rock to stay..
- He put a song in my soul today...
- a song of praise, hallelujah!

Isaiah said it this way...

Isaiah 40:31

31 But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

But David said... I've been there!

- I waited on the Lord...
- and He renewed my strength!!!
- He brought me out...

Let me tell you why I can run and not be weary and walk and not faint...

- because he set my feet on a rock!
- He established my footsteps!
- I was trapped in the muck and mire...
- I was all bogged down...

As hard as I tried, I couldn't move at all...

I was stuck!

- But He brought me out of a miry clay...
- he set my feet on a rock to stay...
- He put a song in my soul today...
- A song of praise, Hallelujah.

David goes on to say, in verse 4:

Psalm 40:4a

4 Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust...

Listen, biblical faith is not a leap in the dark...

- Biblical faith is founded upon the knowledge
- that God knows where I am,
- He knows what I face,
- and He is able to deliver me.
- Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord!

It's a testimony of the perseverance of faith.

- Even when I can't see it... he's working.
- Even when I can't feel it... he's working...
- Come on church, He never stops working!

• David said, this is my testimony...

- he never abandoned me...
- He never turned his back on me...
- he never forgot me...

I waited on the Lord in a miry pit...

- I couldn't save myself...
- But, he heard my cry...

He did for me what I could not do for myself!

- This is my testimony...
- blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord!

It is the promising testimony at the beginning of Psalm 40

- that really makes the rest of the Psalm stand out.

What begins in a testimony, ends in a trial...

Listen to the heart of the Psalmist as his praise

- becomes a desperate prayer...

Psalm 40:11-13

¹¹ Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

¹² For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

¹³ Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

This is why David is reminding himself of the benefits of waiting on God.

Because, once again, he finds himself in the pit...

- Yet again, he's in a hopeless situation...
- Desperation has gripped his heart...
- you can hear it in his voice....
- Hurry, Lord!
- Come quickly, Lord!
- Deliver me, Lord!
- Don't withhold your tender mercy from me, O Lord!

David didn't share his testimony at the beginning of the psalm

- just to have it recorded in the annals of history.

No, my friend,

- He wrote it down because he needed to be reminded!
- He wrote it down because he, like you and like me,
- had the terrible propensity to fall into horrible pits!

He shared it there, in the pages of the song book

for the same reason that I've shared it here, on a Sunday morning...

- Pits are not always relegated to our past...
- Sometimes they become a part of our present...
- sometimes they are more than just the setting for our testimony...
- sometimes they are the place of our present despair...

Watch this, David was in the middle of a personal trial when he shared his testimony!

- It is not just a story of a pit in his past,
- it is a prophetic promise to the pit of his present...

Listen to how he concludes the Psalm:

Psalm 40:17

But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

I am poor and needy... Yet, the Lord thinks on me!

- You hear that, pit?!?
- The Lord hasn't forgotten me!!!

I have a message for someone right now...

- The Lord is thinking of you!
- He is aware of your situation.
- He knows where you are.
- He knows what you are facing.

It doesn't matter if this is a pit of your own making or some trap you were caught in.

It doesn't matter who or what put you there...

- if you find yourself in a pit this morning,
- Let me share with you the source of David's peace...
- Yet the Lord thinks upon me.

The Lord's mind is on you this morning!

His eye isn't just on the sparrow...

his eye is on you, today.

- He knows your situation.
- He knows what you are currently battling...
- He knows the seeming futility of it all,
- the fruitless effort that seems to leave you right back where you started,
- the despair that seems to swallow every sliver of hope,
- the frustration that shakes your very being
- and the fear that chokes the life from you...

And, in spite of it all...Or, perhaps, because of it all...

He's thinking about you right now...

In fact, he made this moment for you.

- He is your helper.
- He is your deliverer.
- He is your healer.
- He is your savior.
- He is your waymaker...
- And he is here right now.

CLOSE

David begins the Psalm by declaring,

- "I waited patiently on the Lord..."

But he ends with this plea,

- "...Do not delay, O my God."

Even as he struggles to wait, he's reminding himself
of what happens when he waits.

I want to encourage someone right now...

- I can't tell you what tomorrow will bring...
- I can't tell you when your waiting will end...
- I can't tell you when your trial will become your testimony...

but I can promise you this...

- he is here, right now,
- and blessed is the man or woman
- who puts their trust in him...

Trust in the Lord and see.

David said, I waited on Him...

- He inclined toward me
- He heard my cry
- He brought me out
- He set my feet

- He put a song in my mouth

What David is telling himself

- Is the same thing that you need to tell yourself,
- if he did it before... he will do it again!

You need to look around at the muck and mire...And sing a song of deliverance!