

Three Testimonies

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Date: 12 December 2019

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[0 : 00] What are the good this evening for a short while and with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling if we could turn back to the book of Psalms and Psalm 40.

The book of Psalms and Psalm 40 and I want us to look at the verses that we read, verses 1 to 10. But if you just read again at verse 1. Psalm 40 at verse 1 to the choir master, a Sam of David, I waited patiently for the Lord, he inclined to me and heard my cry.

He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the myri bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

As you know for many people, Psalm 40 it's a favorite Psalm. Maybe it's your favorite Psalm. But you know it's easy to understand why Psalm 40 is a favorite Psalm because it's so personal. It describes the personal experience of everyone who commits their life to Jesus Christ. Because the Christian can say as we were reading there, he heard my cry. He took me from the fearful pit and he put a new song in my mouth.

Psalm 40 is a personal Psalm. But you know it's not only the personal experience of every Christian. Psalm 40 is also personal to Jesus. It also describes to us the personal experience of Jesus. Because in many ways you could say that Psalm 40 is the Psalm of the incarnation.

[1 : 53] Psalm 40 is the Psalm of the incarnation. And the word incarnation literally means the inflection of God, the inflection of God. When God, the Son became man, taking to himself our nature. It was the incarnation, the inflection of God. And at this time of year, it's good for us to think about the incarnation and the birth of Jesus and all that that involves.

Not that we'll understand all of it. But you know it's good for us to think about it. And Psalm 40, it's the Psalm of the incarnation. Because Psalm 40 is a messianic Psalm. It's a Psalm which draws our attention to the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Of course, all the Psalms in the book of Psalms, they direct us to praise Jesus. But not all of the Psalms are messianic. But Psalm 40, it's a messianic Psalm because it directs our attention to the Persian of the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ. But then it raises the question, well, how do we recognize a messianic Psalm? How do we know Psalm 40 is a messianic Psalm? Well, we recognize that Psalm 40 is a messianic Psalm because if there's a reference to the Messiah in the Psalm, which there is, and we'll look at it shortly, and then it's explained to us in the New Testament. So if there's a reference in the Old Testament in a Psalm, and then explained and applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, that's Sam is a messianic Psalm. And we'll see that when we come to look at verses six to eight. Because verses six to eight in Psalm 40, they can't be applied to David or to us, but they're applied to the Messiah. And they're explained in the New Testament in the chapter we were reading in Hebrews chapter 10. And so Sam 40, it's not only a Sam that's personal to the Christian.

It's also a Sam that's personal to the Christ. And that's what I want us to see this evening. I want us to consider the personal testimonies of the Christian, the Christ, and then in verses nine and 10, the church. So three testimonies, you see three testimonies in the opening 10 verses of Psalm 40, the Christians testimony, the Christ's testimony, and the church's testimony, the Christians testimony, the Christ's testimony, and the church's testimony. So first of all, the Christians testimony, the Christians testimony, what is our testimony?

I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the myri bog and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. Now, this is David's testimony, but in many ways, it's the Christians testimony. And David, you know, he begins his testimony by presenting to us this vivid imagery of being stuck in a slimy pit bogged down in mud and mire. And you know, for us, well, those of us who live on the West side,

well, we're very familiar with David's imagery because we're all surrounded by Pete. And I'm sure that most of us, we've spent a day out in the middle, cutting peats or lifting peats or taking home the peat.

[5 : 20] So we know what it is to get stuck. We know what it is to get bogged down, maybe bogged down even with a tractor. And we know what it is to be in the mud and in the mire. But you know, I don't know about you, but as a child, I would always try. This is not going back that far long ago. But you know, I was always trying to find the biggest, the wettest and the blackest bog to jump into. And you can imagine it, I'm sure you can. But you know, I were often get stuck in the bog. And of course, I would try and get out of the bog by myself. I would try and move forwards and try and move backwards and climb out and move the mud. But it was impossible. And the more, as you can expect, the more you struggle, the more you sink. And so what do you do as a child, completely stuck and bogged down, going nowhere? What do you do? You cry for help. And when you cried for help, well, help would come and you're pulled out of the bog and you're placed on the peat road, the solid ground, and then you're going on your merry way again. And you know, that's the vivid imagery that David's using here, because he's saying to us that when we were without Christ, well, as it was in our experience, we tried to get away from his watchful eye. When we were without Christ, we tried new things and we sought to live our own lives and go our own way and do our own thing. But the reality was we were just sinking deeper and deeper all the time. Of course, we thought everything would be fine, because we didn't see that that we didn't see the danger we were in. And we didn't see the worry that others had for us. We never thought about the consequences of our actions. And we never thought about anything in the future. We were just living for the moment. We were living for the world and for the for the pleasure of this world. We were even living for ourselves. We were living without a thought towards eternity. And like the prodigal son, we lived a graceless and goddess life until we came to the end of ourselves. And when we came to the end of ourselves, like the prodigal, we saw the mess that we were in and the mud that we found ourselves in and the pit that we had sunk into. And the only option we had was to cry to the Lord for help. Our only hope was to seek the Lord with all our heart and ask the

Lord to rescue us from the fearful pit that we have found ourselves in. You know, that was David's testimony. And that's the testimony of every Christian, because David said that his only hope of rescue was the Lord. He had tried every other avenue in life in life to find satisfaction and happiness. But none of them ever filled that void and emptiness in his heart and life. None of these things brought that through lasting happiness that grace alone can give. And David says in verse one, I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry. Now the word waited, it literally means hoped. And what David is saying is my hope was that the Lord would bow down his ear to me. My hope was that he would rescue me from the pit of destruction. But you know, David's hope, it wasn't a hope of doubt. This was a hope of certainty. Because David knew that when he cried out to the Lord, the Lord would hear him and the Lord would rescue him and the Lord would save him. Because when our hope is in the Lord, we can have that assurance that the Lord will hear our cries and that the Lord will rescue us and the Lord will help us and the Lord will give to us that hope that we need. That's why the Christian can testify. As David says in verse two, he threw me up from the pit of destruction out of the myriad bog and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. Now what's remarkable is that the pit of destruction or the myriad bog, it's literally the roaring pit. David says it's a pit with a voice like thunder and it has a power like no other. The pit of destruction that he's describing, the roaring pit, he's talking about the grave. And you know, what David is testifying is that before he cried out to the Lord, he was sinking deeper and deeper in sin. And the deeper he sank, the closer he came to death, maybe not physical death, but certainly the prospect of eternal death. And you know, is that not how the Bible describes us when we were without Christ. We were spiritually dead. We were in the grave. We were in the pit. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were walking according to the course of this world. We were following the Prince of the power of the air and we were under the wrath of God. But you know, the wonder and the glory of the Christians testimony, which is your testimony tonight, is that when you cried to the Lord, the Lord pulled you out of the pit of destruction. The Lord lifted you out of the mighty bog that you found yourself in and the Lord established you on that solid rock that is Christ Jesus. My friend, the

Christians testimony is that we weren't saved by anything in us, but all according to God's grace. And you know, that's what's emphasized in these opening verses. Because David says, he heard

me. He inclined my ear. He pulled me out of the pit. He lifted me up. He established my feet. He gave me a new song. He brought me from death. He awakened my soul. He gave me a new life. He rescued me from the grave. He saved me and he did it all when I cried out to him for mercy. He did it all when I cried out to him for mercy. And tonight, you know, David is reminding us that because we have the Christians testimony, we're blessed.

We're a blessed people. He says in verse four, blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. Who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie. You have multiplied, oh Lord, my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts towards us. None can compare with you. I will proclaim and tell of them yet they are more than can be told. David says, the Christian is blessed and everyone who trusts in the Lord is blessed. And so whatever your situation tonight, however you may be feeling, David is reminding us that if you have the Christians testimony, you're blessed and you're blessed because you have come to discover as David says in verses four and five, that the Lord's gracious thoughts and deeds towards you are too many to be numbered. You're blessed as Paul says with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. But you know, if some 40 is the Christians testimony and it's your testimony, then you must be willing to testify for Jesus. You must be willing to come out on the side of Christ as a witness for him. When you're asked, whatever point in the day, if the question arises, are you a Christian, we must always be ready and willing to give an answer for the reason for the hope that is within us. We can't keep it to ourselves. We need to make what is, what is personal to us, our personal testimony.

We need to make what is personal public. We can't keep it to ourselves. And so Sam 40, it's a personal Sam because it's the Christians testimony. But it's also personal to Jesus because it's the Christ's testimony. And that's what we see. Secondly, the Christ's testimony. So the Christians testimony, and then the Christ's testimony. We see that in verses six to eight, which hold there in sacrifice and offering, you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. By offering and sin offering, you have not required. Then I said, behold, I have come in the scroll of the book. It is written off me. I delight to do your will. Oh my God, your law is within my heart. Now we mentioned earlier that Sam 40 is a messianic Sam that speaks about the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. And we see that especially when we read these words, we can see that David isn't speaking about his own personal experience. David is speaking prophetically about the personal experience of Jesus. And particularly David is speaking about, as we said, the incarnation. And so we need to interpret these messianic verses, verses six to eight, we need to interpret these verses using the New Testament, because we can only interpret the words of a messianic

[14:32] Sam when it's explained and applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament. And that's why we read earlier from Hebrews chapter 10. Because you know, when the writer to the Hebrews wrote his New Testament letter to the Hebrews, he wrote that letter in order to encourage Jews, Jews who had been converted to Christianity, they had heard the gospel, they believed the gospel. But the one problem they had was that they were nearly turning away from the gospel.

And the way in which the writer to the Hebrews encouraged these Christians not to turn away was by reminding them and us that when it comes to all the Old Testament types and shadows, he says Jesus is better. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews, as you read through his letter, he says Jesus is better than the prophets. He's better than the angels. He's better than Moses. He provides a better Sabbath rest. He says that Jesus is better than Aaron as high priest. He provides a better covenant and even a better sanctuary for worship. He provides a better tabernacle to worship him because he is Jesus our tabernacle. And you know, if you're ever tempted by the world, the flesh of the devil, always think as the writer to the Hebrews said, Jesus is better. Jesus is far better than following the world, the flesh of the devil. Jesus is better. But as we read in chapter 10, the writer to the Hebrews says that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was better than all the sacrifices that were ever offered in the tabernacle or at the temple. He says that they were only types and shadows of what was to come. Because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. But he says it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, because they didn't deal with the problem of sin. The blood of bulls and goats didn't cover and expiate and propitiate the heinousness and the ugliness and the awfulness of sin in the sight of a holy God. But the writer to the Hebrews says to us, when Christ came, when Christ entered into the world, he said quoting Sam 40 at verse six, sacrifices and offerings you have not desired. And this is quoting from Hebrews nine, Hebrews 10, but a body you have prepared for me. Now the words a body you have prepared for me, you won't see it in Sam 40. They're not quoted here in Sam 40, because they're

words of explanation that the writer has put in their words used in Hebrews 10 in order to interpret and explain what was being applied here or implied in Sam 40. But in Sam 40, Jesus is giving his personal testimony about the incarnation. Jesus in Sam 40 is saying is explaining why he came into the world. Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me in burnt offerings and sin offerings, you have taken no pleasure. And you know, what we have to understand from these messianic words is that Jesus, you could almost say that he's speaking to his father. And Jesus is saying about his father that the blood of bulls and goats had never satisfied him. These sacrifices that were given daily in the temple and in the tabernacle, these offerings that had to be made continually and the priests who were always walking around, they were never allowed to sit on their feet.

He says they never achieved redemption, they never brought satisfaction for sin, they never accomplished that full redemption. And so Jesus, you could almost say he's speaking to his father through the words of Sam 40. And he testifies to his personal experience.

And he says, a body you have prepared for me, a body you have prepared for me. And you know, it's amazing testimony. It's an amazing testimony because Jesus is testifying that he became man. He was incarnated, a body was prepared for him, all so that he could be the sacrifice for our sin. You know, the wonder and glory of the incarnation is that God became man in order to deal with our sin. The incarnation took place, the inflection of God took place.

[19:20] God was manifest in the flesh. And it's the greatest mystery and yet it's the most wonderful provision. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. He tabernacled among us in order to take away our sin. But you know, in order to become flesh, this is the wonder of the incarnation, in order to become flesh, Jesus didn't become less divine. He didn't lay aside his divinity. Jesus never laid aside his glory. No, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, he added to his person, our nature. He added to his person, our nature.

There was an early church father who put it much better than I can put it. Remaining what he was, he became what he was not. I just think about that for a moment. Remaining what he was, he was the second person of the Trinity. He was God, divine. And yet he became what he was not. He added to himself, our human nature. So the incarnation, Jesus tabernacling among us by adding to himself our nature, by taking to himself our nature, you know, it was the greatest act of humiliation. As another put it, the incarnation was subtraction by addition. The incarnation was subtraction by addition, it was humiliation by taking to himself our nature, by adding to himself our nature, subtraction by addition. So the Son of God humbled himself by taking to himself our nature. And that's how Paul describes the incarnation in Philippians two. He says, Jesus made himself of what? No reputation.

He took upon him the form of what? A servant. He was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man. He humbled himself all the way down and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. You couldn't get lower than that. And that's what Jesus is testifying here. He was the suffering servant, all the other priests in the Old Testament. No, no, they walked around daily. But Jesus, as the writer to the Hebrews said, he offered himself once as a sacrifice for all to satisfy divine justice. He's the suffering servant. He's the suffering servant. And Jesus emphasizes that even in verse six, where he says in verse six, you have given me an open ear. You have pierced my ear. And what Jesus meant by that is that he took upon himself the role of the suffering servant, the piercing of the ear, the boring of the ear, the opening of the ear refers to the obedience of a slave.

In Exodus chapter 21, we're told that if a slave plainly says, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him to God and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with a sharp tool and he shall be his slave forever. And that's the imagery that's been used here in verse six. Jesus is testifying that he's the obedient slave. He's the willing slave. He's the submissive slave. He's the sacrifice to atone for sin and satisfy God's divine justice. And as the suffering slave, you could almost hear Jesus saying and making the confession of the slave, I love my master. I love my wife. I love my children. I will not go out free. I love my father. I love my church. I love my people. I will not go out free. Why I have come. I have come not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly. I have come that they might be redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with my precious blood. Do you know what a testimony and that's Jesus's testimony.

The suffering servant willing to die on our behalf. That's his testimony. But more than that, there's more here. Verse seven. Jesus says in verse seven, Behold, I have come and in the scroll of the book, it is written of me. So what Jesus is saying is that it's written of me. This is all written of me according to the scripture. And that is what Paul said about Jesus first Corinthians 15. Christ died for our sins. How according to the scripture, he was buried according to the scripture. He was raised on the third day according to the scripture. In the scroll of the book says Jesus, it's written of me.

[24 : 47] It's written of me. And that's what we read in the scripture. Christ died according to the scripture. Isaiah 53. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes, we are healed.

Christ was buried according to the scripture. Isaiah again, he made his grave with a wicked and with a rich man in his death because he had done no violence. Neither was any deceit found in his mouth. Christ was also raised according to the scripture. Psalm 16, the Psalm of the resurrection, you will not leave my soul in the grave. Neither will you allow my holy one to see corruption. You know, my friend, that's Christ's testimony that it is written of me according to the scripture. And with that, Jesus also testifies about his father in verse eight. This is what Jesus says about his father in verse eight. He says, I delight to do your will. Oh my God, your law is within my heart. I delight to do your will. You know, how was there delight in doing the will of God? Where was the delight in doing the father's will? Because, you know, when you look at Jesus and the life that Jesus went through and all the experiences he faced and the rejection that he came across and the ridicule and then when you come to the Garden of Gethsemane and you see Jesus brought to his knees before the cup of his father's wrath and Jesus is praying and we're told there's great drops of blood. He's sweating great drops of blood and we're told that his soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. And then we listen into what Jesus is praying about and we hear him saying, oh my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. And that's what he's saying here in verse eight. To do thy will, I take delight. O thou my God, that art ye that most holy law of thine I have within my heart. My friend, the cup assigned to Jesus was a cup that no one else could drink from and yet he drank it until the last drop. Because as he says himself, I delight, it was for the joy and delight that was set before him that he endured the cross, despising its shame. It was for the joy and delight in seeing his own inheritance that Jesus was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. To do thy will, I take delight. You know, my friend, without the Christ's testimony, we could never have the Christian's testimony. Without his testimony, we could never have our own. But there's one more testimony I want us to consider. The church's testimony. The church's testimony in verses nine and 10. He says, I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. Behold, I have not restrained my lips. As you know, Lord, I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your, your salvation. I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. Now, in these verses and verses nine and 10, there are five I have statements, five I have some which the Samist or David, he makes known to others God's work of salvation. And what I want us to see is that both Christ and the Christian are speaking in these verses. This is the church's testimony because the church is Christ Christ is the head and the Christian is the body. So it's the church Christ is the head, the Christian is the body. And as the head and the body, the church's testimony is the same five I have. I have told the glad news of deliverance and the great congregation. Behold, I have not restrained my lips. I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. So he's emphasizing that he has not hidden this wonderful salvation. He has made it known. He has made it known Christ and the Christian are to make known this great salvation. But you know, when Christ speaks through these words, if you're to look at them as Jesus speaking, he's reminding the church that her testimony is all about him. The church's testimony is all about Jesus. Jesus is reminding the church here that Christ is to be proclaimed. The church is to proclaim Christ and him crucified. The church is to elevate and exalt Jesus Christ. The church is to worship and praise Jesus Christ. The church is to give glory and honor to none other than Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the only one who speaks in his church. And you know, that's what we need to remember.

Something I often forget that when the word of God has been read in church, Christ is speaking. When the Psalms are being sung in church, Christ is speaking. When the preacher is preaching in

church, Christ is speaking. You're my friend, as a church, we must remember that when Christ is speaking, he's speaking to us personally. He's speaking to us personally.

[30 : 57] But you know, the church's testimony is not only that Christ is speaking. It's also that well, because we're part of the church where the body, the Christian is also speaking.

The Christian is not only testifying to the saving grace of God, the Christian is also confessing. They're not concealing. They're not restraining their lips. They're not hiding their deliverance. They're not concealing the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord. They are confessing and professing as a church what Christ has done for them. That's their testimony. They're confessing and professing. This is the role of the church work to confess and profess that Christ took us from a fearful pit, that he established our feet on solid rock, that he put a new song in our mouth. And it was all because all because Jesus Christ became man. He became the suffering servant. He offered himself on the cross to satisfy divine justice. He is the one who sat down when he had finished his work at the right hand of God, the Father. And because of this, this is the good news of the gospel. This is to be the testimony of the Christian church. This is to be the witness of the Christian church. We're not to conceal this good news or to make it known. And so the testimony of the church, the church's testimony is to be verses nine and 10. This is how we're to live as a church and to act as a church. Verses nine and 10. I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. Behold, I have not restrained my lips as you know, Lord, I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. You know, there should be no one that comes into our churches that is withheld the gospel. As Paul reminds, he reminded the church in Corinth, if our gospel is hid, if it's veiled, it is veiled to those who are lost. We are not to hide this glorious message because it is the church's testimony, the church's testimony. As Osam 40, it's the Sam of the Incarnation. And in this wonderful Sam, we have the Christian's testimony, the

Christ's testimony and the church's testimony. May the Lord bless these few thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, may you give thanks to thee for thy word, thy word that is the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And may thank thee, Lord, that when we read thy word, that we can see even ourselves on the pages of it, that we can see the Christian's testimony. And be reminded, Lord, that when we cried unto thee from that fearful pit, that the word one who pulled us from it, that were the God who set our feet upon that rock, establishing our way, and that the word the one who has put that new song in our mouth, that we might praise and magnify our great God. But, Lord, we bless and praise thee that when we turn to thy word, we not only see ourselves, but we also see our Savior, a Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. And we thank thee, Lord, that he was willing, that he was obedient to his Father's will in giving his life as a ransom for many. And, Lord, help us as a church, as thine own people, as the body of Christ, never to conceal this message, never to hide it from those who are lost, but to make it known, to tell it on the rooftops, to proclaim Christ to the generation following, that this God is our God, and that he will be our guide, even unto death. Lord, remember thy people here, uphold them and strengthen them, even during this time of vacancy, that they would know that the Lord is still with them, that he is the only promises never to leave and never to forsake. Encourage them, Lord, we pray thee, that they may know thy blessing, thy help and thy strength. And, Lord, we pray for our nation, a nation, Lord, that's voting today, that's seeking to move forward in whatever way it's going to go.

And, Lord, we ask, O Lord, we plead, that righteousness alone would exalt our nation, for thy word reminds us that sin is a reproach to any given people. Lord, bless our nation, have mercy upon us, and whoever is to be the Prime Minister by tomorrow, Lord, we ask that thou wouldst give to him or her the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.

[35 : 59] Lord, guide us, we pray, keep us, we ask, undertake for us, we plead, for we know that without thee we can do nothing, but thy promises that with thee all things are possible. Go before us, and we pray, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake. Amen.