

December 3, 2017
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Psalms
Community Baptist Church
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Greer, SC 29650
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SAFE TO THE ROCK Psalm 40

What does a life dependant on God look like? How is life lived when we are walking regularly in fellowship with God? What kind of confidence is expressed by the person who really trusts God? This psalm from David gives us a good idea of the answer to those questions. It sets a good example for us to follow.

But we know quite a bit about David and know that he didn't always walk in perfect fellowship with God. In fact, there were times when he acted like a plain, ordinary sinner. Just the other day while I was reading the Bible devotionally, I came across a simple statement that had never arrested my attention before. In 2 Chronicles 17:3, God, almost in passing, acknowledged that David didn't finish so well. Speaking of God's blessing on King Jehoshaphat, the historian wrote, *The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals (2 Chronicles 17:3).*

So, maybe David is not the best example of how to live like we are well established on the firm foundation of God's choice. In many ways he is not the best example. In many ways he was a good example. But one thing we need to take into consideration is that David was a prophet and David was a type or a picture. Often, the words David wrote in his psalms looked ahead to describe Jesus Christ. To that end, David was also a type of Christ. He demonstrated things in his own life that were brought to perfection in Jesus Christ.

When I was a kid, I loved to build model cars. In a way, I guess I never got over it because I have two model cars. One is a black 2005 Volvo S-80 and one is a black 2010 Volvo XC-90. You can look at these models and see that in many ways they picture or demonstrate

the real thing. But the real things are in the parking lot. One of them is mine and one is my wife's. The models look much like the real thing. But the real thing is the real thing.

In this psalm, David spoke of trusting God and being delivered by God. However, at the same time the writer to the Hebrew Christians stated quite plainly that this psalm also speaks of God the Son's relationship to God the Father. *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book'" (Hebrews 10:5-7).*

Therefore, throughout the psalm we discover truths that are applicable to David, truths that Jesus Christ illustrated, and truths that challenge us today. When God has planted us on the rock, we can live confidently. What does that confident living look like? It looks like David's life at times. It looks like Jesus' life all the time.

Rehearse God's Multiplied Blessings (vv.1-5).

Remember what God did as we waited on Him. David taught us that if we wait patiently, the Lord will hear. *I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry (v.1).* Here is the wonderful and often repeated promise that those who wait on the Lord will be blessed.

David showed us how it works because he often waited on the Lord. There were times when his warrior, conquering spirit wanted to charge ahead. But he learned to wait patiently. As when he was already anointed to be king of God's people, but had to wait until God disposed of wicked King Saul. It was fifteen years after Samuel anointed David that he became king of Judah and another seven before he finally fulfilled God's revealed will for the nation. And several of those years he was running for his life from the man he would replace. David certainly demonstrated patient waiting on God.

But what about Christ? Does this psalm speak of Him also? Yes, God the Son waited on God the Father. When He laid aside His glory, He chose not to exercise sovereign knowledge at all times. Therefore, He did not know the exact time of His glorious return

(Matthew 24:36). Nor will He determine the positions of authority but must wait on the Father to make that choice (Matthew 20:23). He had to wait patiently for all things to work out as He lived obediently, suffered willingly, died and was raised from the tomb, and finally taken back to heaven.

Then it is important for us to learn also that we must wait patiently if we would mature in Christ. We cannot learn all the lessons of faith we need to learn in a matter of days or months. It takes a lifetime for God to make us good reflectors of His glory. Only while waiting patiently will we ever learn that God is faithful to His promises. Isaiah promised, *They who wait for 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 (Isaiah 40:31).*

Asking modern Americans to wait patiently is like asking for the impossible. We cannot even imagine how impatient modern life and modern conveniences make us. It is good for us to just stop and ask why we need to have everything available immediately, why every question must be answered now. I can't imagine a greater illustration of impatience than having a little box sitting in your house that will answer almost any question you ask it. That is not just scary to me from an Artificial Intelligence perspective, but even as a possible idol to replace God. When you no longer ask mere questions about knowledge and start asking your box about the future, you might want to take a break and ask God to reveal to you how patient you really are.

Those who wait patiently on the Lord, learn how He bends down to hear His children when we pray. This is a picture of God bending down to pay attention to David. That is a picture David often paints at the ends of his psalms. He cried out to God for help, and always he pictured God hearing and answering.

Did the Father not incline like that toward the Son? Yes. When He was tempted by Satan, the Father sent angels to comfort and encourage Him. God sent His messenger to comfort the Son while He agonized in the garden (Luke 22:43).

If we do not sense God bending down to pay attention to our prayers, we will not be very dependent on Him. Pray until the loving Heavenly Father bends down to pay attention to you. We do not have a God in heaven who simply has millions of prayer requests

processed and filed by secretarial angels. Rather our God intentionally leans over and listens to our prayers offered in the name of His Son, offered in obedience to His will, offered in faith.

While we waited patiently for the Lord, He took us from the pit and put us on the rock. *He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure (v.2).* Because God listened to David, He rescued Him. We read of several occasions when David was in trouble with a real enemy. But God delivered him, sometimes miraculously as with the giant Goliath. But more important is that God rescued David from the pit of sin. Like us, he foolishly wandered away from God and fell into a pit of sin where Satan desired to enslave him. He prayed to God and God forgave him, cleansed him, restored him.

God the Father certainly pulled God the Son out of the pit and made Him secure for eternity. Satan and his minions were quite sure that they had dragged God the Son into the pit of death forever. Picture Aslan from Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* lying on the stone table, tortured and killed by all kinds of monsters and goblins at the command of the White Witch. They were sure they had won the eternal battle. That was the supposed condition of God the Son. God the Father raised up the Son, drew Him out of the miry bog of that tomb and set Him on the rock for eternity.

Therefore, it behooves us to pray until God pulls us out of the pit. God pulls us out of the pit of sin and sets our feet on the Rock Jesus Christ, taught and explained by the Rock of the Word, at the moment of our salvation. Sadly, we like to get too close to the edge of the Rock of God's Word and we slip into the sludge and bog of sin. In those times, we are so glad that God promised through John, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).* Why would you want to slog around in the pit of sin and spiritual disease?

When the Lord pulls us out of the miry pit and sets our feet on the solid rock, He also puts a new song in our mouths. *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 (v.3).* David's new song of praise is repeated many times in the psalms. These are songs that rightly declare the glory and grace of the Lord. These songs are quite

different than the songs that mere men and women sang about their pitiful lives and conditions in their world.

So, what new song did the Father put in the mouth of the Son? We know from the Gospel accounts that at the Last Supper the Son was singing some of these very psalms to the praise of the Father. He certainly declares songs of praise now so that many will see God's grand and glorious works.

We too sing a new song. It is a fresh song, unlike the old stale songs about passing, sinful, sorrowful life. Our fresh songs rightly attribute glory to God. They are songs that help people see God's amazing works of grace. Songs about God's grace and glory cause others to fear Him, concluding that God is dangerously powerful but worthy of trust. What about the songs we sing encouraging others to fear God and depend wholly on Him?

Trusting God to hear and lift us out of the pit is good to do. But it is also good for us to remember the results of trusting God. We need to recall blessings we experienced by trusting God. *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 (v.4)!*

David learned to trust the Lord and not proud men. One time, he tried to put his trust in Achish, but God would not allow it (1 Samuel 27). How could he spot the dishonest proud people and avoid them? Whatever does not conform to the Word and will of God is a lie.

We should follow the example of God the Son who refused to commit Himself to Satan, the supreme proud liar, when He was tempted. Instead of trusting the lying religious leaders of His day, Jesus confronted them and exposed them.

But do we have the same kind of trust in God? We are too often like Asa who found himself in a difficult test and chose to rely on the King of Syria instead of God (2 Chron. 14). God had just proven He was faithful as He delivered Asa and His people from the attack of the Ethiopians. How easy it is for us to talk about God, but put our trust in people. How sad that we often discover too late that we have placed our trust in a proud person who was such a good liar that we didn't know he or she was proud.

Delivered people also see God's multiplied deeds toward us. *You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and*

your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told (v.5). Better for us to stay in fellowship with God. To that end, it is good for us to stop what we are doing and spend time in fellowship with God through prayer and reading His Word. Then we can observe how God has multiplied His wonderful deeds toward us. That will cause us to become so impressed with God that we tell others all we can about God's amazing grace.

Accept and Declare God's Atonement (vv.6-10).

The acceptable sacrifice for sin has been made. God's one chosen sacrifice was necessary because the blood of animal sacrifices was not sufficient. *Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required (v.6).* David used four words to describe all the different kinds of sacrifices required in Leviticus. Notice the words "sacrifice," "offering," "burnt offering," and "sin offering." Those words encompass all the different kinds of offerings God required in the Mosaic system. But, all the required sacrifices were always and only symbols or models of the real sacrifice for sin that removes the offense for eternity.

Jesus Christ understood that His purpose was to offer the only acceptable sacrifice for sin. We must rest securely in the fact that only Jesus has atoned for our sins. There is no sacrifice or offerings we can make that will remove even the most insignificant guilt from our record. We are wholly indebted to Christ who came to gain eternal life for us through His willing sacrifice.

God the Son desired to do God the Father's will. *Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (vv.7-8).* It is true that David desired to do God's will. God's law was of greatest importance to David. He kept God's law in his heart. He understood and experienced the great truth, *Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalm 19:11).* Therefore, he desired to do God's will.

But no person ever fulfilled this statement like God the Son did. The *scroll of the book* is the composite whole of all Old Testament prophecy about Christ. He came to earth to fulfill all of those promises. Obviously, His desire was to do the Father's will at all costs. He was driven by the law of God written on His heart.

We are not like Christ and are not on earth to fulfill what is written in prophecy about us specifically. But we should desire to do God's will. And we should know God's will because His law is in our hearts.

Knowing God's will and desiring to do it, we should go out and tell the good news. David wrote concerning himself and the Christ, *I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O 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 (vv.9-10).*

That David told the good news is obvious. This psalm as well as most of his psalms tell the glad news of deliverance. Many of the psalms were intended for congregational singing.

Christ also told the good news. He frequently told critics that He came to earth to declare the Father's teaching. In fact, He authored the glad news of deliverance. He committed the story of salvation to His followers so that they would continue to tell it. He gifted individuals to the Church who will tell the good news.

Therefore, it only makes sense that we tell the same good news. Of course, pastors, teachers, evangelists, exhorters and the like are responsible to continually tell the news of deliverance from sin. But so is every single born again Christian responsible to speak of Christ's deliverance. Or do we hide it within our heart? When we hide God's Word in our hearts, it is not to conceal it but to preserve it as our guide. When we live out the Word we have hidden in our hearts, we will be telling the glad news.

People who have received God's atonement for sin, people who tell the glad news of deliverance, people who regularly rehearse God's multiplied blessings, can then talk to God confidently.

Confidently Ask For Deliverance (vv.11-17).

In asking confidently, we plead with God for deliverance (vv.11-15). We plead because we know that God will show mercy when sin is overwhelming. *As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me! For evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me.*

David experienced God's mercy in the midst of encompassing evils. Sometimes he faced the sins of others and the consequences of those sins against himself. But also, like us, David had to do battle with sin in his own life. When overtaken by sin, he remembered God's mercy.

Okay this must be where the analogy breaks down, as nearly all of them do. How can we say that God the Son was overtaken by iniquity? Actually, Christ took more iniquities on Himself than any person can ever imagine. God the Son never was overtaken by a sin of His own doing. However, on the cross He was fully overtaken by our sins as the Father laid them all on the Son. And in that process, as our text says, His heart did fail Him and He cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" But He remembered the Father's mercy, steadfast love and faithfulness as He said, "Into Your hands I commit My spirit."

In our struggle against evils and iniquities, we must remember God's mercy. Though forgiven of sin, we still struggle. Never give up, never learn to live in peaceful coexistence with sin. Remember that God offers mercy, unchanging love, and faithfulness to His promises. We need to draw on those realities to defeat one level of sin after another. Because we live in a sinful flesh in a sinful world, there will always be the enemy of sin in this life. God is faithful to give us victory over particular sins. As long as we live, we will need to fight against the next particular sin, and the next, and the next.

While we cry out to God, we need to pray for the mercy of deliverance. *Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me! Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch away my life; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire my hurt! Let those be appalled*

because of their shame who say to me, "Aha, Aha!" When facing the enemy David prayed specifically for deliverance from them.

Jesus Christ also prayed for deliverance. The night before the great trial and torture, the night before He was surrounded by the dogs and bulls of Bashan (Psalm 22:12), He prayed for deliverance. He learned in that setting that it was the Father's will for the Son to endure death and be delivered to life. He learned that there would be no deliverance prior to the torture, but deliverance through the torture.

We should be honest and admit the possibility that sinners may indeed snatch away our lives. But God will deliver us to eternal life. And God will deliver the unsaved wicked tormentors to eternal shame, embarrassment, and suffering.

Ultimately, we are right to expect God to make a difference (vv.16-17). Those who seek God rejoice. *But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!"* (v.16).

David came to the end of his life proclaiming "Great is the Lord." Obviously, the Son exalts the Father in the same way. We who have sought and found God should find it easy to praise Him.

In that process, we should recognize how much help we actually need. *As for me, 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!* (v.17). At times David was poor and needy. Such were his circumstances as a shepherd. He was in this condition as a fugitive. But like us, he was most poor and needy as a sinner.

God the Son was comparatively poorer and needier than any person has ever been. He laid aside incomprehensible riches in glory to become a mere man. As a man, He had no home, no donkey, no change of clothes, no retirement account, nothing of earth's valuables. He was dirt poor. As a man, He was under ongoing, intense attacks from Satan and Satan's people. He was very needy for the Father's help. And His Father took thought of Him and delivered Him.

We too are poor and needy, longing for deliverance. An honest assessment leaves us at this conclusion. If we had any idea how bad off we are spiritually, we would spend much more time pleading with God to show us help.

God used David to illustrate to us the great confidence we should have when we cry out to Him for help. God the Father used

God the Son to illustrate perfection in need, perfection in faith, perfection in care and deliverance. We need for God to pull us out of the pit and set us on the Rock. We need to rejoice because God hears our prayer and does indeed deliver us from the pit and set us on the rock. We need to tell the glad news to others.