

God Takes Thought of Us

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- [0 : 00] God, you said in your word, Lord, that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. So we are here, Lord, seeking spiritual nourishment, wanting to feed from your word.
- Lord, we also know, Lord, that it is almost as natural as breathing, Lord, for the human, as it is for the Christian to pray.
- Because we are brought into communion with the triune God. We have a relationship with him. So we speak and we listen. And Lord, that's what we want to do tonight as well.
- Lord, we want to pray to you, speak to you, and to hear from you. So we pray that you will lead us and meet with us in power. We pray that you will speak to us from Psalm 40.
- So that our prayers are informed and inspired by your word. So help us tonight.
- [1 : 16] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. We're in Psalm 40, you guys. It's a great psalm. David is a king that was beset with enemies on many fronts.
- And because of that, he often had turmoil in his life. And so it's not surprising that he's penned yet another psalm where he is seeking God's help for salvation.
- And this is helpful for us as believers because, obviously, when we are overwhelmed by our many sins, when we are just beset by, you know, the spiritual forces of evil, the temptations, they try to trip us, seek to destroy us.
- And we wonder what our posture should be as Christians. And this psalm is a great model that teaches that. And so in verses 1 to 10, David praises God for how he saved him in the past. And then in verses 11 to 17, David prays to God to save him again.
- So let me read it out loud and you guys can follow along. To the choir master, a psalm of David. I waited patiently for the Lord.
- [2 : 29] He inclined to me and heard my cry. 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.
- 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. 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, 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.
- 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 it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation.
- [3 : 38] 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.

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. 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 delight in my hurt.

Let those be upheld because of their shame who say to me, Aha, aha. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.

[4 : 43] May those who love your salvation say continually, Great is the Lord. As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought of me.

You are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. And so David, in verses 1 through 10, first praises God for how he has saved him in the past before he turns to prayer.

And you can see that in verse 1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry. And it's because his patient waiting for the Lord in the past has been rewarded with God answering.

His plight. And that's why he now is able to wait patiently again. And so he prays continually. He says, he remembers how God saved him. He says, he drew him up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

That's an image that has personal association with me because when I was in elementary school, I went out with a friend of mine one time to play in a swamp.

[5 : 51] And in the swamp, there was enough water, and it was during the winter, that some sections were frozen. So we would just hop from one patch of ice to another, one sheet of ice to another.

And then, of course, it cracks, and then I take one desperate footstep after another, and then it brought me deeper and deeper into the swamp. And eventually, I couldn't even take one of my feet out of the swamp.

And in panic, I started to cry, even though my friends there are watching me. And he goes and grabs one of our adult neighbors so that she could pull me out. And that's the kind of image here, right?

The David just being dropped into a pit of destruction out of the miry bog, just the miry, the sinking clan, like a swamp. He's stuck, and every time he tries to get out of it, he sinks deeper.

Yet out of this, he says, God brought him out. He set his feet upon a rock and made his steps secure. So David doesn't specify what this miry bog was, but in verse 12, he writes that he is currently experiencing evils beyond number and his own iniquity.

[6 : 58] So it could be any set of troubling circumstances that we're dealing with that's overwhelming us, or it could be maybe sin that we deal with that just constantly adds, and one sin leads to another that's more serious.

And that could be what's going on. And if we have experienced, and all of us have, then we can relate to what David is going through here. And he says, because God delivered him from the miry bog, in verses 3 to 4, many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. He mentions the word trust twice in these verses, and that's really his main point.

And he's calling us that we can trust God to save us from our numerous enemies and sins, because he takes thought of us in steadfast love and faithfulness. And David's praise of God culminates in verses 9 to 10, where he says, 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.

[8 : 11] And these are the two attributes of God, really the two most prominent attributes of God throughout the Old Testament that God revealed to Moses in Exodus 34, 6, and refers to God's unchanging love toward us, his unfailing loyalty toward his people, that he's always going to be true to his character and to be true to his vow to his people, really to be for them, to save them and to deliver them.

And so it's really a reference to the fact that God's not going to be swayed by the changing circumstances and changing moods, but rather he's constant in his devotion to us. And that's why, and remembering this, remembering God's character, remembering what God did for him in delivering in the past is what helps David to pray now in his current plight with faith.

That's what we see in the following verses, in verses 11 to 17. He praises God for his past salvation and then now he prays to God for his future salvation, verse 11. As you will not restrain your mercy from me, your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me.

So notice the parallel there in verses 9 to 10 and verse 11. David did not restrain his lips, that word, restrain.

And here it says, God will not restrain his mercy. David did not refrain from praising God for his steadfast love and faithfulness. And now God will not refrain from showing his steadfast love and faithfulness.

[9 : 41] So this reciprocity shows that it's because David praised God for his steadfast love and faithfulness and didn't refrain from speaking out on that, restrain himself.

That's why now he can be confident that God will also respond to him because he has remembered that God is faithful and steadfast in his love toward him. And that's why almost invariably whenever we get together to pray during our corporate prayer services, we begin by praising God.

And it's because when we praise him, we remember who he is and what he has done. And that builds our faith for prayer so that we can pray more confidently and fervently.

You know, and it's like praise, you know, is to prayer what the bellows are to the fire. You know, it's, it breathes air of faith into our prayers.

It expands our flames so that we can pray to God with confidence. And when we praise God, then we're turning our attention away from our circumstances and to our unchanging God.

[10 : 39] And then we remember that he's sufficient and able to help. And so he says in verse 12, 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. So, so he speaks of evil beyond number and of, of iniquities, sins that are more than the hairs of my head. And, and both of those words, the beyond number and the word more were used to describe God's wondrous works earlier in verse five.

Because he says, 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.

And literally in the Hebrew, it's can be numbered. It's the exact same word. And so here we see that God is enough. He's sufficient. He's able to meet the multitudes of evil that, that assail us because his wondrous works also multiply and are sufficient for us when we're in it.

God's adequately sufficient for us. And, and what's amazing is that this great God, this almighty God, this sovereign God, thinks of us. And then David used that word twice.

[11 : 48] This verse five and then verse 17. It says, the Lord takes thought of him. The Lord takes thought of us. Right? God in all of his glory and eternal nature, his power, his independence, and yet he thinks about us.

The insignificant, right? Creatures, sinful creatures. He thinks about us and he thinks about us in steadfast love and faithfulness.

That's why we can trust God to save us from our numerous enemies and sins. And, and as Christians, we can be even more full of faith and confident of God's salvation than even David was because the ultimate demonstration of God's steadfast love and faithfulness is, is not the deliverances that David experienced, but Jesus and his atoning sacrifice for sin on the cross.

And we see a hint of that here in verse 68. David writes, This sentiment is similar to what Samuel says.

You guys probably recall this in 1 Samuel 15, 22. So God instructs Saul to devote the Amalekites to destruction to punish them for their evil and wickedness, but also to, to add an act of worship to God.

[13 : 19] But instead, Saul thinks to himself, well, that's a colossal waste of, of this, these perfectly usable goods and, and, and income and food. And so he decides to save them instead of devoting them to destruction.

And then Samuel rebukes him and then Samuel answers, and then Saul answers Samuel deviously saying that, oh, well, it's because I wanted to sacrifice to God with these spoils. And then Samuel says in response, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams. Right? A sacrifice is itself supposed to be an act of obedience to God. So what good is it if you're sacrificing in direct disobedience to God's commands?

Right? So that's what David's referring to here in verse 6. In sacrifice and offering, you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. The last phrase literally says, you have dug out my ears.

So it's kind of invoking that image of God creating, forming man from the dust of the earth, digging out the ear. And metaphorically, it's a reference to the fact that God gave him ears to listen and obey God.

[14 : 31] Right? That's what God did for David. And this view of sacrifice as worship and obedience and as at the heart of it is so starkly different from understanding of sacrifice and really other religions of the world.

I mean, there's hundreds of millions of ethno-religionists in the world that still have altars in their homes, little idols that they bring sacrifices to on a regular basis. And they do it out of fear. They do it out of fear.

If they don't do it, you know, the gods are going to be angry and they're not going to have prosperity and health in their home. And so, and that's really, it's at the very root of, it's a selfish transaction.

It's not a relationship. It's a bribe. It's not a gift. Right? It's not worship. It's not obedience. It's at the very base of it. It's selfish. I want it for myself. So it's, but in the Bible, sacrifices are not a means to an end.

Rather, it's an act of worship at the heart. And they are acts of devotion and love. And in that sense, they see sacrifices prefigured the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus because the sacrifices themselves were actually not effective for atoning sin.

[15 : 40] Rather, it was intended to point to Jesus and his effective sacrifice for atoning sin. And that's exactly what Hebrews 10, 3 to 10 says. It quotes verses 6 to 8 of this psalm and says this and applies it to Jesus.

It says, in these Old Testament sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 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. When he said above, you have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings, these are offered according to the law, then he added, 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. In other words, to summarize, these sacrifices, their real point wasn't to atone for sin, rather to point to the need for the atonement of sin that can only be fulfilled when Jesus Christ comes.

And because he has come, now we who are his enemies are now his friends. And we who are orphans, who are really his rebels, now have become his children. And because of that, indisputably, and ultimately, and decisively, we can trust in God's steadfast love and faithfulness way more than David ever could because of that ultimate demonstration of Jesus.

[17 : 16] And that's why we can trust God to save us from our numerous enemies and sins because he takes thought of us in steadfast love and faithfulness. So, that's why we know we can trust you and over me.

We have to the you