

Scriptures: Read Psalms 40 & 41

Key Verse: “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.”
(Psalm 40:1)

Overview

What wonderful rewards the believer receives when he waits patiently for the Lord by persevering in prayer, trusting that His will be done in His own perfect timing and resting secure upon His Word. In Psalm 40 we learn that the Lord graciously answers those who wait upon Him (cf. Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 40:31). He lifts them up as His own precious children and puts them on sure ground, so they might not fall again and get hurt (40:1-2). He gives them a new song of praise to the Lord, for in their experience of chastening they had learned to be more conformed to the holiness of God and the image of Jesus Christ. It is a wonderful witness to others of the grace and goodness of God when he lifts up, restores, and gives new and better understanding to His children; this causes others to put their trust in the Lord (40:3).

Those who do trust the Lord are called blessed. They do not have to lie, deceive, and side with the rich and proud in order to be sure all their needs will be met, for the Lord is the source of all blessings, and He takes loving care of His children. With these thoughts of God’s goodness in mind, the psalmist begins to praise Him for the abundant kindness and wonderful deeds that He has done for those who trust in Him. On the basis of His loving-kindness, the psalmist can plead with faith for the Lord to preserve and deliver him (40:11, 13,17).

In the middle of the psalmist’s words of praise, it appears that the Spirit of prophecy came upon him (40:6-10). He declares that the Lord had opened his ears to hear and have better understanding. He learned that sacrifices and offerings are not adequate to express gratitude to God, for He desires sincere praises that come from a pure heart. Nor does the sacrificial blood of bulls and goats make adequate atonement for sin. Only the blood of the Most Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ, could accomplish that (Hebrews 9:12-14). Read what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews penned referring to Jesus in Hebrews 10:5-10). Who better than Jesus could say that it was written of Him in the Book? Who more than Jesus delighted to do God’s will? Who more than Jesus openly declared the good news of righteousness, God’s faithfulness, salvation, loving-kindness, and truth? He Himself was the embodiment of these very things. We, His servants, are to be like Him and do the same. We must delight to do God’s will, and one way this is accomplished is by keeping God’s Word within our hearts.

Psalm 41 begins with a beatitude that is similar to the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7). The psalmist David seems to be referring to himself as the one who had shown mercy and helped the poor; so on this basis, he has the faith that God will also help him in his time of need, deliver him from his enemies, preserve his life, comfort and strengthen him on his sickbed. Therefore, he called upon the Lord, yet he recognized that for God to answer him, it was not merely enough for him to be doing good to others; he understood that his spiritual life must be right with God, so he humbly confessed his sin (41:4).

The occasion for the composition of Psalm 41 appears to be when Absalom and his co-conspirators were scheming against David and spreading malicious rumours in order to turn the

people against him and support Absalom (2 Samuel 15:3-6). History tells us that their smear campaign was quite effective. Even David's friend and personal advisor, Ahithophel, turned against him (41:9; 2 Samuel 15:12, 31).

David was content, however, to leave the retribution up to the Lord (e.g. 2 Samuel 16:11-12). He did not desire private revenge, but once the Lord had raised him back to the throne, he desired to call them to account for their treason against him as the Lord's chosen king. If and when the Lord would return him to a place of honour, then David would be confident that God was pleased with him as His choice for king.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, that You do hear our cry. May we be patient in prayer and wait for Your perfect answer in Your perfect time.