

# THE ATTITUDE IN WORSHIP

Leader pages on pp. 144-147

**THE POINT:**  
WE ARE TO COME TO GOD WITH A HEART FULLY FOCUSED ON HIM ALONE.

## PSALM 40:1-11

<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently for the LORD, and he turned to me and heard my cry for help.

<sup>2</sup> He brought me up from a desolate pit, out of the muddy clay, and set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure.

<sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and they will trust in the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> How happy is anyone who has put his trust in the LORD and has not turned to the proud or to those who run after lies!

<sup>5</sup> LORD my God, you have done many things—your wondrous works and your plans for us; none can compare with you. If I were to report and speak of them, they are more than can be told.

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<sup>6</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice and offering; you open my ears to listen. You do not ask for a whole burnt offering or a sin offering.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, "See, I have come; in the scroll it is written about me.

### MEMORY VERSE

**<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, my God, and your instruction is deep within me."**

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<sup>9</sup> I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly; see, I do not keep my mouth closed—as you know, LORD.

<sup>10</sup> I did not hide your righteousness in my heart; I spoke about your faithfulness and salvation; I did not conceal your constant love and truth from the great assembly.

<sup>11</sup> LORD, you do not withhold your compassion from me. Your constant love and truth will always guard me.

### KEYWORDS

**Heard my cry (v. 1)**—These terms picture the Lord bending down to David and listening to him. His cry shows he was in a situation of major distress.

**No one can compare to you (v. 5)**—Yahweh is the incomparable God.

**Is deep within me (v. 8)**—The Lord's instructions were not only written on the scroll but on David's inner being.

**Constant love and truth (v. 10)** - David referred to God's steadfast love. The two words constant love represents the important Hebrew term *hesed*.

# HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE AUTHENTIC WORSHIP?

“Can you tell a bird to just go chirp, chirp, chirp?”

One of the things I love about our church is the support the choir receives during worship. We’ve all experienced the enthusiastic but off-pitched singer rendering worship from their heart but a bit off-key. Then someone from the audience would yell out, “it’s okay baby, take your time!” To some this would be a distraction.

When it comes to worship, distractions are everywhere, but our singing isn’t the problem. Today we will explore why inward-focused thinking reveals a deeper problem with our worship. Focusing on ourselves, our work, our hobbies, along with a host of other distractions, are symptoms of a worship problem.

God deserves our worship. Whatever occupies our minds instead of Him only leads us away from giving Him the worship He deserves. He put a song in our mouths to sing. It’s time for us to block out the noise and sing it. “It’s okay, take your time!”

## Rejoice in What God Has Done

// Psalm 40:1-5

Worship begins with a clear vision of who God is, but it doesn’t stop there. For when we see His

greatness, we soon see our weak and desperate condition. We cry out to Him, and He answers. And the worship is about to begin.

But first, we wait.

For the previous three Psalms (37–39), the admonition to wait on God, confess our own sins, and trust God’s faithfulness resonates through simple commands and prayers:

- “Do not be agitated by evildoers” (37:1a).
- “Trust in the LORD and do what is good” (37:3a).
- “Refrain from anger and give up your rage” (37:8a).
- “LORD, do not punish me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath” (38:1).
- “For I put my hope in you, LORD” (38:15a).
- “So I confess my iniquity; I am anxious because of my sin” (38:18).
- “Rescue me from all my transgressions” (39:8a).
- “Hear my prayer, LORD, and listen to my cry for help” (39:12a).



## THE POINT: WE ARE TO COME TO GOD WITH A HEART FULLY FOCUSED ON HIM ALONE.

Psalms 40 opens by continuing the theme but finally offers relief and hope: "I waited patiently for the LORD," followed by the wonderful word, "and" (v. 1). God in His infinite mercy responds by turning toward the psalmist and hearing his prayer.

What follows in verse two is one of the most central components of worship—the personal testimony. Certainly, worship begins with God—His goodness, His revelation of Himself. The vision of God quickly becomes our cry for help, though, and then the testimony of God's faithful answer: He turned; He heard; He brought; He set; He put.

Pagan worshipers approach their gods from the opposite direction. Consider the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:26: "So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, 'Baal, answer us!' But there was no sound; no one answered. Then they danced around the altar they had made."

If only their god would turn, hear, bring, set, and put. Baal doesn't because Baal can't. None of today's false gods or any of our own idols can either.

But our God can and does. In worship, we have the joy of telling that story repeatedly. It's the story of being trapped in a pit we dug ourselves by sin until He reached down and pulled us out. He placed us on the firm foundation of the Gospel—His atonement for our sin. And He put a song of worship in our mouths that we will sing forever.

### HOW CAN OUR TESTIMONY OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS HELP OTHERS TO LEARN TO TRUST IN HIM?

We might be tempted to believe the story is about us, but we're not the focus of the story. God is. And the song is born out of our total focus on who He is and what He has done for us. Our testimony is about Him and His redemption. Even the very song we sing comes from Him.

One interesting aspect of this song is that it's a song that is seen (Ps. 40:3). In today's world, we often think that singing is only for singers. We're consumed with how we sound and what others think when we sing.

It's as though worship at church has become a talent show for Christians. We put the focus on us.

David started the psalm by remembering how far God reached to save him and how far God had brought him since. His life of trust brought great joy and filled his mouth with praise!



### DIGGING DEEPER WAITING PATIENTLY

The theme of waiting patiently for divine deliverance is seen vividly in Psalms 37-40. In Psalm 40 there are two kinds of waiting pictured here. The first highlights patient endurance over a period of time. This waiting assumes that God does not always respond quickly but that His deliverance is certain and worth waiting for. Along with patient endurance David is waiting with expectation. This waiting is clearly illustrated in Jesus's parable of the ten virgins waiting for the coming of the bridegroom in Matthew 25. All ten virgins waited, but only five waited expectantly as shown by their readiness with extra oil. Those who waited with expectation were ready when the bridegroom arrived to take them to the banquet. Worship should be the response when we, like David, remember God's goodness in times of waiting.

**What does waiting patiently for the Lord look like in your life at this time?**

## Regimented to Do God's Will //

Psalm 40:6-8

David knew the sad story of King Saul quite well. In one episode, the rebellious king—who had once known God's favor—chose disobedience in the name of worship. First Samuel tells the story of the victorious king keeping part of the spoils of war against the command of God. When confronted by the prophet Samuel, Saul attempted to justify his sinful choice with the promise of a worship sacrifice. Psalm 40:6 is an echo of Samuel's response to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22:



"Then Samuel said, 'Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD?'"

We learn something very important about worship in David's recounting of this truth. The sacrifices of worship are not the way to earn God's favor. Just as praise fills our mouths with the song God places there, obedience fills our heart with the gratitude and joy salvation brings.

When we are confused with the order of that process, we're prone to misunderstand how our relationship with God works, and when that happens, our worship suffers. Our humanity naturally drifts toward the belief that God wants our sacrifices first, as we work our way back to

God. We begin to take pride in all we are giving to God and the focus is right back on us again.

Soteriology is a big word describing an even bigger subject: the doctrine of salvation. In our journey to understand the appropriate attitude in worship, we come to an aspect of worship that goes beyond the song of praise and touches an important aspect of salvation. It's important to clarify what we believe about the doctrine of salvation before we continue.

The Bible teaches us that salvation comes by grace and through faith. Paul was repeatedly explicit about this point. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not of yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works so that no one can boast."

Salvation isn't achieved; it's received. The obedience that marks our lives is not for our salvation, it is from our salvation. This is true, but it's also true that obedience is a very important mark of a worshiper.

So how does obedience fit into our worship? Peter addressed this question in his first epistle to the scattered church: "Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, because you have been born again" (1 Pet. 1:22-23a).

We obey because we know God. David understood that knowing God brought delight to obedience. He knew God wanted obedience before sacrifice, but he also knew that obedience would require sacrifice.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF WILLINGLY OBEYING GOD'S WILL?

## Ready to Declare God's Praise

// Psalm 40:9-11

Let's learn about focus in corporate worship from David's example:

- **David was actively engaged in worship.** He came to worship to do something, not just watch it being done by others. Whenever we

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gather to worship, we should all remember that no one else can give God our expression of worship on our behalf.

- **David understood the priority of being present in the assembly of worshipers.** David didn't have to be there; he could have sent his proxy to make his offering. He could have retreated to his chambers for a time of singing and prayer. David had an intimate relationship with God that he could have expressed in a private place and in a private way.
- **David was outwardly expressive in worship with a focus on God alone.** Some might be tempted to say, "I don't want to be a distraction to others in worship," and in that spirit, express restraint in worship. Such an attitude might reveal a focus that's in the wrong place. Certainly, each church has its own worship culture of expression developed over time and led by the pastor and leaders of the church.

David once danced before the Lord. He was so focused on God that he abandoned the decorum she thought worthy of a king. His wife was embarrassed by the praise David brought to God, but David's focus remained in worship. Even when we worship together, we are to have an audience of One.

### WHEN HAS SOMEONE'S UNASHAMED

### WORSHIP OF GOD ENCOURAGED YOU?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The term worship can be applied to the whole of a believer's life because everything in our lives should be an act of worship that glorifies God (1 Cor. 10:31). Because God is worthy of worship and seeks to be worshiped, the time we designate for worship should be intentional and focused directly on God. When we worship God genuinely, giving him glory from our hearts and with our voices, things happen as a result:

- God delights in us (Isa. 62: 3-5).
- God ministers to us (1 Pet. 2:5).
- God draws near to us (Psa. 22:3).
- We draw near to God (Heb. 10: 19-22).

**Biblical Truth:** Because worship fulfills the purpose for which God created us and it glorifies Him, it has eternal value. Worship should be a priority in a believer's life.

**How much time do you devote to genuine worship? What hinders you, if anything, from spending time in worship?**

## LIVE IT

### How can we maintain a right focus during corporate worship?

Reflect on your recent experiences in corporate worship. Were the people of God committed to gathering. What other activities seem to replace worship as a priority for the people in your church? In your family? Choose one of the following applications:

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- **The Starting Place.** Reflect on David's testimony in Psalm 40:1-2. What's your story? Describe your life before you met Christ and reflect on how you discovered your need for Him.
- **The Growing Place.** God puts a song in the mouths of those He delivers. What's your song? Can people "hear" the song of praise in your life? Be intentional this week in having personal worship, but also participating in corporate worship.
- **The Sowing Place.** Make a list of the major priorities in your life. Add the priorities of your immediate and extended family. If you ranked them based on the time, resources, and energy you give each one, how would it look? What changes are needed for you to become a true worshiper, whose heart is fully focused on God?

# DAILY READINGS

## 1. REMEMBER HIS WORKS // PSALM 40:1-5

We can find joy in our worship when we think about all the good things God has done in our life. In Psalms 40:1-5 we find David praising God for the Lord waiting patiently for him and hearing his cry, bringing him from a desolate pit and putting a new song in his mouth so he may sing a praise to our God. If God did that for David, he can do it for you. You may recall being in your own desolate pit, finding yourself waiting for God to deliver you from a stronghold. You may be there currently. I encourage you in your worship to reflect, write down, what God has brought you through.

**Remembering all that God has done is essential to our faith growth in God.**

## 2. OBEDIENCE OVER SACRIFICE PSALMS 40:6-8; PHILIPPIANS 2:13; JAMES 2:26

Obedience is a form of worship that draws us closer to God for His preparation of what he will guide us through in our lives. God is not looking just for our sacrifice of time in service to others, our tithes and offerings, or church attendance. He desires us to do His will and be obedient to the call on our lives. Philippians 2:13 tells us, "For it is God who is working you both to will and to work according to his good purpose." David had a heart to worship God through his obedience as indicated in Psalm 40:8. What do you delight in? God desires for you to take delight in seeking His will and following His instruction.

**James 2:26 reminds us that faith without works is dead.**

## 3. TELL THE GOOD NEWS // PSALM 40:9-11

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus performed many miracles and when completed he said to the one, He delivered, "Go and tell, what the Lord has done." The scriptures are full of the Lord's instruction of telling of His marvelous works, go and tell your friends, go into the world proclaiming of His gospel. In our lesson we experience David in Psalms 40:9-11 reminding the Lord that he doesn't keep his mouth shut of the Lord's righteousness, His faithfulness, God's love, truth, and

salvation. David practiced publicly giving God praise for His glory and goodness in his life, not concealing all that God has done for him.

**We are living witnesses of God's firsthand artistry, God's faithfulness, love, and care in our lives so others may be saved. Share your God story!**

## 4. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRUST GOD? // PSALM 40:4; JEREMIAH 17:7-8

When you trust in someone you believe in the stability of the relationship you have with that person. Your heart regards their words and actions to be true with your best interest in mind. However, because of our sinful nature, imperfect beings, we are let down by those we trust. When you trust God, you exercise complete confidence in His will for your life. In fact, Jeremiah 17:7-8 says, "The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed. He will be like a tree planted by water; it sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit."

**Worship God with your trust.**

## 5. AGAPE LOVE // PSALM 40:11; JEREMIAH 31:3

During our Christian walk sometimes the hardest thing to accept is the love God has for us. Unlike people in our lives, God's love is not based on status, achievements, what you have done for Him, or the relationships you have built. God's love has no contingency on our importance. David states in Psalms 40:11 that the Lord's compassion is not withheld, and God's constant love and truth will always guard us. God chose the unlikely and provided examples in Scriptures to show His love for the oppressed, the grieving, the widowed, the exiled. God's love draws us near to cultivating peace and comfort in a relationship with Him.

**Jeremiah 31:3 states, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued to extend faithful love to you."**