

Psalm Sundays

Text

Psalm 40

Topic

King David describes his life as if he was a playlist of songs through which people could see the Lord

Title

***“God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See”***

The real genius of the internet are the pop-up quizzes.

The last one I took was, “What song are you?” After twenty-nine scientific questions, if I were a song I’d be *Where is My Mind?*, by the Pixies.

Not being at all familiar with them or the song, I went to **YouTube** to watch the music video. It’s a hand-held, black & white video of a dog going through his day. Co-starring a cat.

That’s all I have to say about that.

I do have a point to make. In our psalm, King David will say of God, “He has put a new song in my mouth - Praise to our God; Many will **see** it and fear, And will trust in the LORD” (v3).

1 of 12

Psalm 40

*“God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See”*



Notice David didn't say of the song, "many will **hear** it." That's what we would have expected him to say. No, he said "many will **see** it." Seeing the song, they would "fear, and... trust in the Lord."

You can "see" a song when the singer embodies it; or when he or she is identified with it. In ancient times, singers had an identifying song:

- 👤 Tony Bennett, *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*.
- 👤 Dean Martin, *Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime*.
- 👤 Frank Sinatra, *My Way*.
- 👤 Kermit the Frog, *It's Not Easy Being Green*.

Can we, maybe, "see" Jesus as the Singer Songwriter, and each of us bringing forth His songs?

It's a solid biblical metaphor. After all, the apostle Paul encouraged us to "[speak] to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord..." (Ephesians 5:19).

I'll organize my comments around two questions: **#1 What Songs To The Lord Have Been Seen Through Your Life?**, and **#2 What Songs To The Lord Are Yet To Be Seen Through Your Life?**

#1 - What Songs To The Lord Have Already Been Seen Through Your Life? (v1-10)

Most of you are familiar with the MercyMe song, *I Can Only Imagine*. It's a pretty good movie as well. It captures the emotion of the background story in Bart Millard's life. Because of Jesus, his father went from abuser to someone who Millard describes as, "the godliest man I'd ever known."

2 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



The song was crafted by Millard's experiences. Most importantly, you can "see" the Lord through it.

We don't need to be popular recording artists to have our experiences with the Lord be used by Him as if we were songs. I'm not talking about writing songs, or even singing. I'm saying your experience of the Lord in, through, and after trouble strikes a supernatural chord others see.

Psa 40:1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.

(BTW - Do you recognize the worship chorus we sing from this verse?).

Scholars point out that "waited patiently" could be translated, *in waiting I waited*. It implies more than "patience." It implies learning more about waiting; learning things through waiting.

If asked what is a favorite activity, "waiting" *said no one ever*. It is, however, an essential element of your song being seen. And the waiting here - it involves suffering of some kind, because the psalmist was crying to the Lord.

Psa 40:2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, *And* established my steps.

There are, in God's wonderful Word, many pictures for suffering. Storms... Valleys... Desert places... Ships tossed on the waters... Being overwhelmed by waves... Being assaulted by wild beasts.

3 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



In this case, David expressed his trouble as if he'd been thrown into a "pit." The title of this song might be *Pit Stop*. Or *This is Pit*. Would you believe *Pit Fighter*?

His description of the pit having "miry clay" indicates it was a dry cistern. These were reservoirs carved out of rock to collect rain and runoff. Jeremiah was famously thrown into one in the course of his ministry to Israel.

In David's case, his troubles felt like that. But here he was describing God delivering him from that trouble. Instead of being stuck in mire, he had been rescued, and made to stand on solid rock. *This* trouble was over.

Psa 40:3 He has put a new song in my mouth - Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

While it seems David wrote a praise song about his experience, the meaning is broader than that. David exuded "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in [his] heart to the Lord." People saw his praise in his waiting, and they feared and trusted the Lord.

Psa 40:4 Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

David's trouble had involved the pride and lies of others seeking to undermine his trust in the Lord. It may have been as simple as worldly counsel.

Beware the so-called "wisdom" of the world.

4 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



Psa 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works *Which* You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; *If* I would declare and speak *of them*, They are more than can be numbered. This is the reset position after trouble is ended. It can (it should) also be our default in trouble. In or out of trouble, this is true.

It isn't wishful thinking; or having a positive mental attitude. God's salvation alone is enough to counter any trouble in this life.

Do you ever whip out a yellow pad, and list Pros & Cons? If your troubles generated thousands of pages in the Cons column, writing "Salvation" in the Pros column you'd see nothing could compare. And that's just the beginning of God's resources available to you.

Psa 40:6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Psa 40:7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.

Psa 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart." If you are familiar with your Bible, you might think I forgot to ask you to turn to Hebrews 10:5-7. These verses in Psalm 40 are quoted there, and applied to Jesus. That is why this psalm is Messianic.

I don't want to launch into an exposition of these verses; I would if we were in Hebrews. I do want to make two quick observations in our context:

- 🧠 In verse six, when David mentioned the opening of the ear, he was likely referring to the custom of marking out a voluntary bond servant by hammering an awl through the earlobe. His point is an important one: God is working to make us voluntary servants, not religious people who go

5 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



through the motions of required sacrifices. This is applied to Jesus to show that all the sacrifices were temporary, until He could come and be the once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of the world.

- 👤 In verses seven and eight, David must have realized he was not talking about himself. It reminds us our lives are part of a greater plan. You may not think your song is a hit, or even charting; but it is part of the grander musical of God's redemption, beginning in the Garden of Eden, and ending in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Psa 40:9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.

Psa 40:10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.

The "great assembly" was the gathering together in the Temple for worship. Can I go off subject for a moment? The church is meant to gather together. While virtual church is OK for time, it is not adequate for the long-haul. Virtual church is like taking a virtual vacation.

David gave testimony, often through his songs, to these attributes of God: "Righteousness," "faithfulness," "salvation," "lovingkindness," and "truth."

Those are themes that we can *always* show:

- 👤 God has declared us righteous thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.
- 👤 We are thereby saved by His free gift and not by our works.
- 👤 He Who began this work in us will faithfully perform and complete it.
- 👤 His Word is truth, and can therefore be trusted.
- 👤 All His dealings with us involve His boundless lovingkindness.

6 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



You've probably heard believers described as "living letters." It derives from the apostle Paul, who said, "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart" (Second Corinthians 3:2-3).

We are also *living lyrics* as in waiting we wait for the Lord to conform us into the image of Jesus.

What songs have you shown, already?

#2 - What Songs To The Lord Are Yet To Be Seen Through Your Life? (v11-17)

Beginning with verse eleven, it is evident that David was in a brand new time of trouble.

For some believers, it's as if they have nothing but suffering. Others, not so much. It will be better for you if you refuse to compare yourself to others believers; and, especially, do not compare yourself to nonbelievers.

Psa 40:11 Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.

Before asking for rescue, David wanted God's graces to "preserve" him. He was mature enough to know that his trouble might go on a while. He depended upon these spiritual resources.

7 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



Unlike toilet paper, aren't you glad that Jesus' resources aren't ever exhausted? For those of you who were wondering, every August 26th is National Toilet Paper Day. One fun fact to post as you are celebrating: Colored toilet paper was available in the US for about 40 years. Scott was the last company to remove colored toilet paper from the US market in 2004. Colored toilet paper is still readily available in European countries.

Psa 40:12 For innumerable evils have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of my head; Therefore my heart fails me.

"My iniquities" is taken by most commentators as a statement that it was David's own particular sins that landed him in this new trouble. I can't see that, not in this psalm, and here is why: David doesn't repent or ask forgiveness. He was not hesitant to do so in other passages.

He was describing what we all feel: The world is full of evil, and sin abounds, and it presses upon us. His current trouble was evidence the world was fallen.

The world - it isn't what God intended. Much of our suffering is simply the result of the human condition. I mentioned this last week: COVID-19 is *not* a judgment from God. It is the latest proof Adam and Eve brought death when they sinned.

Psa 40:13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me!

This was an "if it is Your will" statement. David knew God could speedily rescue him. Why didn't He? For reasons of the heart, to continue the work He had begun in David.

8 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



Psa 40:14 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who seek to destroy my life; Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor Who wish me evil.

Here is another metaphor for suffering. David saw his enemies as an approaching army. He asked that they become confused, driven back.

There are a few examples in the Old Testament of literal enemy armies being confused by the Lord - even turning on themselves.

The fact that the Lord can move in these ways is what is often so bothersome. Why doesn't He?

Because His work in the storm is more important than your having smooth sailing. You must learn rough weather sailing.

Psa 40:15 Let them be confounded because of their shame, Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

At home, at work, at school, even (sadly) in church... People have an "Aha!" moment about how they can attack you, destroy you. They are like little Satan's, thinking that if God wasn't blessing you, you would curse Him.

God loves those kind of challenges! Me - not so much.

Psa 40:16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"

9 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



In Isaiah we read, "Thus says the LORD: "Heaven *is* My throne, And earth *is* My footstool. Where *is* the house that you will build Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?" (66:1).

This may not be a deep theological statement, but "God is big." If He is big, how can He be magnified?

It seems He is magnified as believers celebrate His salvation in the midst of trouble.

Psa 40:17 But I *am* poor and needy; Yet the LORD thinks upon me. You *are* my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.

One of the things that's great about baseball is the appearance of the closer. The great ones have great entrance music. Arguably the best of all time, Mariano Rivera of the Yankees, was accompanied by *Enter Sandman*, by Metallica.

When a believer is "poor and needy," enter Jesus.

To us it feels like we are in the bottom of the ninth, losing, with a Little Leaguer on the mound. That is never the case.

When Frodo suggested that Gandalf was late, he replied, "A wizard is never late, nor is he early; he arrives precisely when he means to."

Our waiting is not God delaying. I want to say that again, because it really struck me. Our waiting is not God delaying. It is God crafting our lives.

A lot of you read Stephen King. I came across this quote by the King of Horror:

10 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



When I'm starting a book... I'll try to write a paragraph. An opening paragraph. **And over a period of weeks and months and even years,** I'll word and reword it until I'm happy with what I've got. If I can get that first paragraph right, I'll know I can do the book.

Years to write a single paragraph? He also talks about how critical the very first sentence is.

God gets it right. What He is doing takes time. More time, if we resist.

We think of God as being able to simply snap His fingers and be done with it. Not so with humans.

Look at it this way. God created the universe in six 24-hr days, including Adam and Eve. But since our original parents sinned, *it has been around six thousand years.*

- 👤 Six days to create the universe.
- 👤 Six thousand years, and counting, to redeem and restore the human race.
- 👤 And we know that if the Lord were to resurrect and rapture the church today, it would be at least another 1,007 years before the new heavens and the new earth.

It just isn't possible to go any faster with regard to God's workmanship - with **you**. *You are His workmanship.*

It's probably getting repetitive for you, but I am fascinated in the realization that, in the end, God will have fellowship with believers who have free will but will be unable to sin.

11 of 12

Psalm 40

*"God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See"*



“Impossible,” you say? Nope. God has free will, but He is incapable of sin. One day, so will those who put their trust in Him.

It takes time to accomplish. It would be easier if free will was not necessary. But without it, there cannot be love.

I also am fond of pointing out that the perceived delay is tied to the Lord’s longsuffering with sinners, not willing any should perish eternally, but that they would be drawn by grace to the Savior, and to salvation.

I don’t know about you, but I can’t stand it when the car with the \$10,000 custom stereo system pulls up next to me at the light. I always want to drown him out with Grand Funk Railroad; but all I have is the pitiful stereo that came with the car.

As we go through our lives, in the Lord, when we “pull up” next to people, so to speak, our grace and love and mercy should drown out the noise of the world they generate.

The Lord’s lyrics of salvation, of righteousness, faithfulness, of truth, and of lovingkindness are heard as we simply, but powerfully, in waiting, wait.

12 of 12

Psalm 40

*“God Writes the Songs
that Make the Whole World See”*

