

Lev 05-04-10a

This is Sunday, the 10th of April, 2005. As we worship the Lord together, we will begin by taking a look at our script reading for this morning, which is found in Psalm 40. Psalm 40, subtitled in the New King James, Faith, Persevering in Trial.

Our study is in the book of Herodotus, where we are looking at the Leviticus. There is some additional information in chapter 7, but our focus is going to be on chapters 1-6. So, in what way does a study of the sacrifices, the sin offering, the full burnt offering, which we have begun looking at, the wave offerings, the peace offerings, and so on, in what way does that tie in with our script reading this morning? Well, as you take a look at Psalm 40, you find that the first verse in Hebrew, which is a subtitle in English, says, To the chief musician a song of David.

David is one of the foremost Old Testament scholars, specifically Pentateuchal scholars, since that is pretty much all of the Bible that existed in his day. But David is an expert on the first five books of the law. Now, I ask myself this question.

David is the youngest of a set of many sons. Depending on how you read the text, there are seven or eight sons ahead of him. And his job is to do what? What is he famous for in his youth? Shepherd.

He's a shepherd, right? Shepherd work was basically a servant's job. He was sort of lowly, didn't have to be a real brainiac to make sure the sheep don't fall off a cliff, use sticks and things to keep them where they're supposed to be, feed them. So, how did this young man, over the course of time, become an expert? Is there a tabernacle standing someplace with Levites ministering? What's going on in David's day? Who is doing the ministry of the word of God in Israel? One man, Samuel, a prophet and a priest, a Levite, who got his early training under Eli and was left of the tabernacle in Shiloh, right? But we know that it's not complete.

It's not when Israel needs to go to battle against the Philistines. And he takes the ark, Hockney and Phinehas, accompany the ark out into battle and of course rats and tumors. This was the only form of worship, centralized worship, or any sort of teaching of the word of God in David's early youth.

He heard these stories by the time he's born and comes up as a young man. Samuel is in his adulthood. But people in Israel, you know, it's kind of slow.

There's not television, radio, newspapers. So what do people talk about when they're not saying where Batchel lands from? There's plenty of time to tell the story of Samuel. Think about it.

If you're a teenager and you're interested in the things of God, where are you going to get your information? In and around Bethlehem, B.C. No temple, no tabernacle. It's going to be communicated by the people. Who is going to be teaching David about God? And about the five books, Jesse and Mrs. Jesse.

Who is the man that is mentioned most often in connection with David, even in connection with the Lord himself? It's Jesse. David's father accepts without question the visit of Samuel to anoint one of his sons as the next king of Israel. He doesn't say, now wait a minute, my enemies may come and try to start attacking me.

Jesse, Samuel shows up and says, he recognizes the man of God. He accepts his message and he is obeying it. There's a lot you can say about Jesse, and it's no axis being a root shoot because David got his grounding in the faith.

That's why you have David being an expert. It's available for him from Phantom Press. It is from the same kind of foundation we use to help us think.

View the world in a genuine way. It's a faith, of course, not for you. We are the people over at the pastor's house in our soul.

It's important that that be circulated. Sharp as a two-edged sword. Piercing.

Inspired text includes the fact that this is a psalm of David. Any time you see that in the Psalms and it says, think about where David got his information, elaboration, that's the faith persevering in. So, let's begin in verse 1. To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

When it says to the chief musician, why is that detail important? We've talked about a psalm of David and why that's important. Where it came from in terms of background and the personality of David. Why does it say to the chief musician? We tend to just kind of glide over that and go on.

Who do you think the chief musician is? When you get into the Levites that are in charge of the music, ministry, if you will, there is a chorus. There are men who chant or men who sing. And many times you have difficulty remembering text or words, but if you put it to a tune, then it's more easily remembered.

I'm ashamed to say I can probably remember more popular song lyrics than I can scriptures. If I sat down and spent about three or four hours and had two sheets of paper, and over here I write down the lyrics to a song, and over here I write down a scripture verse or a scripture passage, and then I go over here and I write down all the words to You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby, and then over here I write down the first four verses of Psalm 91, and over here I write down all the words of Barnacle Bill the Sailor, and over here I write down something else, and over here I write down the words to The Navy Hymn, and I write down the words to The Star-Spangled Banner, and I write down the words... You see what I mean? You think about all of the song lyrics that you can recall of the songs that appeal to you or that have bombarded you. I was talking to the girls the other day, and one of the most successful advertising campaigns of all time is a hamburger commercial.

Most people who were alive at the time can still give you the recipe for a Big Mac, not because anybody sat down and said, I want to remember that. It's just by repetition. There are three or

four verses of scripture that the pastor I studied under would always repeat at the beginning of his lesson, and I never consciously tried to memorize those verses, but hearing them over and over, they're burned into my brain, in the King James Version with his emendations.

So my point is, to the chief musician, when David gives these songs, these words, and possibly music, because we know that he played a musical instrument, that's what he did for King Saul, so he wrote words and music, he gives that to the chief musician, these are going to be played, they're going to be performed in the hearing of the people, children, teenagers, adults, old people, and in the regular cycle of worship, these singers are going to sing the songs, and over time you hear them, and they become implanted in your mind. There was a lady when I was a young boy who was trying to teach us memory verses, and so she would set them to music, she would just pick out a tune, or borrow a tune, and put the words of the verse to it. And so Psalm 5517, which I never sat down and memorized, is stuck in my brain because she put it to a little tune.

Evening and morning, I won't sing it for you, evening and morning and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice. Psalm 5517, she just put it to a little tune, and I learned it when I was four or five years old, and never forgot it. So that's why David does this, and we're told at the beginning, what conclusion will we draw? We always talk about this, when you look at the Word of God, it's supposed to be, I observe it, I interpret it, what did that mean, and why do I care? What is the application? Anytime you look at the Word of God, anytime you're studying, whether for yourself or to teach someone else, but ask yourself these three questions.

What do I observe? What does it mean? And so what? Simplest thing in the world. Every time I go to the Word of God to prepare for our studies, I ask myself those questions. What's in the text? Not what people have said about the text, not what I like to think the text says, what does it actually say? What are the words? What is God's voice in this passage? Once I've done that, what does it mean? When Jesus says, I am the door, what does that mean? I am rectangular and made of wood? I don't think so.

So what does it mean? Interpretation. It is a metaphor. It's a standard figure speech used in all languages, in all cultures, in all centuries.

Paul Simon says, I am a rock. I am an island. He doesn't literally think that about himself, but he assumes a pose in his song, I am a rock, to talk about someone who has said, I've been hurt by love, and so I'm never going to let that happen again.

A rock feels no pain. An island never cries. I don't want to feel pain.

I don't want to cry. So from now on, I'm through with love. I am a rock.

I am an island. It's a metaphor. I am like these things, which would be a simile.

It's a difference in a simile and metaphor. If you use the word like, I am like a rock, that's a

simile. If you say, I am a rock, or I am dumber than a box of rocks, metaphor.

Okay. Observation, interpretation, application. So when you look at this first line, the often overlooked first verse, to the chief musician, a psalm of David.

It tells us two things. This is something that David has concluded and brought together from his experience and his training and his meditation on what he learned from the word of God. And secondly, this is something that he has given to the chief musician to be performed so that people will remember it.

If I had to go through and try to pick the most important psalms, or the ones that I felt David thought were most important, I would find the ones that he dedicated to the chief musician. Because these are the ones King David felt people most needed to hear and remember. David says, you ought to not only know the truth in this, you ought to remember it.

I'm going to have the chief musician perform the words and music on a regular basis so that you'll remember it. How many people know the words to the hymn, Rock of Ages? Say them with me. Rock of Ages, cleft for me.

Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure. Save from wrath and make me pure.

Incredible amount of doctrine. I could preach three sermons on nothing but the first verse of Rock of Ages. You know those words.

Did you ever sit down in front of the hymnal and try to memorize those? But it's a part of our hymnology. It's a part of our music worship that makes a difference. If you sit and think about those words, what does it mean that what flowed from Jesus' side is a double cure? Double cure for what? Sin.

What are the two aspects of sin that atonement takes care of? Saves from wrath. This is what we're going to be looking at this morning. What is the whole burnt offering? What's its purpose? It is to save from wrath and make me pure.

Takes away the penalty so that God's wrath doesn't fall on me and cleanses me, sanctifies me, renders me fit for service. Hugely important concepts in that song. And we know the words, whether we've thought about them or not, we know the words because they're in a song.

That's why it's dedicated to the chief musician. So when you look at the songs and you see these little superscriptions, think about it. Every word in this Bible is inspired and every word is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness so that we, as the people of God, can become mature and be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So, short little introduction to Psalm 40. Faith persevering in trial. I waited patiently for the Lord

and He inclined to me and heard my cry.

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. 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. Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust and does not respect the proud nor such as turn aside to lies. 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. Sacrifice and offering you did not desire. My ears you have opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require. Then I said, behold, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart. I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly. Indeed, I do not restrain my lips.

O Lord, you yourself know I have not hidden your righteousness within my heart. I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your loving kindness and your truth from the great assembly.

Do not withhold your tender mercies from me, O Lord. Let your loving kindness and your truth continually preserve me. 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.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me. 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. Let them be confounded because of their shame who say to me, Aha! Aha! Let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let such as love your salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.

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.

We have already talked about the concepts related to sacrifice in Psalm 40 when we had it as our Scripture reading last time. What I would like to point out to you this time is the idea of proclamation. Because in the closing moments of our study last time about bringing the sacrifice and that it is a public act, it wasn't something that was done within your tent or behind your tent or out in the wilderness, out of sight and out of mind.

People had to bring their whole burnt offering on its four feet, lead it through the camp to the

center of the camp to where the tabernacle was. It is a public act that signifies a private transaction between the offerer and God overseen by the priest. So there is this interaction between that which is private.

God could easily have said, now once you pick out the ox or the goat and you put a rope around its neck to lead it to the tabernacle, as you pass through the camp of Israel, recite in a loud voice your sins. Oh, I had a bad thought and I said bad things about Elihu and Bildad the Shuhite and so on, you know, whoever he thinks of. I treated somebody wrong.

Public confession of sins. Wouldn't it be great since this is a public act that he just broadcasts and says, well, I had lecherous thoughts and I was selfish and I stole a roll when I was invited to dinner and I saw a nice looking vase in the house of my friend in the tent of my neighbor and I stole it and now it's on the shelf inside my own tent and shame on me and on and on. God doesn't say to do that, does He? There is a portion, this is the point in case I lost you, there is a point of separation between that which is public and that which is private.

The act of going to God for worship, the act of conducting worship is public. The transaction of laying the hand on the head and going before God and acknowledging sin is private. Nowhere does it say thou shalt recite thy sins in a loud and clear voice so that all may hear and say amen, right? It doesn't say that.

So what is the nature of proclamation? What should be proclaimed in our public life? Well, David says in verse 3, as a result of his deliverance out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, by the way, have you dug any holes in Texas? Have you ever dug a hole with a shovel or with post hole diggers? I've done recently. Well, even if your pets dig holes, if you get very far into the clay of Texas, you find out that it has got unique and special properties. It is like paste.

It is not easy. You can aim a high pressure hose at a shovel or post hole diggers and it won't wash off. You have to scrape it off.

It has a great adhering quality. David says, God inclined to me and heard my cry. I was waiting patiently for Him because I was stuck down in the miry clay.

I was in the horrible pit. And I was covered in this slime and this goo and it was too slippery to climb out. And so God heard me and He brought me up out of the horrible pit.

He took me out of the miry clay and set my feet on a rock. I'm standing on a good hard solid foundation now. He has put a new song in my mouth which is praise to our God.

What is the content of our public proclamation? God is worthy to be praised because He is the God of deliverance. He is not the God of the problem. He is the God of the solution.

He is not the God of sin. He is the God of salvation. That's why I have a song.

We typically expect songs to be performed publicly, right? We sing to ourselves and we hum

along and we let them play in the radio background of our minds sometimes. But songs are basically a form of communication. They are a public broadcast of an idea.

Why do you think all these people write their songs? Do they just write them down and sing them to themselves and we never hear them? They want somebody else to hear what they're thinking. Many songs are message songs, aren't they? They talk about the angst of rejection or unrequited love or what a day for a daydream or I'm sitting on the dock of the bay wasting time or whatever it may be. There's many, many different sentiments but people feel the need to put these ideas out in the public arena.

Part of it is commercial and monetary. If I write a snappy tune and stepped on a pop top and margarita bill and all that, I'll make a lot of money and live the rest of my life doing concerts of basically the same song in slightly different versions. Nothing against the parrot heads but Jimmy Buffett has a particular philosophy in his songs of kind of I don't really care for responsibility.

I'm just kind of flip-flopping around on the beach and making a margarita every afternoon and isn't life grand? That's a philosophy that gets put out there. It's a thought that's in a song. If God puts a new song in our mouth as he does for David here, this ought to be what people hear, what people perceive when we're around.

We partake of the deliverance from a great God. The praise of God will be seen. Many will see it, David says, and fear.

Now, this is not like singing the funeral march or something and people become afraid. I took a... We installed Musical Hold in a company where I used to work. It was a Christian charity organization.

They said, you know, we want Musical Hold on our digital system. So we got this 50 CD changer and hooked it up into the phone system so when people got put on hold, they would hear music but nobody had any music and nobody would buy any music. And so they said, we need some music in here right away.

And I said, well, I've got a few CDs we can stick in until you buy some. They said, okay, fine, just put them in. So I put in some CDs that had classical music and some Christian instrumental music.

But one of my classical CDs had the funeral march. Well, it so happened that the president of the organization was traveling and called in to check for messages or something and he got put on hold and he heard the funeral dirge. And so when I heard about that, we had to pull that CD and put something else because the music sends a message.

You don't want to be calling up a Christian organization that has benevolence in its name and wind up hearing, you know, and I understand that. All the rest of the music on the CD was great. I couldn't really block that one.

But the song that we sing and the message that we have, it isn't designed to, you know, we're not singing gloom, despair, and agony on me, deep, dark depression, and excessive misery like they used to on Hee Haw. When it says, many will see it and fear, many will see it and fear, notice it doesn't say many will hear it and fear. He says, he's put a new song in my mouth, praise to our God, many will see it and fear.

Now how do you see a song? They didn't have sheet music in those days. They didn't waste lambskin trying to write down song lyrics. So how do you see it and fear? How are people going to see it? What this means is the song is inseparable from the performer.

You know, at some God-forsaken point in our history, music videos became the norm. Used to be, you could just hear a song on the radio, but now they insist upon being seen and you have a music video. And it doesn't matter what kind of music, Christian, country, rock, pop, whatever.

You know, the song popularity largely depends on how good the video does in terms of popularity. So when it says, many will see it and fear, what's the idea here? The song is inseparable from the one who sings it. You can't tell people, well, you know, you ought to have faith and God is great and God is good, if it isn't a reality in your life.

Many are going to see the song. They're going to see you singing the song. And so they talk a lot about testimony and you have a responsibility to be a witness and to be a light in the world.

It's a valid truth. The song that we sing has to be reflected in our own life or it becomes ludicrous. You have these wild, painted, red-tongued, hard metal rockers.

Are they going to come out singing How Great Thou Art? Or Peace in the Valley? You know, you're not going to have KISS and Fender Stratocasters and amps turned up to ten doing Peace in the Valley. Why? Well, it is to laugh. It's ludicrous.

Their persona doesn't match the content of a song about God's grace and God's peace. Now, there are some artists that have actually tried to jump that particular shark and it doesn't work. But the song and the singer, David says, are inseparable.

He says, God's put a new song in my mouth. People are going to see it. It's going to come from David.

Now, if David's song is about the deliverance of God, then if David lived a great, saintly, sinless life, if all the stories we knew about David are kind of like St. Francis of Assisi and he's just there feeding the little baby deer and all of that, well, then his song of salvation doesn't really mean a lot, does it? His song of deliverance. This song is meaningful that God has put in David's mouth because David has put himself in the pit. He fell into the miry clay many times, didn't he? And God lifted him up.

God heard his cry and set his feet on a rock. Right? We all mess up. And we don't have to pretend like we are sinless to sing the song of God's praise.

It's a part of the song that it is seen. It comes from us. Sometimes we think, well, I can't really say much about what God has done and so on because people know my faults and know my foibles and know my history and so on and it isn't going to be anything.

They are going to laugh if I try to sing that song. Not at all. David says they are going to see it and fear because it's not about the singer.

It's about the object of the song. It is the God of deliverance. Many will see it and fear and will trust in the Lord.

This is the true nature of our witness. We ought to be characterized by the kind of song that people see just as Jesus said in the New Testament. What did Jesus tell his disciples? Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

He doesn't say you hopeless, sinful, inconsistent, good for nothings. Try not to say anything about God because I don't want people associating my Father in heaven with your pathetic self. Jesus doesn't say that, does he? We are all pathetic and we all fail.

It's the God of deliverance that is in view. That's what people will see and fear and trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust and does not respect the proud nor such as turn aside to lies.

The real problem is not fear of being a hypocrite or being viewed as inconsistent. Well, I know about you. You had this failure.

You had that problem. How can you talk about God? David says the thing to worry about is being proud. Pride is what causes us to fear being ill thought of.

Pride is what causes us to hide our light under a bushel and say, well, better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to sing my song of God and everybody has no doubt that I'm a fool. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust and does not respect the proud nor such as turn aside to lies. Sometimes our denial and our camouflage reaches the point of deception.

People say, well, why are you doing this or why are you thinking that? And we say, oh, well, you know, and we give some commonplace answer that doesn't reflect the fact that we're really doing what we do and living the way we live because we are the people of God and we believe the Bible to be true and we're looking forward to blessing and reward in eternity and it is our hope, as we saw in Hebrews on Friday night, that creates a reality for us and that's what we base our decisions on. It's the reality of knowing that God is in His heaven and that Jesus is coming back and that there's a millennial kingdom and a kingdom of the Father that we are preparing for and it's important for us to live to please God and I can't help what you think and I can't help whether or not you like my song, but I'm going to sing the song of the God of deliverance who lifted me up out of the miry clay and has set my feet on a rock. You may not think my feet are on a rock.

You may want to say, look at all the mire that's all over you. Look at your tendency to fall into pits. Can't help that.

That's not the issue. The issue is the God of deliverance. The issue is the praise for God.

Some are going to see it in fear. Some are going to see it in trust in the Lord. That is genuine evangelism, not fake evangelism.

Do not respect the proud. Do not respect those who turn aside to lies. Keep in mind another thing.

If we want to talk about God and if we want to express the truth of salvation and of the Lord Jesus Christ and the plan of God the Father, it's a waste of time to talk to the proud. It's a waste of time to talk to those who turn aside to lies, isn't it? Some of us know this at first hand. You have to hope that maybe someone is listening to the conversation who is going to benefit from it because many times if you find yourself talking to the proud or finding someone who is willfully self-deceived, you're wasting your time.

There is none so blind as he who will not see. Even if you can use logic to demolish someone's position, you have not converted a man because you have silenced him, right? And Jesus Himself said, do not cast your pearls before swine. And you remember when we went through that parable? Do not cast your pearls before swine.

What does He say? Otherwise they will turn and tear you to pieces. And that tells us that the man casting the pearls, it's not like the swine are around him and he's throwing them in front trying to get them to do what? Eat the pearls? Swine have no concept of the value of pearls. And that's Jesus' point.

These swine are departing. They're going the other way. And the man is saying, Wait, wait, Mr. Swine, come back.

And he takes pearls and throws them over the swine's head in front to say, Look, I've got pearls. You need to... And all it's going to do is annoy the swine and he's going to turn around with his tusks and tear you to shreds. Jesus says, If somebody is departing and is uninterested in what you, in the song that you are singing, in the praise that you have for God, if they are not going to come to fear, if they are not going to come to trust, and it becomes obvious, don't continue, as they are departing, throwing the truth in front of them because they're just going to turn and shred you.

The pearls are going to be completely trodden underfoot. No value assigned to them whatsoever. Many, O Lord, verse 5, are... 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. There is an infiniteness to the work of God, to the character of God. And you could begin the song of praise

and never run out of verses.

Have you ever set yourself a time limit on prayer and saying, you know, I think I'm going to see if I can pray without ceasing for... I mean, pick something reasonable, just say 10 minutes. I'm going to start, I'm going to look at the clock, and I'm going to discipline myself to pray to God for 10 solid minutes. You'd be surprised how quickly you begin to either have your mind wander or start to run out of things to say if you're a traditional Christian.

Why? Because your prayer is mostly, O God, thank you for saving me and here's my list of needs and requests. And once you pretty well cover everything, then you can start repeating your needs and requests. But what David says here is, you know what's infinite? You know what can keep you occupied? You know what occupied the Lord Jesus as he prayed all night long to his Father? The magnitude of God's works.

The manifold nature of his great character, his love, his compassion, the expressions of it in creation and in the history of Israel, and the preservation of it in the Word of God so that it makes a difference to us. Now, what's the first commandment? If you've been drifting away, pay attention now. What is the first commandment and greatest? Jesus said, if you've got this one and the one that follows it, you've got the whole Old Testament in a nutshell.

What is it? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Right? Now, if that's true, you say, yes, I'm going to love the Lord my God with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength. Can you pray and occupy yourself with the content of his character for ten minutes out of a 24-hour day? Can you stop and devote ten minutes and have enough in your soul that you know about this God that you supposedly love with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength to talk about him and his greatness for just ten minutes? It's an interesting little pop quiz to give oneself.

David says here, many, O Lord my God, are your wonderful works. Look at the psalms that David wrote. Where do you think this stuff came from? David's head didn't have a hole in the top with a funnel and God the Holy Spirit just pouring ideas in there.

These are expressions from David's own soul. This is what he metabolized. This is what he digested and turned into reality from the things he learned as a boy from his parents and that he learned from just the little bit of word of God in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

This is the response of David's soul that you see in these psalms. What kind of response does God's word make in our soul? That's the issue. Everything I've talked about so far this morning is the issue when someone leads that animal to the center of the camp to offer it as a whole burnt offering.

What are you thinking about? Is your worship an empty ritual? Is it a habit? Is it just an attendance thing? I will just sit here until the noise stops and it's over and then I can go back to

my life. Or is there an active thinking about the things of God? Do we recognize what He has done for us in taking us out of the pit and setting our feet on a solid rock? Is that a song that others see us singing? That's the question to ask from Psalm 40. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to resume our study of this first great Levitical offering, the whole burnt offering, in Leviticus chapter 1.