

# Divine Deliverance

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev W.McKnight

[ 0 : 00 ] I should like to bring your thoughts back once again to Psalm 40, and the first three verses of that psalm.

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and shall trust in the Lord.

In these words we see the delivering and the saving, pardoning grace of God to sinners. However that may be, there is also in this psalm tokens of testimony to the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners.

[ 1 : 22 ] Now this comes out prominently in verses 6 to 8. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.

Yea, thy law is within my heart. So that this psalm is full of Christ in his saving mission and the redemption which he accomplished for sinners.

That is not the aspect of the psalm that I wish to deal with this evening. Rather, I want to concentrate upon the miraculous work of conversion which God works in the hearts and lives of his people.

Here in this psalm we have the experience of David as he recounts to us, first of all, the plight in which he found himself.

[ 2 : 49 ] He was in the midst of a horrible pit sinking in miry clay.

Joseph, of course, had an almost similar experience when his brethren cast him into that fearful pit and left him for dead.

Here there is a description of a horrible pit that brings vividly before us the corruption of human nature likened unto a horrible pit to miry clay.

That out of which we cannot extricate ourselves. This must be a divine work of deliverance.

But I feel that this mention of David's plight and the pit in which he was held is symbolic of that bottomless pit also that is mentioned in the book of the Revelation.

[ 4 : 13 ] The second thing I should like to point out briefly is the patience of David.

David said, Job was in a personal religion.

Job was in a terrible plight, yet he exhibited tremendous patience under the stroke of God.

Here in Psalm 40 we have an illustration of a sinner waiting patiently for God's delivering hand.

Job was in a personal religion. And in the midst of this patience, David vents his prayer.

[ 5 : 55 ] I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. David prayed, and the Lord heard him and answered him and showed his power in delivering him.

So we may think of the power of God that delivered David, who said in testimony, He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And then David, reflecting upon this, begins to praise God. Here we may take a pattern from this delivered soul, this converted, saved soul, who renders praise to the Lord.

And I sometimes think that looking into my own soul's experience, reflecting upon it, and upon the Church of Christ in general, do you not think that we have lost the art of praising God for his pardoning grace, for his delivering power?

We have lost that art of praise.

[ 8 : 00 ] He said, Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Those who watched David, those who observed the transformation in his life and character, they also would be affected by this, and would turn to the Lord and trust in him.

So David comes to this testimony, Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

We have, therefore, in these verses, a very apt illustration of the conversion of a soul.

And we see in it not only the nature of conversion, we see also the necessity, the vital necessity, of a spiritual change.

For we must realize that by nature we are held in the gloomy and damp pit of human corruption.

[ 9 : 33 ] We need to be delivered from that corrupt condition. We need the saving change which only Jesus Christ can effect.

Now he made this necessity of a conversion. He made it absolute. He said, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

There is a universal need for this, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And the depravity of our nature also would teach us that we need this radical change.

The depravity of our nature is highlighted in the first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah. Let us remember that Isaiah is named, as has been called, the evangelical prophet.

[ 10 : 48 ] And in his prophecy, he begins at this very point The total depravity of human nature.

This is basically taught by Isaiah. And he highlights it in this way. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it. But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. That is the natural condition of mankind.

A fallen creature, unrenewed, permeated with evil and sin and corruption. And you will readily see then the truth in our Savior's statement, except ye be converted.

[ 12 : 03 ] And then there is our own experience in life. The outbreakings of sin and passion, these themselves would teach us that we need this saving change.

The word of God does not take account of any outward decency or respectability. None are exempted from this necessity of converting change.

Not only so, but the character of God demands it. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. And if ever we are to be brought into his fellowship, we require to be changed.

For God is unalterably, unchangeably holy, and he will not reduce or lure his standards of righteousness and truth and holiness to accord with the substandard and the corrupt nature of man. And then the word of God commands it. In the preaching of the apostles, in the early chapters of the book of the Acts, this was their theme. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

[ 13 : 36 ] So this is the principle that is insisted upon by the word of God. We need to be radically changed by the grace of God.

No individual can be absolved from the necessity of spiritual renewal. A saving change is necessary.

Well then, what is the nature of this saving change, this conversion? David likened it to deliverance from a horrible pit from miry clay.

the nature of conversion is this, that it is a new life that proceeds from the new birth described by Jesus to Nicodemus.

It is a regeneration. transformation. It is the creation of a new heart. It is a transformation and it is indeed what Paul calls a translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, from the power of Satan unto God.

[ 15 : 05 ] Elsewhere, in the epistle to the Ephesians, the same apostle describes this conversion as a resurrection from a state of being dead in trespasses and in sins to a condition of being made alive in Christ Jesus, partaking of the life of the Savior.

And this is eternal life. again, the word of God tells us that this conversion is a washing from the defilement of sin.

It is being made clean, it is being cleansed from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

And it is a healing from the disease of sin. Sin, in the word of God, is likened unto a terrible disease like leprosy.

But the soul that is delivered, that is converted, that is regenerated, that is saved, is healed from this disease of sin.

[16:22] But again, it is likened unto a liberation from the bondage of sin. sin, sin binds. And we need those bonds to be broken.

None but the Lord Jesus could effect the breaking of those bonds to liberate the soul.

And if you read the epistle to the Galatians, you will see what it means to be delivered. to be set at liberty. And then this conversion is a receiving of a spiritual sight in place of a spiritual blindness.

And it is, in fact, in summary, it is an entirely new creation. if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.

Now, the process through which the soul is conducted to conversion, to this saving change, the processes in this, they converge at a decisive point in experience, where a sinner convicted by the Spirit of God of the dire need of conversion realizes that now this saving change, this conversion, it must take place now or never.

[18:12] so the soul is brought to a decisive point. It is carried to that point by that preparatory law work known as the conviction of a sin.

That is the purpose of the law of God. The law gives to sin its true character that it is the transgression of the law of God.

And it is this convicting work of the Holy Spirit that prepares the soul for this saving change.

So the means, the processes which God uses, are these. The ministry of the word of God. That is paramount.

That is basic. Secondly, there is the testimony of others. And this is shown in Psalm 40, where David said, Many shall see it.

[19:30] That is, many shall see what has happened to me, what change has been wrought in me. They shall see it. it shall cause them to fear and shall cause them to trust in the Lord.

So how important is a believer's testimony? A testimony to be kept unsullied, unspotted, unblemished, that will testify the grace of God to others.

make others take note. It is quite remarkable that that American politician, Charles Colson, who was a member of President Nixon's staff, underwent this saving change by the grace of God.

What was it that brought it about? Well, in the midst of his personal troubles, there was a friend of his who visited his office one day.

This friend was not only a church goer, but he was a man of God, a devout Christian.

[21:00] He didn't mention religion to Charles Colson, but it was his very aspect, his Christian character, that shone through and impressed Colson and made him think, so that when later he went out to his car to drive home, he sat for a moment or two in his car and he cried unto God to give to him that kind of character that he saw in his friend.

Oh, the power of example, the power of a Christian testimony, what it can work in others. and all of these things God uses to arouse and to alarm and to bring souls to a consideration of their plight.

Of course, not everyone adopts the attitude that Colson adopted, for the truth of a testimony, either by word or by life, may be slighted and mocked at through unbelief.

We see three examples of this in the book of the Acts. When Paul testified of the grace of God to Felix and Festus and Agrippa, one said, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Festus said, thou art mad, thou art beside thyself. And Agrippa said, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

[22:58] And those answers from those three individuals show to us the kind of attitude and response that can be adopted to the appeals of the gospel.

There are many who sink into a kind of carnal security, becoming indifferent, and this is a fearful condition of soul.

John Newton, on one occasion, wrote to a person and said to them, he said, if you feel the slightest stirrings of heart and conscience and soul to be converted by Christ, he said, don't in any way stifle those convictions, but rise up immediately and come to the Savior and trust him, and he will do a work of saving grace in your heart and life.

This is of paramount importance, for the soul that lapses into indifference is found in a fearful condition, which issues in rebellion against God and his truth, the preference of the spirit of this

world to the blessings of the gospel.

Then it is that the influence of Satan deadens the conscience and blinds the mind. But conversion implies that all resistances have been broken down.

[ 24 : 53 ] Unbelief is replaced by faith. Pride is replaced by humility. enmity is replaced by reconciliation.

The love of sin which stifled the desire for holiness is removed, and there are desires after Christ and his truth, and the glory of a holy life is seen to be desired.

And the fear of man which brought a snare, that is replaced by a holy boldness to testify the grace of God to others.

As David said, many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord. Now, conversion implies no middle ground.

I remember a couple of years ago visiting a family here in Leith who had come to live here. I went to see them, saw a young woman, and spoke with her about her soul.

[ 26 : 03 ] And she said, well, I wouldn't say that I am a Christian, and I wouldn't say that I am not a Christian.

I am half away. And I tried to point out to her that there is no such position. Conversion implies no middle ground.

The word of God calls loudly, Choose you this day whom ye will serve. It is either conversion or not conversion.

It is either darkness or light. It is either death or life. It is either cursing or blessing. Now, conversion is a closing with Christ as he is offered in the gospel.

It consists in this that since Christ is freely offered in the gospel of the grace of God, and since God makes in the gospel a bona fide offer of salvation and redemption, forgiveness and justification, and all of the blessings of the gospel.

[ 27 : 19 ] Conversion consists in a soul closing with this offer and making it his very own, complying with the truth of God revealed in the subject of salvation.

Now, there are certain implications here. There is bound to be, for example, the realization and the admission of sinnerhood. Secondly, there is obviously the recognition of Christ as the Savior.

And thirdly, there must be the reception of Christ as Savior and the truth that speaks of him, embracing him personally as he is tendered in the gospel, as many as received him, to them give he power to become the sons of God.

Conversion then is wrought by the Holy Spirit applying the word of God. And eternal destiny depends upon this conversion.

As Jesus said, except ye become converted, except ye become as little children and be converted, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[ 28 : 47 ] Entrance into the kingdom of God depends on this work of conversion. Now there are two outstanding conversions in the New Testament that Paul relates, besides his own.

He relates the conversion of the Ephesians, and he relates the conversion of the Thessalonians. And in Ephesians chapter two, he reminds them of their conversion.

And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

You see, Paul reminds them of their pre-conversion days. He reminds them of what they were before the converting power of God changed them.

Then he went on to tell them what was effected in them by the love and mercy and grace of God.

But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

[ 30 : 32 ] That was the conversion of the Ephesians. But the conversion of the Thessalonians is described by Paul in these words.

He said to them, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father, knowing brethren beloved, your election, of God.

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost, so that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

There again, you see, you have the power of testimony. These Thessalonians became examples of God's converting grace. And Paul went on to say, For from you sounded out of the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God word is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.

For they themselves assure of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.

[ 32 : 17 ] to to to to have a conversion illustrated in the Ephesians and in the Thessalonians and we count ourselves happy if we are numbered amongst those who trust in the Lord and who have a testimony given to us by God to show to others.

Now this is important because the converted soul has an obligation to testify the grace of God to others.

That is what the psalmist meant when he said come and hear all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

Far away in Michigan I was thinking of you at the time of communion we were praying that some would come forward to the table of the Lord professing publicly their faith in Jesus Christ as a Savior.

We were happy to hear that that happened and that there were those who did come professing their saving relationship with Jesus Christ and how gladdening this is to a pastor's heart to know of the transforming grace of God in the souls of his congregation.

[ 33 : 58 ] The unsaved know nothing of this but the child of God converted by the grace of God cannot hold it in he desires to make it known to others come and hear all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

So it is that in this 40th psalm we have David's personal testimony of the change effected in him by saving grace and power of God.

Consider then your own individual condition and inquire within if this transformation has been wrought in you and then reflect upon all of the blessings with which God enriches the soul that he has thus converted.

Here is how David puts it many O Lord my God are thy wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are to us word.

They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee if I would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered. Now these wonderful works of God which he works in behalf of his saved people the loving kindnesses which he makes to flow towards them although they cannot fully be reckoned up yet we may indeed be able to list many of them.

[ 36 : 04 ] And there are five things that can be said concerning them. They are not experienced. They are not progressive for they are perfect and complete.

They are completely unrelated to human effort or merit. They are eternal in character and they are known only by divine revelation and by biblical instruction.

Here I will quickly run through some of these blessings of conversion. The converted soul is taught that this is the culmination the consummation of God's eternal purpose in foreknowing, electing, predestinating, choosing, and calling him.

That is the first thing. He then knows his reconciliation to God that this is one branch of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

He has been reconciled. Thirdly, he has been redeemed, no longer condemned, no longer bound, but set at liberty, freed by the power of Christ from the dominion of sin and Satan.

[ 37 : 34 ] He is regenerated, brought into the family of God by the new birth. He is given a relationship to God which is eternally indissoluble.

He has received the remission of sins. He has been crucified with Christ. He is released from the law as a system by which souls can be saved.

He is accepted in the beloved. He is justified. He is brought near to God. He is given access to God. He is in the circle of God's care.

He is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. He is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

These and many more are the things which accrue to the soul that is committed to Christ that has been converted by God.

[ 38 : 35 ] We cannot reckon these up in order unto God for these blessings are innumerable but we can trace some of them and these are the things which are to be testified.

Come and hear what God hath done for my soul said the psalmist. Come and hear all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

And when I said that these things are not experienced and that they are not progressive and so on what I mean by that is that these things are eternal in character.

They are the gifts of God and God will not repent of giving these things. They become the possession of the converted soul for all time and for all eternity.

Take for example the blessing of justification. The soul that is converted is justified freely from all things.

[ 39 : 49 ] Now justification is not experienced. It is eternal in character and it is not progressive. You cannot be more justified.

Justification does not admit of any degrees. You cannot be more justified. The soul that was saved only a week ago is as entirely justified as the soul that was saved fifty years ago.

There are no degrees admitted in God's work of justification and all of these blessings are similar in character to justification.

God gives them. He will not take them back and you can readily understand then David's praising of God when he said he hath put a new song in my mouth even praise unto our God.

Therefore well might the converted soul sing that doxology praise God from whom all blessings flow.

[ 41 : 15 ] Let us pray. we thank thee O God our Father for thy miracle working grace in the conversion of souls and building up and the assuring of thy people who trust in thee.

And we pray of thee O Lord that our souls may be exercised in tracing these glorious themes and to go over our rich inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then surely O God there will be promoted within us that song of praise unto the Lord our God.

Give this to us we pray of thee that we may magnify thy name. We ask it for Jesus sake. Amen.