

5 Prayers From Psalm 40 to Lift Your Back-Breaking Burden

The past several months have been personally difficult and discouraging due to some pressing and very serious issues in our family. I'm sure you have all experienced such struggles. And if you are like me, the almost overwhelming weight of the temptation to "fix" everything in the lives of those I love threatened to undermine my peace, joy and contentment in the midst of my circumstances.

As I unburdened my heart to a dear friend, she took me to Psalm 40 and encouraged me to sit there with God for a while. What an amazing gift! For the sake of this blog, I am only going to focus upon the first three verses. There is so much richness and treasure to be mined here! Let me share with you some of the incredibly restorative prayers that burst out of these verses:

Psalm 40:1 says, "I waited patiently for the Lord."

The Prayer of Waiting: Father, help me to wait patiently for You, to experience Your sweet and comforting presence in the midst of the chaos, confusion and pain! I trust You to be the answer to each of my loved ones' lives, whether an issue, illness, situation, relationship or dysfunction. You alone can repair, restore and heal. Give me the ability to lay down my burdens at the foot of the cross of Christ so that I am able to watch you move in clarity and precision to do what cannot be done in my human strength. Help me to trust You fully with the lives, minds and hearts of those I love so that You can do Your work more perfectly within, around and through them. Please show me how to set aside my pride and my "need" to fix things or to "come to the rescue." Give me the desire to get

out of Your way and let You move!

God's Response to the Prayer of Waiting:

Psalm 40:1 says, "And He turned to me, and heard my cry."

My Prayer: How amazing to me that You, the God of the Universe, literally leaned in toward me and heard my cry! How precious I am to You! How grateful my heart is and how much I must mean to You to take time to hear my pitiful cries for help. In the midst of my anguish, You care for me so very much—way more than I could ever imagine! Thank You, Abba Father, for bending down and ministering to my broken spirit. Thank You that I can always know You are listening and hearing me as I call upon Your holy name!

Psalm 40:2 says, "He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay."

My Prayer: Loving Jesus, You not only heard my cries for help, but You brought me up out of the pit—the desperate place where I was filled with despair and discouragement and doubt and depression. When I was sinking in the mire, You filled me with hope and allowed me to see the light in the midst of one of the darkest places and seasons I have ever known. My heart is filled with thanksgiving that You have literally pulled me out of the clay that was sucking me under. I was struck down but not destroyed (2 Cor. 4:9) for You defeated the enemy on my behalf.

Psalm 40:2 says, "And set my feet on a rock, and established my steps."

My Prayer: Grace-filled God, after You pulled me up, You gently put my feet on solid ground so I could walk without stumbling! You knew that I would need a firm foundation—a safe

place to learn how to walk securely and upon which to dance with delight once again. Father, You helped me to find my balance when I was teetering on the edge of an abyss. I was so afraid I would fall in, for the pressure felt so great and the storm was insatiably vicious. But You held out Your hand to me in the midst of it all and graciously rescued my thoughts from the temptation to give in to despair. You set me down where I could no longer be battered by the taunts and lies of the enemy of my soul. You stood me up on the Rock that is Christ Jesus!

Psalm 40:3 says, "He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God."

My Prayer: Holy Spirit, my joy was literally ebbing away until You rescued me and filled my mouth with fresh, new praises to the God of Glory! You have given me hope and peace and life once again and in the midst of the struggles of my circumstances, You have reminded me to keep my gaze fixed upon the Holy One. You've helped me to understand how to rejoice always, even when life seems brutally unfair—especially to those I love and care for the most. Please keep teaching me new songs moment by moment, for worshipping the King of kings is my deepest desire. Keep me focused upon Your Word, for embedded there is the sword that defeats the enemy. May I sing Your words back to You as a thank offering for all You have done to rescue me from destructive thoughts and actions. "Let them bless Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and You preserve them all. And the host of heaven worships You" (Neh. 9:5-6).

God has done all these things so that:

Psalm 40:3 says, "Many will see it, and fear, and will trust

in the Lord.”

When others see how God has allowed me to walk through my circumstances in victory, they will be in awe of what my amazing, Almighty God can do. They want to trust in a God who can do what He has done, is doing and will continue to do for me when I cry out to Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” This Scripture doesn’t say that we are to be joyful *for* our difficult and painful circumstances, but it *does* say we are to be joyful, prayerful, and thankful *in the midst* of them.

How do we do that?

If we will pour out our hearts to God in prayer from our deepest, darkest places of despair, we need to have faith that He will bend down to hear us, lift us up out of the pit, and set us upright on solid footing once again so that we can walk in victorious praise and so that many will see His goodness and power and put their trust in Him.

God will use your most devastating circumstances to bring glory to Himself through you! Your prayers from the pit can be the very thing that rescues others from the pit as well. Stand firm in times of suffering and “Wait patiently for the Lord.” He is there and just waiting for you to recognize His presence in the midst of your trials. Trust Him to bend down to listen and hear your cries of desperation so that He can hold out His hand to You and show You His faithfulness. And then don’t keep His rescue a secret! Give Him the praise and the glory so that “many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord.” {eo}

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