

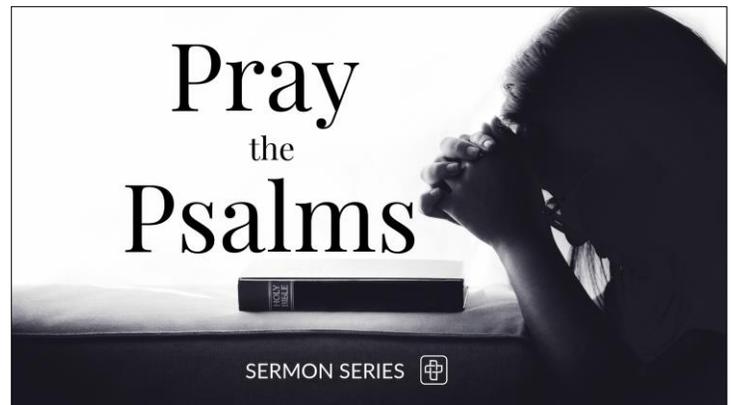


Lord, Do It Again!

Psalm 40

Pastor K. Edward Copeland

August 25, 2019



David Sunday: God is going to show His faithfulness to us through the ministry of His Word this morning through Pastor Ed Copeland. I first heard Pastor Copeland at a Gospel Coalition event last year up in Arlington Heights. I was stirred by his preaching and wanted you to hear from him as well. Justin Taylor is a friend of his, so Justin helped me invite him, but then Justin moved to Iowa a month ago, so he's not here to welcome him. So instead, we want you to warmly welcome Pastor Ed.

He comes to us from Rockford, where he's the pastor of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church. He lives with his beautiful wife Starla. They have three children from age 29 down to 17 and a new granddaughter born this past month. He has a rich background, including a law degree from U.C. Berkeley. He's also a musician, but his passion is to preach the Word. You're going to be stirred by the message we're going to hear this morning. Please join me in welcoming Pastor Ed Copeland.

Ed Copeland: This is the day the Lord has made and we are rejoicing and glad in it. I was glad when they said unto me, "Get up early and go to St. Charles." I'm most appreciative to Pastor Sunday for the invitation, sight unseen. Thank God for the hospitality I've received here among this church family. Thank God for you and your anticipated attention over these next few moments. I'm not easily offended, so if you came to church to take a nap, go ahead and get your nap out. You can get the notes from somebody when you wake up.

I'm grateful that God loves all His children and that He makes provision for us all to feel welcome whenever we get to meet family members we've never met before. Thank you to the music ministry for their selection of songs and for leading us in worship. The hymns have made me feel right at home.

Thank you for the warm smiles. For those of you whom I've not seen smile yet, let's get some ground rules out and agree on some things up front here. I'm from that part of the Christian

family that tends to be vocal in worship, particularly during the preaching moment. But I recognize everybody's not from that part of the family. So that we can collaborate and move forward with some kind of census, let's agree on this: if you cannot say "Amen," just look "Amen." If you cannot look "Amen," is there an "Amen" app yet? If there isn't one, somebody can make some money off that. See if you can find an app that will say "Amen" and "Glory to God" and "Preach it, Brother"—something like that. However you respond, I'm not as concerned about your response in the sanctuary as I am with the results in your heart afterwards.

I solicit your prayers for me as we open our Bibles to Psalm 40. I'm going to read the entire Psalm in your hearing and I do that for a couple reasons. The public reading of Scripture is commanded in Scripture and it's beneficial for all of us. Very often we hear so many lies—whether it be our own voices speaking to us, some family "tapes" we have refused to change, or lies from the media or from other people. We need to collectively hear the truth.

Secondly, and more practically speaking, as I preach this text today, if you really don't like how I preach it, you'll at least have to admit it was a great text. If I'm really not your cup of tea, you have my permission to go home, get in front of the mirror and preach it to yourself.

Psalm 40 reads thusly from the New American Standard Bible:

- ¹ *I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me and heard my cry.*
- ² *He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay,
And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.*
- ³ *He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;
Many will see and fear
And will trust in the LORD.*
- ⁴ *How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust,
And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into
falsehood.*
- ⁵ *Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done,
And Your thoughts toward us;
There is none to compare with You.
If I would declare and speak of them,
They would be too numerous to count.*
- ⁶ *Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired;
My ears You have opened;
Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.*
- ⁷ *Then I said, "Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book it is written of me.*

⁸ *I delight to do Your will, O my God;
Your Law is within my heart.”*

⁹ *I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great
congregation;
Behold, I will not restrain my lips,
O LORD, You know.*

¹⁰ *I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart;
I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation;
I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the
great congregation.*

¹¹ *You, O LORD, will not withhold Your compassion from me;
Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me.*

¹² *For evils beyond number have surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see;
They are more numerous than the hairs of my head,
And my heart has failed me.*

¹³ *Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
Make haste, O LORD, to help me.*

¹⁴ *Let those be ashamed and humiliated together
Who seek my life to destroy it;
Let those be turned back and dishonored
Who delight in my hurt.*

¹⁵ *Let those be appalled because of their shame
Who say to me, “Aha, aha!”*

¹⁶ *Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
Let those who love Your salvation say continually,
“The LORD be magnified!”*

¹⁷ *Since I am afflicted and needy,
Let the Lord be mindful of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.*

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8). Today I’d like to talk about, “Lord, do it again!” If you were paying attention as I read the text, you will note that there is a clear shift in tone. The first ten verses are a joyous reflection on God’s past rescue. Starting at verse 11 and then moving toward the end of the Psalm, you see an urgent petition for present deliverance. That’s us. This is us. This is where we live.

Those of us who shun spiritual amnesia often take time to reflect on how good God has been, how He has snatched us out of harm's way and how He's rescued us from various trials and temptations and turmoil. Even while we reflect on what He's done existentially, we recognize we need Him now more than ever. We need present deliverance. We need Him to help us now.

It's interesting that the psalmist has enough nerve to say, "I need You to hurry up, God." The first verse says, "I waited patiently," but the last verse says, "God, don't delay." That's not schizophrenic. That's not some kind of duality. That is us. That is where we live—in between past deliverance and the need for present rescue.

If we want to look at the structure, the psalmist David meditates on God's rescue, reflecting on what it means to him. Then he gives the only appropriate response in this first half of the Psalm. But then in the second half, he confesses a problem. He articulates a prayer, then he focuses on and lands on God's provision. So let's unpack it and see how it relates to you and me in our present circumstance.

Let me say this right up front. This text is for the person sitting in your seat, because whether you know it or not, you need deliverance wherever you might be situated. The truth of the matter is we all need deliverance right now. We need God to hurry up and do some things without delay.

Past Rescue, Psalm 40:1-10

David starts in verse one by saying, "I did wait patiently." Literally in the Hebrew, it says, "I waited waited." The Hebrew mechanism for intensification is to double up on a word. "I waited waited" means "I waited intensely." It's an intensifier. If you were country, it would literally mean, "I sho' nuf waited."

"I waited for the Lord" and here's what happened. Here are the clear benefits of waiting on the Lord. First of all, "He heard me." Don't gloss over this. I could preach a whole sermon right there, but don't have that much time. What separates our God from any of the so-called gods of this age is our God actually hears. He actually listens. Literally, according to the text, "He inclined His ear toward me. He bowed down His ear toward me."

It's like David is saying, "I couldn't get to Him. I was so heavy laden. I was so burdened, I really could not articulate my prayer like I wanted to. But like a good grandfather, He bowed down and inclined toward me, so that He could hear exactly what was on my heart and mind. But not only that, as He inclined His ear toward me, He brought me up out of what I was in. I was stuck in

my sins like miry clay—like muddy clay (verse two). I was sinking in my sin. Not only was I sinking, I was stinking.”

Have you ever stepped into something you shouldn't have stepped into? Sin is like that. “God brought me up out of it, and not only brought me up, but He stabilized me. He set me securely on firm footing, so I wouldn't step in that stuff anymore. He not only brought me up, not only set my feet on a rock, but according to verse three, He put a new song in my mouth.”

This is very interesting. He's so gracious that He not only rescued me, He put a tune in my heart. That's the appropriate response to deliverance. We see it back in Exodus 15. When the Israelis saw the Egyptians' bodies washing up on the shore, Moses sang a song. A song is always appropriate. But this text says, “Here's what He's done; He gave me a brand-new song.”

See, fresh mercy ought to have fresh music. If God has done something new, we ought to articulate praise in a fresh way—not in stale worship or day-old praise, but fresh-baked honor and glory to God, because of His brand-new mercies that met us at our bedside this morning. “*He put a new song in my mouth.*” Here's the thing I like about it. He says, “Because of what God has done for me, many will hear it and will fear God. They will have a reverential awe of God and will trust in Him.”

I like that, because that's how it's supposed to work. When God rescues His people, there ought to be an articulation, a response, that is so contagious it becomes viral. Other people join in, because they want to partake of what has happened to you. I'm not saying it right, so David, help me out again. “*I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord*” (Psalm 34:1-2). Here it is: “*The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together*” (Psalm 34:3).

There's something viral about praise. There's something contagious about worship. When someone has truly been delivered and rescued, other people ought to hear about it. It's a great missional impulse to worship God, because in that testimony somehow or another, others will see and fear, trusting in God. He reflects on this rescue in verses four and five when he talks about the blessing in trusting God.

If you hear of how God has this rescuing propensity, then in turn you see, fear and trust in God, here's the blessing of trusting in God as opposed to turning to pride or falsehood: you will recognize that His wonders and His thoughts toward you are too numerous to count. Let me say that again. According to verse four, there are a few different ways you can live your life in light of this information that God is a Rescuer.

You can put your trust in Him or you can continue on in pride, trying to live your life independently of Him. You can live in the lies this society has promulgated as it encourages you to

be independent from God. But David says in verse five if you put your full weight on God, if you trust in Him, what you'll find is that His thoughts toward you, and all His wonders and blessings, will be too numerous for you to even catalog.

Before I move forward, I want to challenge us, brother and sister Christian. Maybe we should get rid of the complaint catalog and keep a running list of how good God has been. The old hymn writer said, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done." The idea is simply this: God in His gracious rescuing activity also helps us reflect on the fact that His wonders are too numerous for us to even count. If we started trying to number them, started trying to declare them, there are too many for us to catalog.

If I could just personally reflect, I want to thank God once again for His mercy. As we were singing all these great hymns of the church today, what kept being impressed on my heart as I was worshiping God is the fact that His mercy is so great, so everlasting. His mercies are so tender, that I can't even catalog all the ways. Let me say it this way. If you get stuck trying to list all the ways God has been good, why don't you start with all the ways you've been bad, then recognize how good He's been in light of your badness? You don't have to worry about how much He's given you; just start thanking Him for what did not happen that should have happened if God's mercy had not intervened. His mercy has been tracking us. It's been stalking us. It's been covering up all of our mistakes. We don't even look like what we've been doing. We don't even look like where we've been. Don't act like you haven't stepped in some stuff that stinks and that you are not sinking. He's brought you up out of it and now here you are, safe and sound in the sanctuary. His thoughts toward us are too numerous; the ways He's blessed us are too many to count.

Based on that reflection in verses six through eight, he says, "Here's the thing. Sacrifice and offerings You've not required." That's technically not true, because back in David's time, the Bible does describe certain burnt offerings, sacrifices and all types of things. What he is getting at is that God is not really after sacrifices. He's not really after the blood of bulls and goats. David makes reference to this in several other Psalms. "You own all the bulls and goats. You're not really after that; You're after me. What You really want is my obedient heart."

Let's unpack that a little bit. David said, "Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but my ears You have dug." Obviously, if you read various commentaries, there are differences of opinion as to what that means. "My ears You have dug" could refer, as we see in the book of Deuteronomy, to what was done when an indentured servant had paid off their debt. After working for a particular boss for six or seven years, if because of the atmosphere in that home and their relationship with that boss they wanted to continue voluntarily to be a servant, the owner of the house would bring the servant to the doorpost and pierce his ear through to the doorpost. This

pierced ear signified that the servant was remaining with that person voluntarily for the rest of his life. So perhaps David is saying, “God has dug my ear and I’m now His servant.”

But I think within the context, it probably means—and the Hebrews lends itself to this—that God had opened his ears, which is to say, “God has opened my understanding to recognize that it’s not about the sacrifices I bring; it’s about the obedient heart that I offer Him.” That’s why David says in verses seven and eight, “I come, You’ve written about me in Your book,” and “*I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.*”

That’s what God is always after. He really wants you—all of you. If you really want to boil this whole thing down, that’s why Jesus said, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength*” (Mark 12:30). In light of God’s rescuing activity and my reflection upon in, the only appropriate response is to give Him my all and to let everybody else know that I am His.

Verses nine and ten say, “*I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not restrain my lips...I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart.*” In other words, “In light of Your rescue and my reflection, my response is to give You my all and to let everybody know how good God has been to me.”

I said earlier that an intimate relationship that avoids public display is suspect. You mean, you’ve got a boyfriend or girlfriend, but you’ve always got to meet them around the corner? Somebody is putting their arm around his wife—don’t do it now; wait ‘til you get home. You’re married, but he or she is always slipping their ring off when they get in a crowd? There’s something suspect about that. If you really love somebody, you want everybody to know that he or she is mine and vice versa. Real intimacy wants everybody to know how much the lover is loved and the beloved is loved.

David says here, “I proclaim Your tidings. In light of all You’ve done for me, as I think about it, I have no problem testifying about how good You are to me.”

Can I say this just in passing? Our evangelistic efforts would be turbo-boosted if Christians would stop acting like they’ve never done anything wrong. Many people are not being delivered because those who have been delivered are silent about their deliverance. If we would confess, if we would admit—particularly to the younger generation—that we have not always been where we are right now, they would be drawn to the fact that if God could deliver us, He might deliver them as well. This text says, “I have not restrained my lips. I’ve promoted Your faithfulness in front of the entire congregation.”

Present Deliverance, Psalm 40:11-17

Then starting with verse 11, he takes a turn. All of this has been talking about the blessings and benefits of God's rescuing activity. Now in verses 11 through the rest of this psalm, his tone changes. Now he starts talking about a problem, then has a specific prayer request.

What's the problem? Look at verses 11-12. He says, "You, Lord..." Now, think about this. Up to this point he's been talking about God's great compassion and all these types of things. Then in verse 11, he says, "*You, O Lord, will not withhold Your compassion from me; Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me. For evils beyond number have surrounded me.*" What's the problem? Verse 12 says, "*My iniquities have overtaken me.*" There it is. "Even though I've waited patiently for the Lord and He's rescued me and done all these things for me—even as a person who has put my full trust in Him—my sin has still found me out. The fact is I have not been completely delivered from the power of sin, even though God has rescued me from its penalty." That's our testimony and that's what the psalmist is getting at. He says, "*My iniquities have overtaken me.*"

There, "Even though God's blessings are too numerous for me to count, my iniquities..." Am I reading it correctly? Look in your Bible; maybe mine is broken. Verse 12 says, "*My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my heart has failed me.*" Previously he talked about an obedient heart and a testifying heart, but now he says, "My heart is failing me." Why is his heart failing him? "Because the closer I get to Him, the further away I see I actually am, because my sins are brought into full relief. My iniquity in particular, this twisting within me, this perversion in me, this thing in me that keeps me from fully committing to God's purpose, plan and design for my life—it's overtaken me. It's found me out."

Do you know it's possible to come to church all the time, be involved in this, that and the other, but still have an iniquitous heart? There are still some secret things that are going on that have not been straightened out. That's what iniquity means—it means to twist or pervert. It means to turn something away from what God originally designed it to be. Your sins always find you out.

I found that out recently. Last year I went to the gym where they have this new little machine that you step on and it gives you your BMI, your bone density, your water weight and all kinds of stuff that I don't understand. The gentleman was telling me, "Pastor, you're doing pretty good, but regardless of your chronological age, your body has a metabolic age. Basically, according to these statistics, you have the body of a 56-year-old."

I got offended, because I had just turned 56 and I'm very vain. So I said, "What do you mean? There's something wrong with this machine. The devil's in this machine. We need to do this thing all over again." He said, "There ain't no devil in this machine." I said, "Well, what's the problem?" He said, "Yeah, you're pretty strong, but the problem is you've got too much visceral fat. You've got too much fat down on the inside and that's what's pushing up your metabolic age."

It wasn't the machine. The problem was my sin had found me out. It wasn't Satan; it was Cinnabon. It wasn't the devil; it was Tulio's where I go get that gelato every Friday. I did it in secret, but my sin had found me out. Help me preach this. Grab your bellies and say, "My sin done found me out." See, very often we think we can keep doing something, but the bill always comes due. When the bill comes, you can't rebuke the devil; you're the one who swiped that card. You have to recognize that your sin will always find you out.

David said, "*My iniquities have overtaken me.*" The problem with that, if you read verses 13-15, is there's a humiliation that comes along with that—particularly as it relates to allowing the enemies of God an opportunity to mock. That's what that word at the end of verse 15 means: "*Those who say to me, 'Aha, aha!'*" They're pointing it out.

I had an experience when I was in high school like this that still haunts me today—as a matter of fact, it did just yesterday. One of my childhood classmates passed away and I was at his funeral. He was a tremendous track star. I remember one day down in Kankakee, Illinois, where I went to high school and was on the track team. We were supposed to run a particular route in our training. Basically we were to run down the highway about five miles and then run back. I was with a particular group and as we started running, one of my friends said, "Ed, I don't feel like running all that way. Let's go hide over here in these bushes." There was a ditch in front of a house, so we decided to hide there until everyone came back. Then we'd get at the end of the line and act like we'd run the whole route. I agreed, so we laid down in the ditch and watched everybody run by. When they came back, we found some water and acted like we'd been sweating, then we came running in behind the rest.

But when we got into the locker room, one of my classmates—whom I saw yesterday—said, "Ed, there's some mud on your socks, but there's no mud where we were running. We were running on the highway. How did you get that mud on your socks?" Then my friend and I had to admit that we hadn't done what we were supposed to do. We were laying down in the ditch and got muddy—and everybody else knew about it.

That happened over 40 years ago. Do you know, they're still laughing about that right now? Not only did my sin find me out, now all they talk about is those dirty socks. My sin gave them the

opportunity for mockery. When we sin, it gives the devil an opportunity to mock, saying, “Aha. Look. There they go again” (verse 15).

That’s why the psalmist prays in verses 13-14, “Lord, I need help. I need You to deliver me. Don’t let me cause shame—let the enemy be ashamed. Let them be ashamed, because You have helped me.”

In verse 16 he says, “Let everybody who rejoices in You and who seeks Your salvation, who loves Your salvation, point out the fact that it’s all about You. It’s for Your glory. It’s Your name that’s at stake.” He prays, “Let Your name be magnified and glorified in my life.”

He’s saying, “You’ve blessed me. You’ve done a lot of things. The problem is there’s something in me that’s twisted, but I don’t want to bring shame to Your name. So help me honor You in the way I live. I need You to deliver me.”

Then look what he says in verse 17. This is what I’ve been trying to get to. Help comes when we’re willing to declare spiritual bankruptcy. He says, “I’m poor and needy. I’m afflicted and cannot help myself. I need outside help. I need You to come in and do for me what I cannot do for myself.” That’s what the gospel is: God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He says, “I need Your help and Your deliverance.”

Here’s the real kicker. Here’s where the help comes from. The help doesn’t come from some program; it comes from God in person. He says, “You are my help. You are my Deliverer.” The Hebrew word here for “help” is *ezrah*. It’s a cognate cousin with the word *ezer* which we see in Genesis 2. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He made him an *ezer*, a helper, somebody to come alongside him. We all need some help. We all need an *ezer*, an *ezrah*.

A grandfather was visiting his daughter and the grandbaby was playing around the daughter’s feet. She was trying to fix lunch for her dad, so she put the baby in a playpen and went back to the kitchen to finish fixing lunch. She kept hearing the baby talking and frolicking around. She peeked back into that room and saw that Granddaddy had taken the baby out of the playpen and was playing with her. She said, “Dad, I put the baby in the playpen for a reason. Now, I’m going to put her back in there; you leave her in the playpen.” She went back into the kitchen, but she heard laughing and giggling again. She looked back in the room and saw that Granddaddy had gotten into the playpen with the baby. He said, “You said I couldn’t take her out. You didn’t say I couldn’t get in here with her.”

That’s what God does. That’s how He helps us. He doesn’t necessarily take us out of trouble, but He’s always in trouble with us. That’s what the psalmist says in Psalm 46:1: “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*” Help there is the same word: *ezrah*. This

means that as a Christian, you will go through trouble but God will get in it with you. He helps in that way.

He's also the Deliverer. This is a strange word here. It comes from a Hebrew word that means slick or smooth. It means the ability to slide out of something. In Psalm 46:1 we read, "*God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble.*" There the word trouble is what we are talking about when we say we're "between a rock and a hard place." It's a squeezing, a pressure. That's what affliction is. But God in His delivering power knows how to slide us out smoothly from whatever we're being bound by.

How does this apply to you and me? What do we understand about the gospel from this text? Well, in the middle of Psalm 40 is the center of all reality, the center of all time and eternity. In verses six through eight we read, "*Sacrifice...You have not desired...In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God.*" The writer of Hebrews helps us understand that this is just a preview of something that happened 2,000 years ago on an ugly hill called Calvary. In Hebrews 10, the writer says these Old Testament sacrifices were just a shadow of things to come, but they couldn't do what really needed to be done.

This is therefore Jesus' transcript. The "scroll of the book" —all of Scripture—is about Him. It is either pointing to Him or it's responding to Him. Although the priests and Levites would offer annual sacrifices as a reminder of their sin, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. But Jesus, once and for all, made one sacrifice. When the psalmist wrote, "I delight to do Your will, O my God..." that will was to get rid of the old obsolete system and inaugurate a new system whereby, through this will, Jesus was offered as a sacrifice once and for all. Now there's no more sacrifice needed.

The gospel is that He gave His body. That's what this text is talking about. He gave His body on the tree. "*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5, NKJV). We are delivered. This means that it doesn't matter how many sins you have or how long you've been committing them. His deliverance has coverage for even your sins.

When I was going to law school out at U.C. Berkeley, it was famous for its lack of parking spaces and I was notorious for getting parking tickets. After you got about 15 tickets, they would just come snatch your car. I had that experience at least two or three times. By the time I got to my third year, I said, "Lord, if You could just get through this last semester..." And even though I got about 18 tickets, I got out of town and moved back to Kankakee where my parents lived.

What I didn't know was that in order to take the bar exam, I had to list on the application every ticket I had ever gotten in life—and proof that the tickets had been paid. My sin had found me out again. So I called the traffic clerk in the city of Berkeley from my parents' house and said, "I need to know how much I need to pay. I know I can't afford it, but at least let me know how much I need to pay for those tickets." "What's your name?" "Copeland." She looked it up and said, "We don't have any record of any tickets that you owe."

I said, "Ma'am, I have the tickets." I had the tickets in my hand. You know how you thumb through a deck of cards? I held the tickets up to the phone and thumbed through them for her. "I've got the tickets. I admit—I did it and I owe. Just tell me how much I owe." She said, "I've looked, but I cannot find them. I don't know what to tell you." We went back and forth for a few minutes, then finally she said, "Wait a minute. Where are you calling from?"

I said, "I'm calling from Kankakee, Illinois." She said, "Do you have an Illinois driver's license?" I said, "Yes, I do." She said, "How did you get it?" I told her, "Well, when I got here I had to turn in my old identification and they gave me a new identification." She said, "That's what happened. When you got a new identity, all of your past records here were cleared up. When you turned in your old ID, we erased you from our records." Now, don't try this at home.

That's exactly what happens to those of us who celebrate Christ right now. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). All things. How is this the gospel? That last verse in Psalm 40 is a prayer that everybody in this building can pray. If you don't know Christ as your Savior, you need to say, "I'm poor and needy. I'm afflicted and need help. I need a Deliverer." Guess what? He will deliver you today.

If you are in Christ, this is still your same prayer. "In Christ, I'm poor and needy. I still need deliverance. There are still some things in me that haven't been straightened out, that haven't been ironed out. I need God to help me with that pattern of behavior, that habit, that addiction, that way of thinking, that thing I won't let go, that unforgiveness, that resentment, that bitterness. It's not just the lusts of the flesh, but even the lusts of the eye and the pride of life that are still clinging to me. God, I need Your help. I need You to deliver me."

Guess what? Even those of us who are in Christ, who have been saved and are in the process of being sanctified, we can pray this prayer right now. "Lord, we need You. We need You to come and get us right now—don't delay." He has not only saved us from the penalty of sin and is progressively saving us from the power of sin, one day He'll save us from the very presence of sin. He's that type of Helper and that type of Deliverer.

My wife and I were traveling someplace here in Illinois and we were in two different cars. This was before I had an I-PASS, but she had an I-PASS. We were coming up to a toll. I was leading and she was following me. Before I got to the toll, I realized I had left my wallet back at the office. Somehow or another through her wifey sense, she decided to get in front of me. I followed her closely, because when she got to the toll booth, she put in enough money for me and her. She pointed back to me and said, "I'm taking care of him too." So when I got to the booth, the toll attendant said, "Smooth through."

When Christ said, "It is finished," He didn't have any sin to pay for, but He paid for all of our sins. One day, when it's time to make that transition, there's no toll we need to pay. God will just say, "Come on in. It's already been paid, because when you were poor and needy, you cried out to Me. I helped and delivered."

If you need deliverance today, do you know God has an app for that? His deliverance is inexhaustible. He delivered you from the penalty of sin and if you keep on going back to "poor and needy," He will deliver you from sin's power in your life.

With every head bowed, pray with me.

Father God, I want to thank You for Your delivering power. Thank You that You are our help and our salvation. You're the One Who comes alongside and You're the One Who rescues. We come confessing today that we're poor and needy. We need You all over again. Lord, do it again. You've rescued us before, but we need a fresh deliverance. I pray for those who are struggling in their relationships, for those who are struggling with their health, for those who are troubled in their mind. Whatever it is that has kept us bound and kept us from fulfilling Your purpose, plan and design in our lives, Lord, help. Lord, deliver—and don't delay. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

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