

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

Psalm 40
Waiting Patiently for the Lord
(Audio good)

Editorial Note: It is my belief that this series on Psalms was recorded while Sidney and Violet Cox resided in retirement at The Eventide residence in Detroit, Michigan. This was during the period 1962 through 1972. Sidney Cox was 75 years of age in 1962.

At various points in the recordings, he states that he is meeting with this group weekly to lead this series; however, when listening to the recordings, there does not seem to be a live congregation. At another spot in the series, he explains that he has also been taping these messages for further distribution.

During this period in his life, Sidney Cox often preached and taught in various churches around the Detroit area, but for a variety of reasons, including the declining health of his beloved wife, Violet, he was increasingly unable to travel extensively. As a result, he began to experiment with tape-recording his messages and lessons in order to send them to interested groups.

Thus, it is impossible to know if he delivered this series in person to a church group, or whether he recorded the series for them to listen to in their Sunday School or other meetings. It was likely both.

The order in which he presented the weekly series was: Psalm 24, Psalm 40, Psalm 46, Psalm 91 and Psalm 117. In addition, there are two recordings made in two different settings of Psalm 29, which do not seem to be part of the formal series.

The audio quality of these recordings varies a great deal. Some are quite good while others are poor.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. July 30, 2010.

Once again, you will find in Psalm 40 a large portion of it that we speak of as being Messianic, where obviously David is not in view, but the Lord Jesus Christ is. Now, that part of it is not before us tonight. What we want to do is to just contemplate and think about the first section of it. And before we do anything of the kind, let us just read these first three verses together. Have you got the place? Psalm 40, and we'll read it aloud and read it together. Here it is.

“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 fear, and shall trust in the Lord.”

The first three verses of the 40th Psalm.

Now, let's remember some of the things that we said about Psalm 46. In the first place, it was a psalm written by a man whose name we do not know. It was one of the anonymous psalms. When we turn to the 40th Psalm, the one before us tonight, we do not find that. We know the name and the man who wrote it. This is one of the psalms of David. Now, I want you to notice, if you please, that not only does it state that this is a psalm of David, but it was a song that was to be given to the chief musician, which means that it was to be set to music and used in connection with the temple services.

So many of our lovely psalms were to be sung in the temple worship and the temple services. Now, just for a moment, let us remember that these songs that were given to the chief musician to be sung were of various kinds. For instance, some of them were to be sung on special occasions. And then there were other songs that were to be sung at any time of the year. Now, let me give you two of the words that you will find there. Sometimes it causes a little confusion with folks. I'm sorry about that, but let me mention two indications that the song or the psalm was to be sung on a certain occasion.

You will find some of them in this way. A psalm of David upon Shoshannim. Now, Shoshannim is a word that means lilies.¹ And obviously, when you begin to think about the lilies you think of the spring of the year. Here was a song that was intended to be sung in the springtime. Now, occasionally, you will see a psalm of David to be sung upon Giddith. Now, Giddith is a word that means wine presses.² And the moment that you say that, you're not thinking about the springtime, you're thinking about the fall and the harvest. And so there were some psalms that were intended to be sung in the springtime, some at the harvest time, some at other special occasions that are designated. But some of them, like this one, are to be sung at any time of the year. There is no designation here. It's a psalm that would be applicable just as much in June as in January.

Now, again, notice that this is a personal psalm. Psalm 40 begins with the personal pronoun, I. When you turn to Psalm 46 as we noticed it last week, this is not just a personal psalm, it is a psalm that involves a group. Notice the words. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth be removed."³ There is a group in mind in Psalm 46.

But in Psalm 40, David is simply giving his own personal experience. Now, you will notice again, or you will remember, that last week we said that the writer of Psalm 46 made his grand discoveries about God because he had turned his eyes upward. He turned his eyes to the skies and he said, "God is our refuge and strength." Now, in this psalm, David's eyes are turning upward as well. But it is not quite so clear. We have to wait for a moment or two before we can see David looking up to make his grand discovery about God. Now, let us take the psalm as it is and just take it step by step.

First of all, there is the introduction for it - the first six words. Let me remind you of them. "I waited

¹ Used in Psalms 45 and 69. The strict Hebrew meaning is "lilies." However, some believe it also refers to a lily-shaped straight trumpet

² Used in Psalms 8, 81 and 84. While it is true that "Gittith" can refer to a form of wine press, the word also refers to a stringed musical instrument from Biblical times.

³ Psalm 46:1,2

patiently for the Lord.”⁴ Now, that's the introduction to this section of the psalm that we're contemplating now. Now, I want you to notice a moment and, if you please, let's invite David to come and sit in our class. Because it's not only nice to listen to him, it's nice to look at him as well. And I want you to see David sitting quietly over there, waiting patiently for the Lord. Now, my dear, do you see what an extraordinary sight that is?

Because remember, David was one of the most impatient of men. Over and over again his impatience not only led to personal disaster and personal difficulty, but it led to the difficulty of others as well. David was not a patient man by nature. But isn't it wonderful to notice that God's grace had been at work in the heart and life of David. And now, as we find him here in the beginning of this psalm and as we look at him sitting in our class, we find a man waiting patiently for the Lord.

Have you ever noticed dear, or have you ever thought, what a miraculous situation that is? Here are two words: waiting patiently. Let me ask you, how do you get along with this business of waiting patiently for the Lord? Are you a success there? Now, I want to break down and confess and tell you that this is something that causes me a good deal of difficulty. In God's examination papers, I don't get A+ on waiting patiently. Sometimes I get a D- and I expect you do too. There have been many a time when waiting patiently was not my experience and I expect it wasn't yours either.

But here is a man who is waiting patiently. Put the two together and the more you think of them the more wonderful the occasion becomes. It's fairly easy, isn't it, to wait impatiently. Even I can do that. I can get A+ on waiting impatiently. How about you? Sometimes, you know, we are experts at waiting if we don't have to be patient. Oh, I can wait, calm on the outside, boiling over on the inside. Do you know what I mean? Because I do. Waiting impatiently, but not David. Now, it's easy enough to be patient if we don't have to wait. Ask any husband about that. I can be very patient if I don't have to wait. But when you put waiting and patience together you have a most wonderful situation here and it reminds us of how great was the work of God's grace that had been done in the heart of David. For I'm quite sure that this wasn't produced by Law, this was grace. In some way or other we find it right here in this man's life. Grace of God had done something for David.

I was reading in one of Mr. Marshall's intercepted letters this phrase.⁵ He's describing somebody or other. And this is what he says. “His heart is in the right place and he was content to leave it there.” At long last, impatient David was finding his heart in the right place. And for the moment, he was content to leave it there. Contentment can only be found when we are waiting patiently for the Lord. When the grace of God has worked that miracle in our hearts, one of the wonderful things that comes to us is this great and gracious gift of contentment in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Do you remember how James Whitcomb Riley, in one of his lovely prayers that's often set to music, mentions that word 'content'?⁶ He says this, “Give unto the sorrowing all relief from pain. Let the lips

4 Psalm 40:1

5 I am unaware to what this reference is made. J. Douglas Cox.

6 James Whitcomb Riley (October 7, 1849 – July 22, 1916) was an American writer and poet also known by the pseudonyms Jay Whit, Benjamin F. Johnson, and Uncle Sidney. During his lifetime he was titled the Hoosier Poet, National Poet, and Children's Poet. He began his career in 1875 writing verses in nineteenth century Hoosier dialect for the Indianapolis Journal. His poems tended to be humorous or sentimental, and of the approximately one thousand poems that

of laughter overflow again. And with all the weary, O divide I pray, this vast treasure of content that is mine today.” David's heart was in the right place and he was content to leave it there. What a blessed resting place that is.

Now, when we find him there, we should expect that this would be a time and place and an occasion for great discoveries about God. If God can once get us quiet enough so that we will wait patiently for him, it is amazing what revelations he can bring to us. And not only can, but does. I want you to notice in this psalm that David makes five great and wonderful discoveries. Perhaps you'd like to make a note of that. Five discoveries.

First of all, he discovered the attitude of ...(dead spot in the tape)...inclined toward me. Now remember, dear, that the word 'inclined' has two meanings. Or it can be used in two different ways. It can mean position or it can mean disposition. For instance, if we go to Chattanooga or Hamilton, Ontario or any one of a dozen other places where there are hills surrounding these towns, and we can get on the bus or the train and we can ride the incline railroad. If we see a ladder up against the side of a building, we say it's inclined there. The ladder inclines against the building. It's a position.

Now, we also use the word to describe a disposition, an attitude of character. For instance, we say of a person occasionally, or we could say, he's inclined to be moody. Now, we know what we mean by that. Or he is inclined to be something else. Now, when David uses this word about God, he not only means position, but he means disposition as well. He has discovered the position of God and he has discovered the disposition of God.

Notice the word again - Inclined toward me. You know what it means, don't you? It means bending over. Here in the quietness, God was bending over David. And here in the quietness, David's eyes found God bending over him. He's bending over. It's a picture word again. We find them over and over again. And you can make your own little parable about it or your own illustration out of it if you like. If you saw a mother with a little sick child, the little child in the cot, for instance, and the mother had come to see some difficulty that was evidently there, what would be her attitude? She wouldn't be standing straight up there as if there was a poker up her back, would she? You know what that mother would be doing. She would be bending over the little sick child in the cot.

Do you mind if I remind you that God is like that? That in the moment when we need him most, in that moment, God is bending over, the loveliness of his position. Now, not only that, but God is demonstrating his disposition as well. The disposition of God - God's unchanging attitude toward us. How wonderful it is. Bending over us so that God's face is close to your face. That's the meaning, really, of the words face to face. When we think of that and apply it and have God in the picture, we say God's face close to your face. And when that happens there's a glory that flows from one face to another. Do you remember what happened to Moses, don't you? He came down that mountain having looked into the face of God with a glory that could not be seen by ordinary eyes and it had to be covered. God's disposition. His unchanging attitude toward us.

Riley published, over half are in dialect. Riley's works were significantly influenced by Robert Burns, to whom he was compared by many critics.

Somebody that I know quite well described or defined the grace of God in this way. He said, "Grace is the unchanging disposition of God to give good gifts to the undeserving." I like that. But did you notice the word disposition. The unchanging disposition of God to give good gifts to the undeserving. Here then is David's first discovery, that God was there bending over him as a mother would bend over a child; the attitude of God; the position of God; the disposition of God.

Now, let's go on to discovery number two. What else did he find out? And all we have to do is just look at the words. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined toward me, and heard my cry."⁷ Now, here David discovers not only the position of God, but the ear of God. He heard my cry. Now if you will, for a moment, will you take a good look at that, because sometimes the question comes creeping into our hearts in spite of us, particularly in the hour of prayer – Is God listening? Does God hear? Now remember, if you please, that this was not a formal prayer that was coming from the heart and lips of David. It was a cry.

I think we have said to each other before, that in the Psalms you find that word 'cry' so frequently. And it expresses something that we have to say to God that is not formal at all. It's just a cry, perhaps an utterance of distress. Perhaps a groan of bewilderment. And we all know something about that, don't we? This wonderful thing that is there, the ear of God. God listening to us.

When you said your prayers this morning, or when you prayed, to use the right words, were you aware of the fact that God was listening? Listening carefully, not to your prayer necessarily, but to the cry of your heart. That cry that you wished you could put into words, but couldn't.

The cry of David. Now, we want to see where that cry came from. Do you remember a moment or two ago that we were saying that David, as did the writer of the 46th Psalm, looked upward? Now, David looked upward too, when he uttered that cry. Where did it come from? It didn't come from a pleasant position at all. David was in a pit. And not only that, but his feet were in the clay. And the pit is described as a horrible pit, and the clay is described as miry clay.⁸ Now, here's where David was. And looking up from a horrible pit and from the misery and mess of that miry clay, he saw God was there - God's face looking down upon him. God bending over David. Not in a pleasant place; not in his palace; not in some place of approval, but in the miry clay and in the horrible pit. Now, my dear, I'm not going to try to interpret for you what that horrible pit meant. You can do that for yourself. There was many a time when David, by his own willfulness and his own wickedness, found himself in a place that could be described only as a horrible pit and the miry clay. Now, that's the next discovery he made.

Now, let's take a look at discovery number three - for not only did David cry to God, but God did something about it. And David discovers the arm of God. Notice it, if you please, "He brought me up." Now, not only that, but he brought me out as well. Here was David in a place of utter helplessness; of utter distress. And in the midst of it, the long, strong arm of God is stretched down and grips David, and not only grips him, but brings him up and brings him out. Now, not only that, but the same word is said about the miry clay. He brought him out of the miry clay. Now, it's quite one thing, isn't it, to bring a person out of the pit, quite another thing to get rid of the miry clay.

7 Psalm 40:1

8 Psalm 40:2

I think God has a lot of trouble with some of those that he has already brought out of the horrible pit. But there's a difficulty about the miry clay in so many lives. The miry clay still sticks around them. Did you notice it? The miry clay. Now, I wonder if you can see something there?

And here, I don't want to get into any doctrinal aspect of this at all, but I'm wondering if you can see two things that God does for the child of God? I wonder if you can see sanctification in that pit and salvation there? - the bringing out and the delivering from the miry clay. I'm only suggesting it. Perhaps you can, and it's alright in any event, because we're not thinking primarily of any doctrinal aspect of this. We're just looking at it as simply as children might to see what David's talking about.

But the arm of God brought him up, out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. So he discovered the attitude of God; the ear of God; the arm of God; and now he is discovering the purpose of God - that God brought him out of that horrible pit and cleansed him from that miry clay in order that a purpose might be fulfilled. He set his feet upon a rock. Now notice, if you please, here is the beginning of the vision of God's purpose in delivering David from the horrible pit and the miry clay. He had something for David to do. There was a purpose in mind. But the purpose started when David's feet were placed upon the rock.

Notice, if you please, that the rock is the important thing. Around it, as Brother Marshall, again reminds us, the tides may be swirling, but it isn't the tide that matters. It's the rock that matters. The tides may ebb and flow, but the rock remains firm. And the rock held David. It's not only a matter of David coming out of a horrible pit and finding himself upon a rock. The rock gripped David.

There's a song we used to sing sometime ago. We don't sing it very often now. Simple little old thing, with the chorus, "I hold not the rock, but the rock holds me." The rock holds me. David's feet upon a rock.

Now notice, if you please, that there was something for David to do. Tides may ebb and flow, that's true. But he was not only upon the rock, but his goings were established. Notice, it was David's feet that were placed upon a rock, not some other part of his anatomy.

So many times when folks are delivered from the horrible pit and placed upon the rock, the first thing they do is to sit right down and many of them don't know anything else. But that's not the purpose of God. There's a going before us. It's our feet that are placed upon the rock. There are so many folks who just love that phrase in the scripture, "my down sittings". And there are any number of folks who are delivered from the pit and placed upon the rock who immediately sit down and there they are from then on. No goings about it at all. Their favorite song is about, "I'm sitting on the promises of God." Now, here's David discovering that God had something to do for him, and it had a going connected with it. Go is God's great word, not only then, but now. Now, there is another...(tape seems to be spliced here).

I want to conclude this brief study of the 40th Psalm by mentioning the fifth of these grand discoveries that came to David. We have already noted four of them. This is the fifth. We have noted the attitude of God; the ear of God; the arm of God; the purpose of God; and now we're talking about, or rather, David was talking about, the song of God. Into the heart of this man who had learned to wait patiently

and who had been delivered from the pit and the clay, and had learned to rest in the arms of God, to this man God could entrust what is perhaps one of his most gracious gifts – His own song. Remember, if you please, it was not David's song. You'll recall the words, “He hath put a new song in my mouth” and in his heart. (audio ends)