

**Devotion:** Thursday, April 16, 2020

**Psalm 40:1-12 The Message (MSG)**

**A David Psalm**

**40** <sup>1-3</sup> I waited and waited and waited for God.  
At last he looked; finally he listened.  
He lifted me out of the ditch,  
pulled me from deep mud.  
He stood me up on a solid rock  
to make sure I wouldn't slip.  
He taught me how to sing the latest God-song,  
a praise-song to our God.  
More and more people are seeing this:  
they enter the mystery,  
abandoning themselves to God.

<sup>4-5</sup> Blessed are you who give yourselves over to God,  
turn your backs on the world's "sure thing,"  
ignore what the world worships;  
The world's a huge stockpile  
of God-wonders and God-thoughts.  
Nothing and no one  
comes close to you!  
I start talking about you, telling what I know,  
and quickly run out of words.  
Neither numbers nor words  
account for you.

<sup>6</sup> Doing something for you, bringing something to you—  
that's not what you're after.  
Being religious, acting pious—  
that's not what you're asking for.  
You've opened my ears  
so I can listen.

<sup>7-8</sup> So I answered, "I'm coming.  
I read in your letter what you wrote about me,  
And I'm coming to the party  
you're throwing for me."  
That's when God's Word entered my life,  
became part of my very being.

<sup>9-10</sup> I've preached you to the whole congregation,  
I've kept back nothing, God—you know that.  
I didn't keep the news of your ways

a secret, didn't keep it to myself.  
I told it all, how dependable you are, how thorough.  
I didn't hold back pieces of love and truth  
For myself alone. I told it all,  
let the congregation know the whole story.

<sup>11-12</sup> Now God, don't hold out on me,  
don't hold back your passion.  
Your love and truth  
are all that keeps me together  
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Day 30 of isolation:

- The squirrels in my yard are all now named and categorized by color and personality.
- Cleaned out the closet in the back bedroom, after making sure I didn't clean it last week.
- Finished counting the shingles on the garage roof...457 for further reference.
- Tracking the birds in my birdhouse and studying the passive/aggressive behavior of starlings.
- Noticing that our mail carrier takes 22 minutes and 43 seconds from the time he exits his mail truck, to his delivery at my house
- (Reminder, Order Siri so that I could stop talking to myself)

Recent studies have shown that more and more people are talking to their AI devices (Alexas, Siri), than before the virus.

Example of one conversation from the internet

*Justin: Google, who created you?*

*Google: I was created inside the brains of people at Google. People from all over the world helped make me who I am.*

*Justin: Do you know why we're here?*

*Google: That's a deep question.*

*Justin: What is the meaning of life?*

*Alexa: The meaning of life depends on the life in question.*

*Justin: Do you think there's a God?*

*Google: I really don't know.*

*Justin: Who was Jesus Christ?*

*Google: Religion can be complicated and I'm still learning.*

*Justin: Do you have a soul?*

*Google: I'll have to ask the engineers.*

*Justin: What happens when you die?*

*Alexa: I don't know that one.*

*Google (taking a crack at the same question): Hopefully, you plug me back in.*

*Justin: Is the Bible true?*

*Google: I'm much better at searching than theology. But I'd like to help.*

Now, as you sit there and read this, try and think of yourself in your quiet place, and you say to Alexa, "Alexa, let's chat." Or you might say, "Alexa, read Psalm 40 to me."

This is what the writer of the psalm is doing: "God, let's chat."

Psalm 40 is a prayer that reflects a real relationship, one in which God is not merely a cosmic intelligence who spits out answers and serves a person's every need, but rather one who hears, responds and delivers according to God's good plan for humanity.

And notice that the prayer begins with a statement of patience. Waiting "patiently" for the Lord means that there is no expectation of instant gratification (v. 1). The psalmist's patience had paid off previously when he found himself in the depths of difficulty and cried out to God, who lifted him up and set him on firmer footing and on the right path (v. 2).

"Patience" is not something we associate with a machine. It's a human virtue that is often tested when we're trying to boot up a machine!

But when humans ask God for patience, it's usually a prayer for patience to wait for God to do something! "God, please give me patience, so that I will not get irritated with how long it's taking you to answer my prayers!"

If we ask God for patience, God will probably honor the request. Waiting patiently on the Lord is a sign of trust that God will provide in God's good timing.

The most important item God offers us, of course, is God's own self. God's rescue plan for the world was not launched virtually from a distant heaven, God didn't become a voice emanating from a box dispensing information.

To put it another way, when we put our trust in God we don't just receive information about God, nor do we simply get a string of words and advice. Instead, we receive the very person of God in Christ through the arrival Holy Spirit. That's something Alexa or Siri can't offer, and it's silly even to think about it. But it is something God offers. God offers not artificial intelligence, but God's own wisdom and love in Jesus Christ.

The stuff Alexa, Assistant and Siri can do is amazing. And link Alexa with other technologies, and it gets even more fun. Who would have believed a few years ago that what's possible today would be possible today?!

What God offers — well, it is not exciting in the same way. True. But God has been doing amazing things forever. God is beyond anything we can think or imagine.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is from the book of James: "You do not have, because you do not ask," the apostle James writes (4:2).

The psalmist asks. And why not?

We don't hesitate to ask for help in other situations in our lives.

Got a leaky faucet? We call a plumber.

Got a dead electrical outlet? We call an electrician.

Got a leaky roof? We get a roofer.

Got a toothache? We see a dentist.

Got a stomach ache? We see a doctor.

Got anxiety? We see a therapist.

Need some soothing music? We ask Alexa. "Alexa, play Chopin."

Need directions? We call on Siri. "Do you know the way to San Jose?"

So why not ask God when we're in trouble?

The psalmist asks — as he should.

And so should we.

Let's talk to God. Let's chat. Let's ask for help. Let's remember that God is more than our personal assistant. God is the fullness of everything that exists.

Oh look! Grey tail Bradley is at the birdfeeder again!

Stay Safe, God Bless

Pastor Jack

Let us pray:

Great Healer, make us aware of your great Spirit. Touch and heal our brokenness, and lift us out of despair and doubt. Dry our tears of pain and sorrow. Comfort and nourish us with the many blessings of your great love, O God. May we flourish and blossom in the warmth and compassion of your healing love and grace. Amen.

