

CALL OUT

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS

THE STONES

And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'" If you joined our study of Joshua last Fall, you might remember this passage from Joshua 4. When Israel entered the Promised Land, twelve men were selected to carry a stone for each tribe. These stones were to create an opportunity for generations to ask and hear the story of God's deliverance.

As we look at how we can respond to God's revelation of himself, we have seen that we can call out to the Lord as our Comforter (22), our Shepherd (23), and our Healer (51). This Week, we will see that we can also call out to God as our Helper as God helps David through another difficult circumstance.

From David's poetic journey, we can be encouraged through our own circumstances. Just like the stones that were a reminder from generation to generation, God uses us to tell our story to share his goodness and glory with others.

All of us will face trials, struggle, and tragedy—sometimes caused by our own sin. Why waste it?

PSALM 40:1-5

¹ I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. ² He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

⁴ Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! ⁵ You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"This is my testimony from death to life. Cause grace rewrote my story, I'll testify... If I'm not dead, you're not done. Greater things are still to come."

People can dispute facts and interpretations of facts, but nobody can deny your experience. As you experience God's faithfulness, share that testimony. Scan the QR code to worship all that God has done and can do through you and your testimony.



DISCUSSION

What was your favorite childhood story? Why?

1. What result does the psalmist expect from God's help? (3b-4)

2. Describe the relational actions between the psalmist and the Lord. (5)

3. Based on the information provided, how would you describe the psalmist's circumstances? (2)

4. If God's help becomes a believer's story, what should that story tell? (1-5)

5. What help has God given to you in difficult times that has become part of your story?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The three parts to sharing your story of what God has done:
1. Where you started. 2. How God changed your life. 3. How has your life changed. Need help? Talk to your Coach today.

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STUDY NOTES

THAT MOMENT

Stories play an important role in our lives. While we might excitedly share something cool that happened, it's often the stories of tragedy and struggle that matter most. I've forgotten most of my days in high school, but I'll never forget September 11th, 2001. I sat in class after a school assembly and watched a plane fly into the second tower of the World Trade Center. I remember the moment when a cloud of dust took over the television screen and saying to a friend, "I don't think that building is there anymore." You can ask anyone in my generation where they were on 9/11 and they can tell you the story.

More personally, we will all face tragedy and struggle. It's often in those moments that we see God move in mighty ways. God intends us to share those stories with others. Today, we want to walk through the first five verses of Psalm 40. This passage teaches us practical ways to not only deal with tragedy and struggle, but also how God is developing you to share your story of his deliverance.

GOD'S HELP BECOMES OUR STORY

First, our story should reveal patience. David calls out, "**I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry.**" God's timing is rarely our timing. However, our faith muscles grow stronger as we trust in him over the long haul. Only babies in God's family demand his instant action. God is faithful, but on his own (better) timetable.

Second, our story should tell both our trouble and his deliverance. David continues, "**He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.**"

This picture is an utterly hopeless situation where only God can save. The "pit" David refers to were cisterns that people used to collect rainwater. A person in a pit could not save themselves, they had to have someone pull them out. God does this throughout our lives. However, the ultimate pit is sin, and the ultimate Rock on which we stand is Christ—without whom we are utterly hopeless.

Third, our story should allow God to revive our faith. David records, "**He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.**" For millennia, great victories have been immortalized by poets who put them into song for future generations. God's initial salvation usually brings a burst

of spiritual vigor, but his ongoing faithfulness as our Helper revives our faith along the way.

As God delivers victories, these moments become like the stones of remembrance from the introduction. We can look back and remember God's faithfulness, strengthening us to trust him in future trials.

Fourth, our story should allow God to impact others. David understands, "**Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.**" Seeing God work in another's life can bolster your own faith. Likewise, seeing God work in your life can bolster the faith of those around you. We should boldly tell others of how God provided both our salvation and help through life's circumstances.

Fifth, our story should reveal humble dependence on God. David recognizes, "**Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie!**" Dire circumstances reveal our true self. In such situations, we always have many options we can choose to depend on. Intense pressure narrows down our options according to our wisdom. Is it wiser to lean on a self-proclaimed know-it-all, an inspirational (but false) hope, or to count on God's Word and his faithfulness to keep it?

Sixth, our story should expand our worship and thoughts of God. David rejoices, "**You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us. None can compare with you!**" When going through tough times, we can easily feel like God has forgotten us or doesn't care. His "help record" should become a reservoir of resistance to such doubts.

Seventh, our story should expand our evangelism. David declares, "**I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.**" People can (and will) argue over theology, they can't (and usually won't) argue over your own experience. Let them know how God has helped you in your life. It tends to open their heart and mind regarding how God can help them.

CALL OUT TO GOD AS YOUR HELPER

All of us will face trials and tragedy—sometimes caused by our own sin. Why waste it? A wise man once said that our two greatest witnesses of our faith is our marriage and how we endure suffering. Marriage is probably still several years away for most of you, but I bet that many of you have already endured great suffering. Knowing God will use it may not make it easier to endure, but it does give hope. God's help provides you with a platform to proclaim his goodness and glory, even as you share through tears.