

THE PREACHER'S THEME

PSALM 40:7-10 • TV-232B

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Psalm 40:7-10

"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

I want us to go to school today. I want you to listen very carefully to some things that I feel impressed to say to you about the preacher's theme or the preacher's message.

The thought that gave birth to this message and when I prepared this message, this is what I was thinking. I am concerned that my generation, the people who are living on this earth at this present time, especially in America, are not hearing from the pulpit what they need to hear. I am convinced of that.

We have many preachers and we have much preaching going on from the pulpit, the television, and the radio today. Very little preaching is concerning the vital issues, the things that people must hear and need to hear.

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The title of the message today is the “**PREACHER’S THEME.**” That is what I want to talk about. The preacher’s theme is set forth in the **Book of Psalms, chapter 40.** If you have a Bible, turn with me to **Psalm 40.** I am going to read verses **7 through 10.** Listen to this:

It is David who is writing here. This is David speaking. This same portion of Scripture (Psalm 40) is also quoted in **Hebrews 10**, and according to the apostle Paul, was written about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of you who know something about the Bible will recognize immediately that this is the Scripture that Paul quoted in **Hebrews 10** in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Please listen to it in **Psalm 40, verse 7:** “*Then said I; lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me.*”

Do you recognize the Scripture now? I’m sure you do. In **Hebrews 10**, it is verses **9, 10, 11, and 12.** “*Then said I, lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do Thy will O God.*”

Remember that David is writing this, David, the sweet Psalmist, (the son of Jesse, the king of Israel) is writing this; what he writes, he is writing of himself. He is speaking in the first person. He is speaking out of his own heart and his own experience.

He was a preacher of righteousness. He was a prophet of God. He was a leader of the people. He declared the message. God spoke to the people through David.

But he is also speaking of Christ. He is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*It is written, yea thy law is written in my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.*”

“*Lo, I have not refrained my lips O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart. I have declared Thy faithfulness. I have declared thy salvation. I have not concealed thy loving kindness. I have not concealed thy truths from the great congregation.*”

Here, the preacher’s theme is set forth in my text in no uncertain terms. He says; “*I have declared thy righteousness. I have declared thy faithfulness. I have declared thy loving kindness. I have declared thy salvation. I have declared thy truths.*”

If we can somehow, every one of you, (this preacher also), if we can somehow get a hold of these words, get a hold of these five words, we will understand the preacher’s mission. We will understand the preacher’s message. We will understand the preacher’s theme because it has not changed.

If we (each one of us) can somehow get a hold of these five words, we will understand the preacher’s mission. We will understand the preacher’s message. We will understand the preacher’s theme because it has not changed.

The importance of these words are seen, first of all, by who writes them and secondly, by the person to whom they are assigned.

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First of all: These words are written by David.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that these words are written by David. He said, *“Lord; I have declared your righteousness. I have declared your faithfulness, your salvation, your loving kindness and your truth to the great congregation.”* This is David, the chosen of God.

God sent Samuel down into the home of Jesse to anoint a king. Samuel, by the orders of God, anointed this man David. God said of David; *“I have found David to be a man after my own heart.”*

Did you know that He says that twice in the Bible? There is no man in the entire world, in all of Scripture, and in all of history, in which God said that.

He called Abraham His friend. He said of John the Baptist; *“He’s the greatest man born of woman.”* God said this of David and no one else; *“I have found him to be a man after my own heart.”*

The heart of God and the heart of David beat as one. This is David the exalted king. Actually, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God’s Son who came into the world, was identified by these words; *“He’s the Son of David.”*

Our Lord said; *“What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?”* Everybody replied; *“The Son of David.”*

So my friends; it would do us well to listen. David declares his theology and you cannot improve on it. David declares his theme and you cannot improve on it. David declares his message and what’s more; he gives these words through the lips of the apostle Paul.

He gives them greater meaning by the fact that Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled them. That was his message; Christ the preacher says, *“I have preached thy righteousness. Lo I come in the volume of the book it is written of me to do Thy will O God.”*

“Thy law is written within my heart. I have declared thy righteousness, thy faithfulness, thy salvation, thy loving kindness and thy truth.”

I am saying that I can do no better as a preacher of the Gospel in 1984 than to preach what David, the servant of God, preached. I can do no better as a child of God, a preacher of God, or a preacher of the Gospel in 1984 than to declare what Jesus Christ, my Lord, the Son of God, preached.

That is my theme, the five-fold-theme. This is my message. I am going to deal with it one at a time. What is he talking about?

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He said, "*O Lord I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me. I come to declare Thy truth. Thy Word is hid in my heart and I have declared thy righteousness, thy faithfulness, thy salvation, thy loving kindness, and thy truth.*" This is my message.

David said that it was his message. When Paul came along and wrote **Hebrews 10**, he said; "this is talking about Christ; this is talking about the Son of God, the Messiah." This was his message and this was his Gospel.

Let's look at it one at a time:

First of all: David said, "*I have preached thy righteousness in the great congregation. I have not hid (I have not concealed) thy righteousness.*"

My friend; let me be as plain as I can be on this subject (and this is what I try to do all the time). God Himself is a righteous God. God is Holy. The Scripture says, "*Holy and Reverend is His name.*"

Isaiah said, "*I saw the Lord high and lifted up and His train filled the temple and the seraphim's about the throne cried; holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.*"

God's Law is holy and righteous. God's Kingdom is righteous. His angels are called "*holy angels.*" Heaven is called "*the holy heavens.*" The tabernacle is called, "*The Holy of Holies.*" Our Lord's Bible is called the "Holy Bible." It says, "*The Lord is in His holy temple.*"

When the priest came into the tabernacle, written across his forehead was "*holiness to the Lord.*" Our God is infinitely, unchangeably, unapproachably, holy. God is holy, essentially holy.

What the apostle Paul is talking about here is Christ; David is talking about himself. When he says, "*I have declared thy righteousness,*" what he means by that is that he not only has preached about God and His holiness and righteousness, but he is preaching about the righteousness and holiness which God in His mercy and grace has provided for His elect in the obedience of His Son Jesus Christ.

There's a righteousness which God not only has, essentially being God, but there is righteousness and a holiness which He has purposed. There is a righteousness which He has provided, which He has given, which He has worked out through the obedience of Christ for you and me who believe on Christ.

That is the righteousness that Paul said that he preached. That is what I am trying to preach to you. "*Without holiness no man will see the Lord.*" Our Lord said, "*Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (the best who ever lived on this earth); you shall in no way enter the kingdom of God.*"

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You have to have righteousness and it is not your righteousness but God's righteousness. I have declared God's righteousness.

In **2nd Corinthians 5:21**, it says; "*He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (in Christ).*" Christ knew no sin. That is the righteousness that David said that he preached. That is the righteousness which the Lord Jesus Christ said that He preached.

Paul said, "*O that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law.*" A righteousness by the deeds of the law is shot full of holes and is "*filthy rags*" in God's sight. The righteousness of God is the righteousness which is in Jesus Christ.

That is what Paul is writing about in **Romans 5:19**, when he says; "*By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*"

If we are going to preach "*all the council of God,*" if we are going to preach that which is profitable to men, if we are going to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are going to have to preach the righteousness of God.

That is not only saying that He is essentially, perfectly, unapproachably Holy, but that He has provided for us in the obedience, in the person, work, merit, and the death of His Son; He has provided for us righteousness (a righteous covering). He has provided for us a righteous cleansing and standing before the law. He has given us that holiness which allows us to come boldly into His very presence, not only now, but in eternity. We have to preach this; "*I preach thy righteousness.*"

Secondly: Then he says; "*I have preached thy faithfulness.*"

God is faithful; God is unchangeably faithful, immutably faithful. "*He abideth faithful.*" Listen to these verses:

"*I am the Lord; I change not.*" I can't say that and you can't say that. No human being could ever say that. You cannot say "I change not."

You may change in the next 30 seconds. God is the only one who can say "*I change not; I am the Lord; I change not. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*" He does not change.

"*The gifts and calling of God are, without change (without repentance).*" Whatever God has done; He is doing. Whatever He is doing He will do. God does not change in His purpose, His program, in His Covenant; He does not change; God is the same.

We change:

**"Swift to its close
Ebbs out life's little day,**

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Earth's joys grow dim
Its glories fade away.

Change and decay
In all around I see,
Oh Thou who changest not
Abide with me."

He's the only one who does not change; He says, "*Abide with Me.*" I'm preaching an unchanging God. I'm preaching the faithfulness of God.

I know that most preachers preach the faithfulness of men. These men will say, "Be faithful, be faithful; keep the faith." What I am emphasizing is that men do remain faithful and men do by the grace of God remain in the faith.

I'm preaching this; His faithfulness, not yours. He is faithful; God is faithful and He will not change. Our Lord says, "*I am the Lord; I change not; therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" It is not your fault that you are not consumed, it is God's fault because He is faithful to His purpose. He said in **Isaiah 46:11**; "*I have spoken; I will bring it to pass.*" He also says, "*I have purposed it; I'll do it.*" God is the only one who can say that; you can't say that.

You can say this, "And I hope by Thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home." God is faithful to His purpose, He said; "*I have spoken it; I will do it. I purposed it; I will bring it to pass; I change not.*"

Thirdly: God is faithful to His Covenant.

I want you to listen to this in **Jeremiah 32**; "*I will make an everlasting covenant with them. I will not turn away from them to do them good.*"

Romans 8:29 says, "*Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He predestinated He called, whom He called, He justified, whom He justified He glorified.*"

Why was this done; "*If God be for us who can be against us?*" God is faithful to His covenant. God is faithful to His Son. "*All that My Father giveth me shall come to Me,*" Christ said. "*And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*"

God is faithful to His Word. "*Abraham believed God. He was fully persuaded that God would do all that He promised.*" Paul stood on the deck of that sinking ship and said, "*Sirs; be of good cheer. I believe God and it shall be exactly as He told me.*"

My friends; God is faithful. This is the hope that a believer has. That is the assurance and the confidence that a believer has. A true believer does not hope in himself or have confidence in himself.

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In **Philippians 3**, Paul says this; *“We are the circumcision; (we are the true Israel) who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.”*

I will tell you this; you can have confidence in God, in His purpose, in His covenant, in His promise and in His Word. *“He is faithful.”*

That is what David is saying and that is what our Master said; *“I have preached thy righteousness, purchased and provided. I have preached thy faithfulness.”* God is faithful!

Fourthly: He said, *“I have preached thy salvation.”*

David, don't you mean “our salvation?” No, he didn't, he said *“Thy salvation; I have preached thy salvation.”* He rightly called it God's salvation because the gift of God is salvation and eternal life. *“It is the gift of God.”*

Jonah said in **Jonah 2:9**; *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* In **Psalm 51:12**, David said; *“O Lord; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”* In **Psalm 3:8**, he declares; *“Salvation belongeth to the Lord.”* In **Psalm 37:39**, he says; *“The salvation of the righteous is of God.”*

My friends, salvation is not what we have done for God and not what we have done for ourselves. Salvation is not what we have done with God for ourselves but salvation is what God has done for us in His Son. Salvation is a gift of God.

One great old preacher years ago, preached one of the greatest outlines that I ever read on the subject **“Salvation is of the Lord.”** He said this; *“Whole of the work is of the Lord and Him only.”*

A corrupt, fallen, sinner is saved and delivered from his bondage and slavery of sin, darkness, and depravity and that he is, *“translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ.”*

He is made perfectly conformable to the image of God's Son. I am saying that the whole of that work from the beginning to the end is of the Lord and of Him only. No man makes any contribution to it in the slightest degree. *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* It is of the Lord in its origination; God planned it, God purposed it, God ordained it and God thought of it.

It is of the Lord in its execution; *“In the fullness of time he sent his Son into the world.”* We didn't send up to heaven for Him; He sent His Son into the world.

“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” Yes, wicked men nailed Him to the cross but *“they did what God before determined to be done.”*

Salvation is of the Lord in its execution and it is of the Lord in its application. Paul said, *“God who separated me from my mother's womb was pleased to reveal His Son in me.”*

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God revealed His Son in me. God the Spirit regenerated me; God the Spirit quickened me; God the Spirit convicted me; God the Spirit granted repentance unto me and God the Spirit granted faith to me by the Word of God.

God the Spirit keeps me, for salvation is of the Lord in its sustaining power; *“we are kept by the power of God through faith, (not by our faith), but through faith.”* We are not kept by our faithfulness but by His faithfulness.

“We are kept by the power of God through faith,” not apart from faith. We are not kept without faith or in spite of faith but through faith.

Salvation is of the Lord in its ultimate perfection. Someone said, “Emblazing across the skies eternally will be written *‘salvation is of the Lord.’*”

That old leper came to Christ and fell on his face and worshipped Him and said; *“If you will, you can make me whole.”* We have that backwards now. We are going to the sinner and saying “If you will, you can get God to make you whole.”

They think that if they will, through cooperation with God, they can be made whole. No sir! The leper said, *“If you will, you can make me whole.”*

The Publican in the temple said, *“Lord; be merciful to me the sinner.”* Then the thief on the cross said, *“Lord; remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”*

David said, *“I have preached thy salvation.”* We better put the emphasis where it is. Men cannot save themselves.

One day the disciples asked the Lord; *“Who then can be saved?”* He said, *“With men it is impossible.”* With God *“All things are possible.”*

We are going to have to turn our eyes away from the pew and we are going to have to turn them toward heaven and say, “Lord; if it please thee in this day, send mighty conviction, mighty Holy Spirit conviction and break men’s hearts.” Break men’s hearts and bring them to Christ for *“salvation is of the Lord.”*

Fifthly: Then David says, *“I preach Thy lovingkindness.”*

In **Psalm 51:1**, David says; *“Lord, have mercy on me according to thy lovingkindness. According to thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Herein is love, not that we love God but He loved us.”*

Ephesians 2 talks about what we were as we followed *“the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.”* It talks about the lust of the eyes and about us being *“children of wrath even as others.”* It talks about us following *“the prince of the power of the air.”*

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“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sin hath quickened us together with Christ.”

In **Romans 5:8** it says; *“But God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

My friends; I preach the love of God, the loving kindness and tender mercies of God Almighty. I preach that He loved us first and we love Him *“because He first loved us.”*

*“The love of God
How rich, how pure
How measureless, how strong.
It shall forever more endure
The saints and angel's song.*

*Could we with ink the ocean fill?
And were the skies of parchment made?
And every man on earth a scribe by trade.*

*To write the love of God above
Would drain that ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.”*

His love is everlasting. His love is infinite. His love is unchanging. His love is to guilty sinners and He pardons the guilty. Our Lord said, *“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”*

Let's preach the justice of God but let's preach also the mercy and love of God. Let's preach the holiness and righteousness of God. Let's preach to fallen sinners the love of Christ.

I will tell you this; the Father is portrayed in no more wonderful fashion than when He stood out there that day and waited for the Prodigal Son to come home. He fell on His neck and kissed Him in love and forgiveness.

I will tell you this; the shepherd is presented in no greater light than when he left the 99 and went out into the wilderness and hunted the one lost sheep. This is the love of God; Thy loving kindness.

Sixthly: Then David said, *“I have not concealed thy truth.”*

Let Paul speak for every true preacher; *“I have kept back nothing profitable unto you. I have not shunned to declare unto you the all council of God.”*

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The truth; what is the truth? Well, in one word, (condensed in one word), the truth is Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*I am the way; I am the truth; I am the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*"

All Scriptural truth is related to Christ. If we preach the truth we will preach Christ. If we preach Christ then we will preach the truth. It is said of some, "*They are ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.*" Why is this? The reason is because Christ is the truth.

The preacher's theme is God's righteousness, God's faithfulness, God's salvation, God's loving kindness, and God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the truth!