

Our Father in heaven, we come into your presence this morning to seek your face. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears are attentive to the cry. The face of the Lord is against evildoers to cut off the memory of them from the earth. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. As we come to the Psalter this evening, O Lord, we pray for a line to fathom the sufferings that You often place us in and through in this life. And grant me words, O God, a line that cannot possibly fathom the sufferings that our brave Savior endured on our behalf. Help us, O God, that we might love Him more ardently and wait for You more patiently in those moments in our lives when You seem to stand afar off and to watch as we suffer without coming to our aid. We offer these prayers, our Father, in Jesus' name. Amen. Please take your seats. And if you would, turn with me in your copy of the Word of God to the 40th Psalm. My intention to preach to the end of the first book of the Psalter, which means we'll come to an end next Sunday evening. Josh Fleming is preaching. Week after that, we'll preach Psalm 41. And after that, it remains to be seen as we march toward the summer, looking for a short series, perhaps the servant songs or the fourth servant song in Isaiah. and pray for me as I think through what to bring before your attention in these Sunday evenings before the summer. With the word of God open before us, please listen carefully. This is God's word. To the choir master, a psalm of David. I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the mirey bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. 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. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust. He does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie. 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. In sacrifice and offering You have not delighted, but You have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, behold, I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation. Behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord. I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. As for you, Lord, you will not restrain your mercy from me. Your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me. For evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see more than the hairs of my head. My heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me. Let those be put to shame and disappointed together who seek to snatch away my life. Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt. Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, aha, aha. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. May those who love your salvation say continually, great is the Lord. As for me, I'm poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You're my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. Amen. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of God endures forever. Well, the great lesson of this psalm is wait not for Godot. He never shows up. But waiting for God, well, that's a different matter altogether. And for sinner and saint alike, this psalm is replete with lessons. We can sing it as David sang it in ourselves to get a line to fathom our own sufferings. And also as David sang it, we

can look forward to a greater sufferer who carried a greater burden and seek a line to plumb the depths that no man can fathom. As Christ became sin in our room and in our stead, David looked forward to that day with the eyes of faith, and we look back with the same eyes, enlightened by the New Testament and particularly all of the Gospels. Well, there's a number of points this evening. Let's begin, first of all, with the peril that faith experiences, the peril that faith experiences. Yet again, David is up against it in this psalm, and the fact that God gives you psalm after psalm after psalm after psalm that aren't happy clappy, oh, praise the Lord, but as Dr. Davis said, paint the picture of sinners and saints slogging their way in the paths of righteousness, from their guilt through God's grace to glory, is a lesson to us that we can expect to sing such Psalms because we can expect to have such times. And these were excruciating for David. We can outline them under three heads. First of all, there was the pit of overwhelming destruction. Verse two, he drew me from the pit of destruction, out of the Mary bog. It carries the idea of a deep pit, which is bad enough, but at the bottom of that pit, there's a slimy, fathomless bog of mar and muck, like the pit that Jeremiah the prophet found himself in when the Jews cast him into one of the sewers beneath Jerusalem. In memory of that, I saw a video a couple of weeks ago, actually, on my Instagram feed of the kinds of job nobody wants to have, and the top of the list was this video, I think, from Vietnam or some other place, some God-forsaken part of the world, and there was a manhole cover, and there was a man standing above the manhole cover looking down, and the manhole cover was overflowing with raw sewage. And the man waited and he waited and he waited and after it was at least a minute and a half or so, whatever was blocking the sewer kind of gave way and all of that muck and mire and mess just sank into the depths. And then out of the pit crawled this man who'd been swimming down into the sewer to find the blockage and remove it. And he had no, he didn't even have a pair of goggles on him, much less an aqualung. He had to hold his breath as he sank down into the depths and came back relieved that his efforts had been successful. For David, no doubt, This was metaphorical. For Jeremiah, there was no metaphor, just a grim reality. And for our brave Savior, as He became sin in the presence of the holy God of heaven, the judge of all the earth, there was metaphor, but what a metaphor, the kind the like of which no man has ever seen or heard of before, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the depths of the pit and the pains he endured there when your brave Savior became sin on your behalf and answered for God for all of your misdeeds of thought and word and deed. And you can imagine Jesus singing these words as a little boy in the synagogue growing up in Nazareth. And the hope he would have that the pit would not be his eternal destiny, but there was eternity in that pit, the everlasting, infinite wrath of God. He drew me from the pit of destruction, out of the Maori bog, and set my feet upon a rock a foretaste of His resurrection. But to get to that rock, He first had to descend into the pit. As Rabbi Duncan said about the cup of Gethsemane, there was damnation in that cup. And Christian, for you He drank it lovingly. So there's the pit of overwhelming destruction. That's peril number one. Peril number two, the pain of innumerable transgressions. Verse 12, for evils have encompassed me beyond number. David feels surrounded by his failure, as if they've been hounding him. The hinds not of hell, but the hinds of his failure, his sin, his transgressions, have been hounding him. And he's exhausted from the chase. And now the hinds are all surrounding him, baying for his blood. hungry to sink their teeth in him. Evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities, the

hidden crookedness of his heart, they've overtaken me and I cannot see. They're more than the hairs of my head. My heart feels me. Once again, David has to say, and see and recognize that much of his trouble is of his own making. Wasn't it Oliver? I always get them confused, Oliver and Hardy, the well-upholstered one. Remember, he'd always say to his thinner friend, well, it's another fine mess you've got me into, got us, me into. He didn't say us, me into. Well, David can look himself in the mirror and say, it's another fine mess I have gotten myself into. William Plummer, in his wonderful magisterial commentary on the Psalms, says, "'Distress, perplexity, a terrible and protracted warfare with sin and hell are the lot of the saints.' Adams of Wintringham said, "'I found myself a sinner at threescore and ten, and I find myself a sinner still at fourscore.'" It doesn't matter how long you live, Christian. You'll have need to sing these words. The battle does not get easier as we get nearer to heaven. Sometimes it intensifies, even though our bodies may lose the appetite for the lusts of youth, shall we say, yet I imagine our minds will ever be a fertile sowing ground for the devil's temptation. Evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities have overtaken me. I cannot see. I've lost the ability to see a way out of this, to see a way through this, David says. They're more than the hairs of my head. My heart fills me. Our dying prayer, or our prayer to our dying day, Plummer says, must be, Father, forgive us our debts. I thought you knew this evening. Do you feel that your sins right now are choking you out, blinding your eyes, throttling your heart, your soul? You feel overwhelmed with sin? Your sins crawl all over you like cockroaches infesting a fridge in a student's house. You just move the fridge and they scurry everywhere. And your sins are all over you and you're discouraged. You have a friend in the psalmist, and God gives you these words, Christian, again, because you will need them every day. And of course, for Jesus here, our sins laid hold of him. He sang these words, too. My sins have overtaken me. I cannot see. They're more than the hairs of my head. My heart feels me. Of course, he had no sins of his own, but he had all of the sins of his people to answer for. They became his. Their guilt, their shame, their punishment were for him to bear. And when he bore them, he bore them alone into the presence of God. And again, you can imagine Jesus as a little boy singing these words and having a grim foretaste of what it would mean in human mind, finite and frail, unable to fathom what the cross would mean for him. And as he went through his life, these words and others in the Psalms disciplined him. They gave him a line to fathom the fathomless and appalling cost of our redemption. And as the day dawned and the hour approached, the man of sorrows, his soul became more and more sorrowful until in Gethsemane, as he's alone, wanting to find a way out, Father, is there any way, any other, is there any way, can this cut past from me? He's in full submission to his father's will, but he's asking, Father, is there any way? And you remember, unlike at his transfiguration, As the sun bangs on the door of heaven, no father runs to him. No voice from heaven shatters the silence of that night. He speaks, but he receives only the silence of heaven. And as Fred Leakey says in his wonderful commentary on the Easter week, the cross he bore, an angel came, but only an angel. The father had already begun to step back from his son in preparation for the final desertion when God would abandon him to the curse and to the wrath of Almighty God. An angel is sent, but only an angel. So you've got the pit of overwhelming destruction, the pain of innumerable transgressions, and then the petulance of gloating enemies. Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, aha, aha. It's a terrible thing when people gloat at your downfall. I have no idea what's going on at the

Masters at the moment. But you could imagine if my fellow countryman Rory had a putt to win the Masters, and he put it past a lip. And the other golfers laughed at him. Bad enough to miss the putt. But to have your competitors laugh when you did, what agony. And as Christ hung upon the cross, as we said this morning, they mocked him. Using the words of Psalm 3, there is no salvation for him in God. For David, that was a fear, but not the reality. But Christ, it was true. For there to be salvation for you, there could be no salvation for him. He saved others. He can't save himself, they said. Imagine having that thought ricocheting about your head as you become sin in the presence of God. One can only imagine the use the devils made of that line in Christ's soul as they unleashed their pent-up fury one last time against the Son of God and the Savior of men. And they thought they had won. We've done it. We've killed the Savior. There can be no salvation for Him, for them, because we have killed the one who came to save them. And of course, what a reversal Easter morning would bring. So, the peril faith experiences. Then secondly, moving on, the patience faith demonstrates The first line of this psalm is altogether too anemic. I waited patiently. Literally the Hebrew says, waiting, I waited. Waiting, I waited. David is, this is an active posture of the soul. He's patiently waiting. Active, persistent, patience. He's looking. Like Baxter, sermon illustration dog, when I'm eating at the table and all the kids are, and he's standing there, his eyes bright, tail wagging, feet prancing, but the plates are empty. But still he waits. Surely it would make a man embarrassed to eat all of his dinner. which I often do, because it tastes so good. But he's waiting. Surely there'll be some leftovers. And he's not just sleeping in the corner waiting to see if the plates someday turn up with a bit of beef or pork or whatever else is on the plate, on the offering. You know he's waiting with eager anticipation. That's the word here of David, waiting. I waited. Now when you read it, of course, It sounds all so sudden. Waiting, I waited for the Lord. He inclined to me, right? And it sounds just like it happened, just no white space whatsoever. But who knows the hours that separated the second line of verse one from the first? It was not immediate. Otherwise, it would be superfluous for David to describe the wait. Waiting, I waited. The patient's faith demonstrates And God inclined to me, it's a very tender word. It's like when your grandchild falls and cuts their knee and the wee boy comes running in from the yard and his knee's bleeding and his eyes are crying and he looks up at you and says, Papa, I hold you. which of course he means, pick me up. And what do you do? You stand there aloof, you go, son, shake it off, son, it's not that bad. No, you might have done that with your own son, but not your grandson, right? When your wee grandboy comes in crying with his knees bloody, and he said, Papa, I hold you. What do you do? You bend over, you come down to his level. You don't tar above the lad. You get down to his level. You're inclined to him. You wrap him in your arms. You pick him up and say, there, there. Take you to granny, and she'll put a plaster on it. But David puts these words side by side, the waiting and the result. Because he wants you to know, Christian, that though at times God will leave you waiting long, he will not leave you waiting forever. It's just not possible. You may be waiting this evening, and God has not yet come. But the fact that God has not yet come is one thing, but it would be entirely A different thing if God would never come and David is letting you know that can never be. When you wait for God, he will come to your aid. He dragged me up from the pit of destruction. You almost hear the suction of the mud holding on to David's body as God grabs his son and pulls him out of the slop in the mire. out of the Maori bog and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. No longer is he

searching for the bottom in the mire, but he's a rock to stand upon. And Christian, God has given you these words and this hope because one day you will need it. Do not despair in the pit. Wait for God from the pit and God will pull you out of it. It's only a matter of time. So the peril faith experiences, the patience faith demonstrates, the people faith evangelizes. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise not to my God, but to our God, our God. It's amazing how suffering can contract our mind. It's very difficult when you're in trouble, real trouble, depression, enduring rounds of chemotherapy, a difficult marriage. It's very difficult to get your mind out of your own headspace and think of other people. Suffering can vacuum pack your mind like those chicken breasts in Kruger Republic sucks it in. But the moment David gets out of this trouble, his pronouns change from I and me to we and us. 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." David sees the reason why God put him in this state. Not just to have Psalm 40, that's part of it. If David hadn't been in the pit, we would never have had these songs to sing. But in his own generation, he realizes he's got a story to tell, and that story will encourage other people. It's like when God had mercy on Paul, and Paul said, if God will forgive me, and I was the worst of sinners. Well, he did that so that every other sinner could have hope. Because if he'll forgive me, he can forgive any. And not only can he, but will he. Many will see and fear, people often struggle with that term, fearing God. You've got to always remember there's two types of fear in the Bible. There's the filial fear of a son who's been redeemed, and his fear is the thought of offending, displeasing God in Christ, grieving the Holy Spirit. How can I sin against such a God? Not because God is so terrible, but because God is so good and so wonderful. That's the filial fear of a son. That's the kind David's speaking of here. There's also the servile fear of a slave, the terror of a man or woman, the thought that I have offended God outside of Christ, and unless I find a Savior, I must face Him alone. That's you this evening. There's a Savior on offer this evening who's willing to face the anger of God that you might become a son of God forever. Calvin says, I understand fear in general to mean the feeling of piety which is produced in us by the knowledge of the power, equity, and mercy of God. And David's suffering in the bog produced that in others. As they saw God's kindly, fatherly dealings with him, they learned to fear God in the sonship type way, the filial way, and to put their trust in Him. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go after, who go astray, after a lie. Spurgeon is beautiful here. A single, simple-eyed, sorry, a simple, single-eyed confidence in God is the sure mark of blessedness. A man may be as poor as Lazarus, as hated as Mordecai, as sick as Hezekiah, as lonely as Elijah, but while his hand of faith can keep its hold on God, none of his outward afflictions can prevent his being numbered among the blessed. But the wealthiest and most prosperous man, who has no faith, is accursed, be he who he may be. No, be he who he may. Sorry, it's a virgin's language. Many will see in fear and put their trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the pride, to Rahab, literally, which is an old nickname for Egypt, which is always Israel's problem. Rather than trusting God, they'd look to Egypt, a metaphor for worldly strength and power and security. Sure, there's bondage, but you can be safe in Egypt under Pharaoh's watchful eye. To those who go astray after a lie, there is no truth in Egypt, only the lie of idolatry." Great quote from Tim Keller. It's one thing to have God as your boss, your mentor, or your example. But if you want God as savior, you have to replace what you are already looking to as savior.

Everyone's got something. What's it for you? Whenever trouble strikes, where do you run for comfort? Where do you go for hope? Your bank balance, your investments, your reputation, your position in the church, your appearance? Where do you look for comfort when trouble strikes in your life? You can either have that as your savior and one day it will forsake you and sooner than you might like to think, or you can have God as your savior, Keller says, You have multiplied. David speaks later of sins he can't number. Here he thinks of mercies he can't number. 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. Numerous sins in his life, And yet there are numerous mercies and thoughts of love in his God. And the two can exist side by side in the same man's life at the same time. We can find ourselves full of sin. as Christians. David found himself here in this psalm, and he lifts his eyes to God. He doesn't find a God full of wrath and anger and malice and ill will. He finds a God who looks down upon him with a heart of love and compassion and of mercies. And even though his problems were largely his own fault, God rescued him from the pit And David determines to spread the news far and wide. And of course, these words find their fulfillment in Christ. Psalm 22, Hebrews 2, same verse quoted. Christ speaks about proclaiming God's name amongst the brethren every Lord's Day. That I'm not the one really preaching this evening. Christ is the one preaching. It's His voice that's being heard. As Paul says to the Ephesians, a place where Christ never visited. Paul says, Christ came and preached peace to you. Well, how did he do that when Paul was preaching? Christ was preaching, which makes the sacred desk a place of unfathomable glory and honor, one I'm not worthy to receive. So we've seen, let's see, the peril faith experiences, the patience faith demonstrates, the people faith evangelizes. David is determined not to be a dead end to truth. He wants to encourage the brethren. That's what Paul means by speaking the truth in love amongst the congregation. It's how we grow together as we testify of God's mercies toward us. And then the posture faith adopts. As David thinks through his recent experiences, he learns this lesson. In sacrifice and offering, you have not delighted, but you've given me an open ear. Literally, you've dug an ear for me. burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, behold, I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart. Now again, notice, this is the same man who says, evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They're more than the hairs of my head. My heart feels me. And yes, verse six and seven and eight speak of Christ. We'll speak with that in a second. But David's writing these words, and the same things are in his heart at the same time. It's Paul in Romans 7. I delight in the law of the Lord in my inward man. Yet the good that I want to do I do not do, the evil that I will not do that I find I practice. do not lose heart, Christian. What is the posture that faith adopts? And it can simply be summarized in three words. Obedience, not ceremony. It's very common When people who are religious find themselves in trouble, especially if it's trouble of their own making, their first response is to double down in religious rites and rituals and rubrics, to try harder at church, to go more often, morning and evening maybe, and to be more faithful to God in the outward ceremonies of religion. But God is after a deeper target. He's not about rites and rituals. Even if those rites and rituals point to Jesus, burnt offering and sin offerings, they're good. God requires them. But they're not the heart and soul of true religion, right? Calvin says, all men have a vague general veneration for God, but

very few really reverence Him. And wherever there is great ostentation in ceremonies, sincerity of heart, is rare indeed. Here's a man who is well-versed in popish superstition, all the waving of the incense, and all of the ceremonies, and the, let us now worship God, and all these high, holy kind of ceremonies. And yet how close we can appear with our lips, and how far away you can be in your life and heart. There's a beautiful illustration from that. We need to be quick. But if you turn quickly in Zechariah 7, from where we've been. I've been in Zechariah this week. I've been living this prophet so I could preach him to you. Not the kind of prophet I can preach on the fly. But in Zechariah 7, the people of God come to Zechariah with a question. In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. Now, the people of Bethel had sent Charizer and Regem-Melech and their men to entreat the favor of the Lord. saying to the priests of the house of the Lord of hosts and the prophets, should I weep and abstain in the fifth month as I have done for so many years? Should we continue weeping and abstaining and fasting in our prayers? That's what they were saying. And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me. Say to all the people of the land and the priests, when you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh for these 70 years of exile, was it for me that you fasted? When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? Were not these the words that the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous with her cities around her and the south and the lowland were inhabited? And God is saying here, it's the age old story. God's people were earnest in ceremonies, weeping and fasting and rending their clothes. But as God said, to the prophet Joel, rend your heart and not your garments, right? That's what, that's, David's point is in Psalm 40, so much of our religion can be for our own benefit, the pomp, the ceremony, we love it. But if we're not loving God in it, with a broken and contrite heart, when the mouth speaks and the heart is not broken, God is deaf and does not hear. And yet these words point most clearly, don't they, to Jesus. It's interesting. So, verse six, in sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you've given me an open ear. Literally, you've dug out my ear, which is an expression we use in Northern Ireland. When you don't listen to your mom, mom will say, dig out your ear, son. In other words, get that wax out of your ear, right? You're not listening to me. And David says that, Lord, you've given me a dug out ear. And the Hebrew, it could mean that God is clearing out the impediment of his ear, or some commentators think he's, it could also mean, you're giving me a pierced ear, a reference to the all ceremony for the servant, you remember in the law, if you were, there was no welfare state in those days, no social security, and if you lost your job, or there'd been a plague upon your crops, you had no money and no food. what a man would do, he would sell himself into the hands of a kindly master who would look after him for six years, and on the seventh year he'd go free. But if after six years you discover this is a good man, he's kind, he looks after me, I want for nothing. Do I take my chances with the job market, with the economy in free fall at the moment, or do I stay with this man? And if you wanted to stay with this man, you could say to him, let me not go next year, keep me forever. And the master would take your ear to the doorpost of his house, and he would pierce it through with an awl. as a sign that you wanted to have only one ear, or you have an ear for the voice of one master all your days. And there's a potential that David is speaking of that. Who knows? But interestingly, when this psalm was translated by the Jews in Alexandria into Greek, and we have the Septuagint, They didn't know

what to do with this verse, and they kind of did an NIV move. They kind of interpreted it. In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but a body you have prepared for me. And interestingly, the writer to the Hebrews, whoever that was, liked that translation and quotes it in Hebrews 10, five, six, and seven, speaking of Christ. God has given me a body to serve him with and to bleed with and to die in the redemption of my people. a sign even that the translation of Scriptures, when it's done faithfully by godly men, can be helped along by God and pleasing to Him. You need not fear that this is not the Word of God because it's a translation. It's a good translation. And what it says, the Hebrew original, says very closely such that if you read Dr. Davis's translations, they're quirky and funny and beautiful. Surely goodness and mercy shall dog my steps all the days of my life. I love the way he does that. But you know what it means when you read the ESV, you can follow along. But it pictures Jesus here, our great Savior, what a hope for a sinner like David and me. Behold, I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart." Ever notice with dogs? It's always a good day for a walk. It might be raining, it might be thundering overhead, but if the master says, walkies, the dog, Teal, jumps up from his bed, Teal wags, even when he's arthritic and likes lying and sleeping most of the day like poor 11-year-old Baxter, he still loves to go for a walk. It's always a good day for a walk, and Jesus, our Savior, this describes Him, His beauty, His glory. He loves doing the will of His Father, even when that will is, okay, son, you must become sin for these people. And Jesus will say, not my will, but thy will be done. My delight, my food and my drink is to do the will of the Father. That you're justified, Christian, by the obedience of a Savior who was obedient not just in life, but to the point of death, even the curse of death on the cross, on which He descended into hell on the cross. Crucified dead and buried, what they did to his body. He descended into hell, what happened to his soul upon the cross. It's not a chronological line, crucified, dead, and buried, and then went to hell. No, crucified, dead, and buried. What happened to his body mattered. The Apostles' Creed was written in the context of Gnosticism, where they said the body doesn't matter, and the Apostles' Creed says, no, what happened to his body matters. without it, but what happened to his soul, the unseen sufferings of Christ, he descended into hell. That's where the full weight of God's wrath was borne, in the presence of the Holy One. It's a bit out of order, but excuse me just to draw your attention to it. Look at verse 11 again. They go together. As for you, Lord, you will not restrain your mercy from me, your steadfast love, your faithfulness will ever preserve me. Why? For evils have encompassed me beyond number. My iniquities have overtaken me and I cannot see. There are more than the hairs of my head. My heart feels me. I know it's out of order in the Psalm. I meant to set earlier, but it escaped me. But isn't it wonderful that the presence of great sin not only does not disqualify you from the mercy of God, David argues it as a reason why he should receive the mercy of God. You will not forsake me. You'll not restrain, hold back your mercies from me, your steadfast love, your stubborn promise to be kind to me and loving to me, no matter what I have done. I know they will preserve me even now in my sinfulness from which I'm repenting. Why? Because I am up to my neck in sin. And that's the argument. I am pleading your covenant mercy that not even sin, innumerable sins, can disqualify me from the chesed love of God. And David pleads the one in favor of the other. And even though you've fallen like Peter, when you can say, Father, you know all things, you know that I love you. And you know that even though I've sinned,



and at times I have this awful delight in sin, I delight in your law more, and I come to you, Father, do not cast me out. Psalm 40 tells you, you have a friend in heaven whose love for you is more stubborn even than your love for sin at times. And he will not let you go no matter how often you try and let go of him. And then lastly, and very quickly, the prayer faith offers from verse 13 to the end. Notice it begins and ends with a need for quick help. Despite the deliverance of verse one and two, David's troubles are far from over. He still needs help unquickly. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me. And the last verse, you are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. Four and a half, he's saying, Lord, come quickly. Yet all this praise before in the psalm was uttered by one who was delighted, not because his sorrows were absent, but because his Savior had come and was very much present with him in his sorrow. Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, aha, aha. It's surely a delightful study into the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, that when he suffered upon the cross and he could have reached for curses like these, that those be put to shame and disappointed together who seek to snatch away my life, let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt. And there are many verses like that Christ could have reached for with his dying breath. And yet instead, he chose for better words. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Isn't he lovely? Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for Jesus. Even when the Psalm put a cannon cocked and loaded into his hands to obliterate his enemies. Yet his heart overflowed with kindness and not vengeance. That is not to say one day he will not come in vengeance. We knew the Bible too well to doubt that, and yet on the cross when he became a sin and received no mercy for himself, His heart overflowed with mercy to others, even those mocking Him and crucifying Him with delight. And if His heart were such for His implacable enemies, then no soul in this room need to doubt His tenderness toward them this evening. No matter what they have done, no matter what they deserve, Christ's heart toward them is one of mercy and kindness and great patience. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die? Give us such faith, O Lord, to delight in your will for ourselves and to wait with great patience, even when it seems that you have forgotten us and have abandoned us to the wait and will never come to our help. We thank you for words like Psalm 40 that remind us, though we're in the pit now, we will not be in the pit forever. Our name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and we will stand in the rock of our salvation through the endless days. In Christ's name, amen.