

S.W. - Dec - 11, 1977 A.M.
(P) -

GOING UP

Psalm 40

INTRODUCTION:

We are all familiar with elevators and escalators that carry us up. And if there is an operator, they usually say to you - "going up". And you make the choice.

Of course, the ^{last} thing about it is, just so you make your (last trip up). That is the thing to be concerned about.

In Psalm 40, we find something about (Christian experience). There are too many Christians today hunting for the things that are found in Christ. It is very strange that after nearly 2,000 years, of Christian experience and testimony, that the Christian life should be so misunderstood.

The Christian life ought to reveal something in this world. It is a straight and narrow road. In fact, the traffic is all one way.

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Billy Sunday once said, live the Christian life and men will admire you. Women will respect you. Little children will love you. And God will crown your life with success. And when the twilight of your life mingles with the dawn of eternity, men will speak your name with honor. And baptize your grave with tears. As God atones for you the evening chimes.

In this experience, if we go, no deeper into Christ than we allow him

to get into us, then we will not get very high.

Some people have the (strangest ideas) of what a Christian is. A little girl once said that Christian people are those who go to the church and talk about religion and then bring the parson home to tea. There are lots of people today whose intelligence of being a Christian is no higher than that.

Here in (Psalm 40), you have the (whole story) of the Christian. And all of it is in the direction of going up.

I. CLEANED UP - V. 1-2

V. 1 - (2A) V. 1 - The Psalmist said, that he had waited patiently for the Lord. And the Lord had inclined his ear toward him. And the Lord had cleaned him up.

If you catch the (picture) - it is a miry bog, a horrible pit, it is the position of being destitute, desolate, dreary - in great distress and trouble. And he is down in this miry pit. This miry bog.

It is miry clay. This implies that the poor prisoner here would be sure to sink. And every effort to draw one foot out, would press the other foot just a little bit deeper. Have you ever tried to walk across the (marsh or the swamp) Have you ever been out hunting and had such an experience. One foot, goes down, and when you try to pull it out - the other one goes down. Now this was going on day after day with this man. He was about ready to perish.

Now this can happen in inward distress. Or it can come from outward trials, as well.

Now the story of Victor Hugo, I think, in which he tells of a man caught in the quick sand. One moment this man is walking in safety. Then his path begins to change. And it clings to his feet a bit. A few more steps, and he is bogged down to his knees. He then begins to struggle, but the more he struggles, the deeper he sinks. And soon the sand has reached his waist. And by the time the unfortunate victim has become desperate, he now realizes that he is being slowly swallowed by a blind mouth. And he is absolutely without mercy. And he cries for help - but there is no response. He looks to the clouds floating in the blue and the birds, as they soar above his head. They seem to mock him. He prays, he curses. And he struggles. And every ounce of his energy is used, but the mouth still swallows him even faster. At last, his final wild wail ends in a gulp - the cruel sand has filled his mouth and the fatal struggle is over. Now the Psalmist tells us that he was sinking. And this was horrible to be sure. And he was crying desperately for help. And there was but one that could answer that cry. And he stretched out a helpless hand. And ceased him and cleaned him up. Bringing him up, and setting him up on a rock.

The eastern prison, sometimes they used to dig a pit in the earth. Just a square hole and the prisoners were flung into it. There was no covering from the Heavens. The rains came and the surface water drained in. The poor prisoner was helpless. Sometimes often in the miry clay. This is a word picture that

was used by Jeremiah 38:6 as he was a prisoner. "Cast Jer into The dungeon & let Jer. down

with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; so Jer sunk in the mire"

Man spoke to King about Jer - v12-13 tells - Took old Rags under his Arms & tied cords around & lifted -

It might also be a little reference to the pit in 37:24, 28 of Genesis. *Kept in Court of Prison*

Now that's where David said he was. Have you discovered where you, yourself are today. Have you discovered that you were born in iniquity. Born in prison, in sin. So we shall start with that pit on our way up. We are all born there. And some not only live there but they die there. They begin with the experience of life in the pit, and they stay in that miry clay.

Colridge was a fine poet. But he was subject to opium. And he hired a man to watch him day and night. And at the same time, he laid plans to deceive and cheat the very man whom he had hired. He was so completely out of control.

Thomas Marshall, a great legal mind, was brilliant. But the grip of strong drink was so strong in his life. That he stood outside a blacksmith shop one day and said, if I knew it would take away this appetite for drink, I would hold that red hot piece of iron in my hand, and sing the doxology while I did it.

These men knew what they were and they knew they were imprisoned in the miry clay. But there are a great many people who are down in the pits - and are unconscious of it. Have you discovered where you are. Have you ever come to Jesus and asked him to clean you up, and to lift you up. And to put you on your way.

Y. 2 B The Psalmist said that he not only cleaned him up but he placed him upon a rock. Now if your feet are upon a rock, you know it. It is God's will. We should know that we are saved. And we will be able to say - blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. That is a wonderful Christian experience. To give knowledge of salvation to other people.

Psalm 18:31 - for who is God but the Lord. And who is the rock except
our God.^h God's help had restored him. Brought him up, set him up on the rock,
and cleansed him.

I read the story about a boy in a prep school who had a great head master.
He was a wonderful influence on many of the boys. A. Lindsey Gregg said, that
on New Years Eve he used to invite us all to a party. Out in the play ground,
a bondfire was erected. It was so large, that we used to warn the local fire
begade that when they saw the reflection in the sky, it was not a house on fire,
but our own bondfire. After we had tea, we gathered, put on our hats and coats,
and made a circle around the bondfire. Then the head master lit it - and the
flames leaped up, while we looked on in admiration. And then when we turned
around, we saw that the head master had gone. Presently, he re-appeared. Carrying
under his arm a book, a book that I soon recognized as the detention book. The
books that our names were put in when we had not done our lessons. When we had
not behaved ourselves properly.

A proceeding with which I was all too familiar. The head master brought out
this book and our faces fell. And then he came into the circle, and the blow
of the bondfire and said to us boys - that here is the record of your past miss
deeds. Here is your wrong doing written in ink. This is the last day of the
year. We are going to start the new year a fresh. And all of the past is going
to be forgotten, forgiven, and blotted out. He took that great book and swayed
it backwards and forwards, until with one great heave - he pitched it into the
heart of the bondfire. How we cheered. We threw up hats in the air. One year
I threw mine into the bondfire. It was a great thing to know the past was
blotted out.

Have you had such an experience of that sort. The knowledge of salvation unto the remission of your sins. Where God says, I will cast all of your sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19. And how wonderful that is, just like that bonfire. When the Psalmist had been brought out of the mire, then the sins and the iniquity, as God said - I will remember no more. Heb. 7:12. And what a chapter that is. It ought to be a chapter in your experience. Has God set your feet upon a rock. Have you been cleaned up and brought up out of the pit and put in safety. Upon that rock which is infallible. Upon Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. Upon the rock of his infallible word. John 3:36. Thy word is settled in Heaven. The security of the saved is, that his feet is upon the rock.

God's help had restored him and cleaned him up. The Christian experience is going up.

long-haired man - She Store - Selecting hair shoes - Mary Jones Flayed - Bent the sides of shoes he was interested in - Finally explained to Clark - "You see," said to, I'm an orchestra conductor & I want shoes that squeak in the same key!"

II. TUNED UP - V. (3)

Buncher spent night in West Ken. Hostess asked how would you like your eggs - soft, medium, or hard? He expressed a preference - lady said to Cook "Two Verses Mandy" - soon Mandy singing High -

Now he has been placed upon the rock and he says that he has established my going - I am now settled upon this rock. And what a great truth that he is there. In doing so, he has put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto our God. And many shall hear it. Many shall see it. The new song - he is tuned up, cleaned up, and tuned up. Now this is a song that can be seen. Now that is the right kind of song. Now that is the sort of song, that by God's grace I may have. It is a song that could be heard from me, that might not be too tuneful - but we can all go out and sing a song that can be seen.

Plugged Buncher - Hostess explained - Mandy can't tell this - when we want the egg soft - she singer one stanza by a Harp - Medium - 28 stanzas - 351 if or to be heard

Let me ask you - is that part of the chapter missing in your life?

What was the source of this new song. From what fountain of inspiration does it come forth. It is not merely just the song of youth. It is not just the song of the weary soul, who is fed up with life. It is not the song of one who has fame and fortune. It is not the song of one who out of his strong determination forces a song. But he says, this is (a gift of God.) He hath put a song in my mouth. The music he needed. He sings of the fresh mercies of this new song. He is now upon solid ground. It is a song of forgiveness. It is a song of praise. Then the noise and the mire of the pit have now given way to heavenly music. It is a song of gratitude. And it is a new song that he is singing.

Why should we not covet this song ourselves? It is an unspeakable blessing. For he says, many shall (see it) There are a number of illustrations that I can give, Ole Bull had a friend by the name of Lief Ericson, by name. This friend had no ear for music. He didn't even like music. And he'd never go hear Ole Bull play. He could take that bow and use it like a magic wand. He could make the tempest crash, and the thunder, and the birds sing, and the brooks leap - and bring laughter to happy children. He refused to go hear him. But the great violinist won him - not by a lecture, and not by breaking the violin over his head. But he went down to the place where his friend worked. And he played for him. He played with all the power of a genius. And what was the result. It is easy to guess - the friend's heart became warm, his face softened, and his eyes grew big with tears. And the soul of that (scientist and inventor) was captured by the charm of the music - by what he heard.

So that this singer of the new song seeks to take captive those who hear and

see his song.

I read of a layman once who one day knelt in a mission hall beside a miserable man, who was just down and out a tramp. His knees were sticking through his trousers. And he laid his hand on his shoulder and said, my friend, "I know one who can forgive you of your sins." He looked up, and he said, sir, will you say that again. And the ~~layman~~ tramp said to him - come home with me. And so he took the man and went into his home. And when he went to visit in his home, there was a bare room. In one side of the room, he says, there is my bed. There was a sack lying in the other corner of the room. And he said, that is my wife's bed. And that is all in the world that we have. I have done no work for nine years. And he had vowed that he would not work again. He was a professional beggar. He said he would go out and beg a little money and then go off and drink. At 14, he ran away from home. He tramped through England, Scotland, and wound up in Africa. And there deserted the Army. And there became a (drifter) - and vowed that he would never do an honest day's work. There in that room he opened his heart to Christ. And the Lord took him up and cleaned him up out of that pit of miry clay. And put a new song in his mouth. And tuned him up. Six weeks after that, he was converted. And this layman took him to Spurgeon Tabernacle, to listen to (Chapman) preach and (Alexander) sing. Mr. Alexander was conducting the music. And right at the back stood this newly converted man. We stood up together and sang. And when we came to the (second verse), Mr. Alexander said, I want you all to stop. There is a man over there in the far distance, and he is singing this song with (the light of the glory of Heaven in his face). Come up, my brother, and sing us a verse by yourself.

I said to my poor old drunken friend, up you go. And he went up to the platform and sang a verse and gave his testimony. And Mr. Alexander gave him his own song book. And he brought it back under his arm.

This man went out and (found work) God gave him a (beautiful home) Every Sunday afternoon his (table) was laid for (six people). He would sit at one end, his wife at the other. And out in the highways and byways, they would go, until they had four poor wretched fellows. Such as he had been. And then they would sit down to tea together. There was no vase of flowers in the middle of the table. But there he put the family Bible. After tea, there would be a prayer meeting. And the promises of God would be taken for those guests of his. There is no way to tell how many hopeless drunkards he led to Christ.

Some years after that, he called this layman and he said - I have come by to say goodbye. My old life has found me out. I am going to the hospital. My ruined body cannot live much longer. I'll meet you up yonder. He went to the hospital and he lived three weeks. And they said that the men in the beds on either side of him were led to Christ. The nurses spoke of him with tears in their eyes. When they thought of the great things that God had done. (His life was a song that could be seen.)

This man was tuned up. Have you a song in your heart like that. Do people see it when you walk into your business, when you walk into your social circles. Or into your family groups. When you go up and down the streets and into the market places. Do they see something of this melody or song going along with you. Is Heaven radiating out from you. Now that is what the Psalmist said - The Lord had done. And what a benefit this was. He was cleaned up. Then he

tuned up.

III. HE WAS OPENED UP - V. (6)

He says my ears hast thou opened. True faith opens up the eyes and the ears of the believer.

V, 5

If you study V. (5) and 6, you will discover that his understanding of the Holy Scripture was opened up. And that he offered himself as a sacrifice.

V. (7) - He says, God has given instruction through the role of his book. What the prophets have demanded, and what God has demanded. He says, my ears have been opened up and I understand, what God would have me to do.

Has your ears been opened up, to (understand what God wants you to do.)
Not somebody else - but what he wants you to do.

IV. THE PSALMIST WAS CRANKED UP

Now I don't mean this in a despairing way. But I am simply following the idea of going up in the Christian experience. Somehow the spirit of God had truly got him to a place where his spring had been wound up. And he was running. He was running full steam ahead.

V. 8 - He says, I am a (joyful servant) first. He delights to do the will of God. He has given himself as a sacrifice. He has now placed his life at God's disposal.

V. 9 - Second, he is a (faithful proclaimer) of the way of God. The righteousness. God's doing and God's work is being done through him. And he is spreading God's revelation. This is what he says.

V. 10 - Third, he has (uncovered God's faithfulness). He says, I have kept nothing to myself, about God's salvation. I have been faithful to unfold this.

Now here is a living reality at work in his life.

V. 11 - 12 - Fourth, the (problems of adversaries). He says, my problems outnumber the hairs on my head. Now this fellow is really cranked up. Because he is drawing from some strength other than himself.

V. 13 - The Demon forces oppose him.

V. 14-15 - He asks that they be confounded through the power of God. And that they will be judged through God's doing. Talk about somebody really being cranked up and turning on for God - this man was. A joyful servant, a faithful proclaimer, uncovering the faithfulness of God. Handling his problems

which he knew were multitudes in this way.

V. CAUGHT UP - V. 17

V. 17 " Make no tarrying, O my God. He urges God to not tarry. He is going to be caught up. Now this is the Christian experience. And this, my friends, is the last chapter of the Christian life. Someday I will be caught up.

Now, I know these things are what the Psalmist says - make no tarrying, O my God.

Now if we are going to find a last chapter, in the Christian experience of going up, we must tell you that the Heavens are to open. And the Son of God will come forth in triumph. And we are going to be forever with the Lord. Many of us are looking forward to that great day and that great time. It is going to be the greatest time of all.

Now it was a great time. When I first came to know Christ. But it is going to be a far greater day when I see him. We are going to be caught up. And this is going to be an act of divine power. There is no law on this earth that is going to hold us. It is going to be by the uplifting power of God. And it is a wonderful thing for us to look forward too.

I John 3:3 - He that hath this hope within, purifyth himself.

Now if you are walking in this way, looking forward to the coming of your Lord, then it is a wonderful thing.

X
I read about a man once who had a garden. And he had a gardener. And he joined in the competition that his garden might be selected for one of the prizes. He knew that when he filled in the form, to enter his garden in the competition that the judge may come at any time. He says we do not know when. But we will have to keep the weeds down. He talked to the gardener about this. Now the next morning, and each time, as the man went out to see him. He would say something like this. What about those weeds. Is the lawn nicely cut today. I wonder if the judge will come today. Are the edges straight, are the plants trimmed and pruned. What about that border over there. Is that just as neat as it can be. Everyday, the man said we waited in readiness for the judge. One day he came. And then later on he said, we received a beautiful certificate that was given for a reward that was given as a reward for a garden of charm and beauty. The owner said, I took it down to the gardener and said, now friend, I want you to frame it, at home, and keep it. It is your reward.

The question today is, are there some weeds in your life. What about the garden of your heart. Are the edges straight and trimmed. The judge may come today. The judge of all the earth. The judge of glory. Are you ready for him.

Would you be ready to meet him with joy.

In that remarkable book, Look Up Brother, Dr. W. A. Criswell gives us a

note to conclude this sermon on going up. He describes the prayer of Elijah as not being side-tracked in the dead letter office. But that was answered from Heaven. And that we serve a God who is never dejected. A God who is never discouraged. And a God who will never be defeated.

He tells of an old farmer plowing in the field. He was asked what he would do if he knew Jesus was coming immediately? He answered, "I would finish plowing this furrow to the end of the row." And anytime, any day, an hour - he may come. When he comes, he will find us hard at our task, doing his work in the world and in the earth.

Our days are numbered. But Christ's best days are yet ahead. Look up brother! How true it is, we can't lose if we are on his side. Because if God be for us, who is against us. And who is going to separate us from the love of Christ. We are going up.

And it is better higher up.