

Psalms 40,41

Psalms 41:4 I said, "Lord be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."

Each of these psalms begins with a positive message in respect to past experience with God. Each also encounters sin and the struggles of those who fall. In the end there is a return to the former blessing.

Psalms 40: David combines his experience of blessing with principles that he has found to be tried and true. The psalm begins with "patiently for the Lord and then God inclined and heard his cry. He has experienced a deliverance from miry clay to having his feet set upon the rock. He has been given a new song of praise to our God.

Some guiding principles are offered: Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside for lies; Sacrifice and offering You did not desire... burnt offering and sin offering You did not desire.

So David is led to give praise, "Many, O Lord my God are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order...they are more than can be numbered. O Lord, You Yourself know I

have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

But past blessing sometimes turn into present distress. David feels extreme shame over his failures. His iniquities are more than the hairs of his head "therefore my heart fails." His misery is complicated by the animosity of those who wish him ill. David prays for deliverance and for vindication. While he offers a benediction of blessing and assurance, David sees himself as poor and needy and yet as one who is "thought upon" by the Lord.

Psalms 41: This psalm begins with a principle and then seems to apply it immediately to a circumstance that David is enduring. In fact the principle, appears to be inconsistent with David's actual experience. "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed of the earth. The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sick bed."

Against this expectation David confesses his sin, "heal my soul for I have sinned against

You." And yet, David prays as a righteous man who seeks vindication. What he hears is the rejoicing of his enemies over his trouble, he sees that they are eager to witness his demise. David is isolated by their sentiment, "An evil disease clings to him and now that he lies down he will rise up no more." Even a trusted friend who had eaten at David's table had turned on him.

David might be isolated but he is not alone. God is with him and David cried out to God for mercy. His endurance to the present prayer indicated that God was not displeased and that his enemies had not triumphed over him. He was comforted by God's strength, "You uphold me in my integrity." and by God's promise, "and set me before Your face forever."

A final benediction, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen."