

BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 40 (OSB 39): Rescue and new beginnings

Bible Study Preparation and Materials Needed:

Reflecting on: Psalm 40 (OSB 39) - God is Close to the Brokenhearted

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Optional Practice

If time permits, begin or conclude this Bible study with an antiphonal Psalm reading. Have students read the psalm aloud in two groups, line by line. Encourage them to hear David's emotion, allowing it to become their own prayer.

Leader Notes

Things to Watch For:

Some students may have experienced real trauma. Don't push for details or force sharing.

If discussions stall, that's okay. Silence is better than forced responses.

Be ready to follow up individually with students who seem especially affected.

Adaptation Options:

For smaller groups (under 8), skip partner discussions and keep everything as full group.

For larger groups (over 15), use more small group time.

If your group is less familiar with Holy Scripture, add more context about psalms in general.

For groups that are more reserved, extend individual reflection time and reduce sharing time.

Memory Verse:

“He brought me up out of a miserable pit and from miry clay; and He established my feet on a rock, and He guided my steps aright.”

- Psalm 40 (39 OSB):2

Psalm 40 (OSB 39)

*1 For the End; a psalm by David.**

*2 I waited patiently for the Lord,
and He heeded me;
And He heard my supplication,*

*3 And brought me up
out of a miserable pit
And from miry clay;
And He established my feet on a rock
And kept straight my steps.*

*4 He put a new song in my mouth,
A hymn to our God;
Many will see and be afraid,
And shall hope in the Lord.*

*5 Blessed is the man whose hope
is the name of the Lord,
And who did not look
into vanities and false frenzies.*

*6 Many, O Lord my God,
are the wonders You performed,
And in Your thoughts there is no one
who shall be likened to You;
I declared and said,
“They are multiplied beyond number.*

*7 Sacrifice and offering You did not will;
But a body You prepared for me;
A whole burnt offering and a sin
offering You did not require.”*

*8 Then I said, “Behold, I come
(it is written of me
in the volume of the book);*

*9 I willed to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law in the midst of my heart.”*

*10 I proclaimed righteousness
in the great church;*

*Behold, I shall not restrain my lips,
O Lord, You know.*

*11 I did not hide Your righteousness
in my heart; I declared Your truth
and Your salvation;
I did not hide Your mercy and
Your truth from the great congregation.*

*12 O Lord, do not remove
Your compassion from me;
May Your mercy and Your truth
take hold of me continually.*

*13 For evils without number surrounded me;
My transgressions overpowered me,
and I could not see;
They multiplied more
than the hairs of my head,
And my heart failed me.*

*14 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, give heed to help me.*

*15 May those who seek my soul
to make away with it
Be disgraced and confounded together;
May those who wish evil for me
be turned back and disgraced;*

*16 May those who say to me,
“Well done! Well done!”
Receive their shame immediately.*

*17 May all who seek You, O Lord,
Rejoice exceedingly, and be glad in You;
And may those who love Your salvation
Say continually, “The Lord be magnified.”*

*18 But I am poor and needy;
the Lord will take care of me.
You are my helper and my protector;
O my God, do not delay.*

Bible Study Lesson

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

A Reflection on Psalm 40 (OSB Psalm 39): Rescue and New Beginnings

There are seasons in life when we feel stuck. We wait and wait for God to do something: to heal, to guide, to answer, to rescue. Psalm 40 is a song of someone who knows what it means to wait patiently on the Lord, and to be lifted from a place of despair into a place of praise. But it doesn't end with personal celebration. It moves outward. David teaches us that God's faithfulness calls for a faithful response.

I Waited Patiently for the Lord

"I waited patiently for the Lord, and He heeded me; and He heard my supplication. And He brought me up out of a miserable pit and from miry clay; and He established my feet on a rock, and He guided my steps aright." (vv. 1-2)

David begins by showing us what it looks like to trust God during hard seasons. The "miry clay" and "miserable pit" are images of feeling trapped, uncertain, or emotionally stuck. But the turning point comes when God hears and acts. Waiting isn't passive here; it's faithful endurance. And when deliverance comes, it is firm and foundational: a rock, guided steps, a new direction.

Q: Have you ever felt like you were in a 'pit'? How did God pull you out?

A New Song of Praise

"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn to our God; many will see and be afraid, and shall hope in the Lord." (v. 3)

When God delivers us, we are transformed, and our changed lives can inspire others. David doesn't just say "thank you" privately; his gratitude becomes a public song. The Orthodox tradition emphasizes doxology (praise to God) as central to our life of faith. When God acts, we don't just feel thankful; we become witnesses of His mercy.

Q: What does your 'new song' sound like? How might your story encourage someone else?

The Inner Offering

"Sacrifice and offering You did not will, but a body You prepared for me. A whole burnt offering and a sin offering You did not require. Then I said, 'Behold, I come: it is written of me in the volume of the book. I willed to do Your will, O my God, and Your law in the midst of my heart.'" (vv. 6-8)

David moves from outward deliverance to inward transformation. This part of the psalm is quoted in the New Testament (Hebrews 10:5-7) as a prophecy about Christ. God desires our hearts more than our rituals. In Orthodoxy, we learn that true obedience flows from inner surrender: loving God's will, not just following rules. When we accept God's mercy, our response should be a life given back to Him.

Q: What does it mean for you to 'do God's will from the heart' instead of just out of obligation?

The Boldness of Testimony

“I proclaimed the gospel of righteousness in the great church; behold, I shall not restrain my lips, O Lord, You know. I did not hide Your righteousness in my heart; I declared Your truth and Your salvation.” (vv. 9-10)

David is not shy about what God has done for him. This is a model for us. The psalm links personal rescue with public witness. Orthodox Christians are called to confess Christ not only with icons and incense, but with words and lives. When we stay silent about God’s mercy, we rob others of the hope our story might bring.

Q: *Why is it sometimes hard to share openly what God has done for us? What helps you to speak up?*

But I Am Still Poor and Needy

“Let all those who seek You greatly rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation always say, ‘The Lord be magnified.’ But I am poor and needy; the Lord will take care of me.” (vv. 16-17)

The psalm ends with humility. Even after rescue, we remain dependent on God. David never paints the spiritual life as one constant upward climb. There are victories, but there is also weakness. This closing reminds us that faith is a continual return to trust: not once, but always.

Q: *How do you stay grounded in humility even after God has answered your prayers?*

Reflection Questions

1. What does patiently waiting look like in your life right now?
2. How has God “put a new song” in your mouth?
3. What would it mean for you to offer your whole self to God as a response to His mercy?
4. When has sharing your story helped someone else see God’s goodness?
5. In what areas do you still feel poor and needy, and how can you bring those to God today?

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

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