



Psalm 40:1-3 Waiting on God

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. Someone once told me that the better translation of this verse is something like this: *I waited for the Lord and waited and waited and waited, and finally, at long last he inclined to me and heard my cry.*

Waiting, I think, is some of the hardest work in the world, at least for some of us. I was in a group once studying how different people make decisions. After taking a brief test, we were separated into several groups and given a simple task to complete. We had thirty minutes in which to do the work. The group I was in completed the assignment in less than five minutes. It was clear to us what had to be done and how to go about it. There was nothing to it! Another group, though, had not finished when the half-hour was up. In that group the process was as important to the participants as the end result. Everyone, they thought, should have an opportunity to express how they *felt* about the matter at hand. The members of the latter group were a bit more patient, on the whole, while those of us waiting were drumming fingers and wondering what could possibly be taking the others so long.

The psalmist, like all of us at times, really had no choice in the matter; all he could do was wait. There was really no way for him to hurry things along, though the longer he had to wait the more critical his situation became. I remember seeing a poster some time ago that declared: "Do something: lead, follow, or get the heck out of the way." But sometimes all you can *do* is wait, and waiting on God to act can be painfully trying, especially if you are helplessly watching someone you love suffer, or getting close to a deadline for a decision you have to make, or dealing with any number of other life situations. We want to hurry things along, and sometimes we do, but often the results are disastrous.

The psalm assures us, though: *He drew me up from the desolate pit,* out of the miry 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.* Sometimes the best prayer we can offer is: "Lord, give me patience, as I wait upon you, for I know that waiting upon you is never in vain, even when you keep me waiting and waiting and waiting. Amen."