

He Thinks of Us

by John McGregor

God's thoughtfulness is a powerful reminder of his love and care for us, encouraging our faith, enlarging our hope, and enabling our love for him.

Duration: 36:05

Scripture: Psalm 40:17, Matthew 6:33, John 14:1-2

Topics: "God's Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Psalm 40 and specifically looks at the last verse. The psalmist expresses gratitude for God's faithfulness and deliverance, as well as the transformation that God brings into their life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of waiting patiently for the Lord and not losing sight of our purpose and closeness with Him. They also highlight the power of God's presence and the need for spiritual revelation through Jesus. The sermon concludes with a story about a missionary doctor in China who experienced God's love and presence in his work.

Transcript

So we're looking this morning in Psalm 40, and I'll just read that. It's 17 verses long, and we'll consider just one verse, the very last one together. One of the things I love about the Lord is that sometimes when our hearts are heavy, He picks them up, and that's what I'm asking Him to do this morning for us.

Psalm says, I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined His ear to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth, praise to our God.

Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, and does not respect the pride, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O Lord my God, are your wonderful works, which you have done, and your thoughts toward us, cannot be recanted to you in order.

If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering you did not desire. My ears you have opened.

Burned offering and sin offering you did not require. Then I said, behold, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart. I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly. Indeed, I do not restrain my lips.

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 loving kindness and your truth from the great assembly. Do not withhold your tender mercies from me, O Lord. Let your loving kindness and your truth continually preserve me.

For innumerable evils have surrounded me. My iniquities have overtaken me so that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of my head.

Therefore, my heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who seek to destroy my life. Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor who wish me evil. Let them be confounded because of their shame who say to me, ah-ha, ah-ha.

Let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let such as love your salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified, but I am poor and needing. Yet the Lord thinks upon me.

You are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, O my God. Father, we thank you for your word.

And Lord, we thank you for this powerful time of worship. And we thank you even that in your sovereignty you have chosen to move your servant, Melissa and John. We give you great praise for them.

We pray, Father, this morning that you would indeed bless these days as they draw things to a close here. But we're asking, Father, that you would speak to our hearts this morning and that you, Lord, would indeed be our encourager this day and strengthen each one of us deep in the heart. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Do you ever get in trouble? Johnny says, yeah, Brad said once. So, well, I'll tell you about a time I got in trouble. And I was directing a crusade for the Billy Graham people in Calgary.

And we rented the Saddle Dome. And the cost was \$30,000 a night in 1990. I don't think you could rent it for that now.

And we had it for five nights. And I left Calgary to go to Minneapolis to meet with some of the leadership of the Billy Graham Association. And when I got there, my boss sort of looked across the table at me and said, you need to get out of the Saddle Dome.

It's too expensive and you need to get out of it. Now, I'd already signed the contract and given a deposit. And one thing about Scotsmen is they don't like to buy real estate twice.

Right, Bob? Once is bad enough, that's right. So, you know, he said, I'll talk to you tomorrow morning about it, but get out of it. And I had no comfort in my heart whatsoever.

And I had a fairly restless night. And the next morning, I bumped into the big boss, John Kortz, Dr. John Kortz, the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in those days. And I bumped into him in the hallway.

Hi, John, how's it going? Good, thanks, Dr. John, good to see you. And I'm hoping he knows nothing about my situation. And then he said to me, been thinking about you.

Don't worry about the money, man. Been thinking about you. Don't worry about it.

Let's pray together. We prayed. I still had a whole hour before I had to meet my boss and confess my sins, that I had spent some money and hadn't done what I was told.

But those of you who know me know that I have a fair amount of practice standing outside the principal's office, waiting for the Board of Education to be applied to the seat of learning. Somebody came and got me and said, there's a phone call for you. And on the other end of the phone was Libby Raines from the Saddle Dome.

And Libby said, thank God I got ahold of you. I rented that place to you, and I shouldn't have because the Calgary Flames have first call on it, and they need to play a game maybe in that time. So I wondered, would you mind starting off in the Corral, smaller facility, and then moving to the Saddle Dome, and we'll give you the whole thing for the Corral and the Saddle Dome for the cost of one night in the Saddle Dome.

You know, it changed my whole attitude going into that meeting with my boss because I knew he was gonna say, have you gotten out of the Saddle Dome? And now I could say, not quite, and explain the whole deal. But you know what really turned that around in my heart was this one little statement from Dr. John Kortz. Been thinking about you.

I want you just to look with me at verse 17. But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me. Some versions say the Lord cares for me.

Now we may say, I can't totally identify with this, John, poor and needy. Yeah, compared to many places in the world, we are infinitely rich. But you know, there are always areas where we are poor and needy, areas where it is just this word from God that encourages our hearts, been thinking about you.

Thinking about your circumstances, your struggles, thinking about your challenges. And you know, it's a lovely thing just to stop this morning for a few moments and remember that God thinks upon. You and me.

Now that's amazing to me because he's the almighty God and that he would stop to think about us. I didn't tell Brad what scripture to use at the beginning of the service and yet the Holy Spirit put in his heart Psalm 8. What is man that you think about him or upon him. And here it is again in Psalm 40 and verse 17.

The Lord thinks upon me, the Lord cares for me. Now God reveals himself in nature. We see that in Romans chapter one that you can't say there's no God because this whole place didn't just happen.

It was created and there is a creator and so on. And God reveals himself in history. When you look back through the times of history, you see the moving and working of God.

And God reveals himself in conscience, doesn't he? There's that conscience within us when we're gonna do something. There's that warning voice. And sometimes when we have done something, there's that voice that comes in conviction that says, you know, you need to make that right.

And that God reveals himself in that way, doesn't he? And in spiritual revelation, he reveals himself in miracles and in prophecy and he reveals himself best in Jesus, the son of the living God. And he reveals himself in his word and he reveals himself in personal experience. And my prayer always is that when we

come together in worship on Sunday morning, it's this thing of personal experience.

That it won't just be a thing that becomes a habit, but that each time we come together, we're experiencing the living God in our hearts and in our lives and meeting us right where we are. Now, when I think about the one who thinks upon me and who thinks upon you, there are four things that come out of that that just quickly we wanna encourage our hearts in. The first is that it encourages our faith that God thinks upon us.

If you are in Christ Jesus this morning, you have a touch of God in faith. By faith, you are saved and by grace, you're saved through faith, I should say it properly. But you see, it encourages our faith, does it not, to know that he thinks about us.

Now, I can't understand why God would think about me because I would say in the scheme of things, I'm pretty insignificant, five foot five and a half. That half, so important. I don't know what it is in meters and centimeters.

Ought to work that out someday. And you know, at one time, it was five foot five and a half and skinny as a post. And over the years, we've expanded a bit, but it's still pretty insignificant compared to the scheme of things.

The billions of people in this world and the needs that are there and the immensity. If we were to take the immensity of our needs and concerns and worries and all those things in this room at this very moment. But listen, let your faith be encouraged this morning.

There is one who sits on heaven's throne and he doesn't count you as insignificant at all. He loves you so deeply that he not only died to pay for the price of your sin, but he loves you so deeply that he rose and sits at the right hand of the Father as your representative and mine. He thinks upon you.

Now, there are no times of difficulty and distress and struggle, and they can sometimes be so overwhelming, but he thinks upon us. And I love to look at it this way. If you've ever seen a disaster situation in Belfast where I grew up, the Royal Victoria Hospital became renowned as the place in all the world for dealing with massive disasters as hundreds of people would be rolled in after bomb and shooting attacks and so on.

And people would come to study their methods and how that was to be done. And you know what the secret of the whole thing was? This thing called triage. It was taking that which was most vital and important and getting it to the place of treatment quickest.

And that which could wait a little bit would wait a little bit. But I think as this verse says, he thinks on us. Maybe this morning in your life, the great sovereign Lord of all is saying, it's okay, I can still do triage.

I can still get you what you need and where you need to be in my grace and in my love. He always deals with us in this way. We have done a study on Joseph and was it not at the times when Joseph was in his deepest need that God shows up.

We've done a study on Ruth and the same thing we discovered there, didn't we? It was there that the Lord moved in. We have seen it in the life of Daniel and so many others through the scriptures when he thinks upon us, as he thinks upon us. And he's given us the gift of the Holy Spirit which proves his thoughtfulness.

I loved last Sunday, Rachel shared a little bit. I thought she was just gonna talk about the song she was gonna sing at the offertory, but she came instead to the microphone and said, I had a meeting with God this week. He was thinking about her and she was thinking about him.

And you blessed my heart when you said, the next day was kind of depressing. Who wants to be with people? When are you gonna be with God? The gift of his Spirit. My friends this morning, whatever the challenges and issues you face, the Spirit of God in the heart of the believer is more than sufficient.

He thinks upon those who humbly walk with him and acknowledge our guilt and our wrong and deal with it time by time and know the freshness of his forgiveness and the strength of his power. Secondly, this morning, as I think about these words, the Lord thinks upon me, it enlarges my hope. Now, hope is one of those things that you cannot live without.

And without hope, there are all kinds of things that set in, aren't there? But consider his love and his thoughtfulness to us. You ever noticed that it was after everything was created that he created man? Everything was provided first. That's also so that we couldn't say, look at what we did.

Because that's that little bit of Irish in all of us that would take the claim and the glory, isn't it? But it really enlarges my hope when I think how he thinks upon us. His Word contains his thoughts to us. I am the Lord.

I change not. Woo-hoo! You know, when I was growing up in church in Ireland, nearly every Sunday we sang these words. And to use a term that I heard Martin Lloyd-Jones one day say, we dragged it mournfully.

Change and decay in all our ways. It's true, isn't it? Things change. But my hope is in the one who does not change.

He hasn't changed his mind. He hasn't changed his heart. He hasn't changed his power.

His thoughts are so practical and providing and full of kindness and forgiveness for us. We need hope, don't we? There's a wonderful story that I heard about a young boy in school who actually had an accident at home and was quite badly burned. And the school system that he belonged to had a program for children who were in hospital so that they could still receive coaching and help and so on.

And he'd been in the hospital over the weekend and on Monday morning, one of the teachers was called to the office and she was told, would you take this program and go and coach this child? He has problems with nouns and adverbs and verbs and I understand his problem, believe me. And so the teacher comes to the hospital and she asked for him, but they didn't tell her that he was badly burned. And it was quite a shock when she got in to see this little boy.

And as she's sort of stumbling through, she's saying the school sent me to help you with your nouns and your verbs and adverbs and so on. And that she went away kind of discouraged because she figured, you know, he's badly burned and I don't think I really helped him at all. But because of the program, she dutifully went back the next day.

And in the next day, as she came in, one of the nurses stopped her and the nurse said to her, you've come to visit this boy. And I wanna talk to you before you go in there. Now she's sure.

I must have really blew it yesterday. And she begins to speak to the nurse and she starts to say, I'm so sorry. Listen, if I said something wrong, or I'm just so sorry.

And the nurse said to her, wait, wait. We always jump to the wrong conclusions, don't we? Nurse said, you know, we've been so worried about him. Because over the weekend, he was completely unresponsive.

And over the weekend and early Monday, we were quite sure that he was just gonna slip downhill and leave us. But yesterday when you came in, everything changed. What was it? It was hope.

That teacher brought hope into that room. And you and I walk with the one who is the Lord of all things and the God of salvation. And we walk with hope if we are in Christ Jesus.

We are so blessed to have that great and unperishing hope that nothing can touch. I get sort of tickled on the inside sometimes thinking about how things have changed for me over the years and the aging process. And I'm just thrilled in the hope that I have I'm gonna emigrate once more.

I emigrated from Ireland to Canada. But there comes a day when I'm gonna emigrate to glory. And nothing is gonna be changed thereafter.

I have that hope that is in Christ. Do you have that hope this morning? You see, one of the things that I'm convinced happens is we get so entrapped in all the stuff. All the challenges that we face.

All the issues. Where will the next meal come from? All of those things. And they are important.

I am not minimizing them. But what I want to say is, it enlarges my hope when I just pause and realize, hey, wait a minute. God is thinking on me.

There is hope here. There is somebody who can produce exactly what I need. We have seen it even in the past week where somebody had a need and somebody else was moved by God to meet that need.

Wonderful, isn't it? And this thing of hope is so powerful. Some of you are not old enough to remember Leonard Brezhnev, the president or premier of Russia. And when he died, George Bush went to his funeral.

It was interesting to watch the funeral of this communist dictator. And right before they put the lid on the casket, Mrs. Brezhnev, after 70 years of communism, is standing beside the casket of her husband who has suppressed Christianity and Christ in the years that he led the country. And just as that lid is being lifted up to be set onto the casket, Mrs. Brezhnev goes, talk about hope.

And of course, Russia has since opened up to the gospel wonderfully. Number three, as I pause and think about the Lord thinks upon us, it enables our love. Think about Him often who loves you.

And it enables us to grow in love to Him and with Him and through Him. Just think upon this love of God. He has thought enough to prepare a place for you.

Now, I'm not a fan of the King James Version. It's a nice version. But there is one verse that I love and I think we should change in all the other ones.

Okay, I'll tell you why. And you'll say, he's as selfish as could be. It's in John chapter 14.

And Jesus says in verse one, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe in me. It goes on in verse two and says, in my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. And lo, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will doubtless come again and receive you unto myself.

Where I am, there you may be also. So, you know, if I ask you to memorize scripture, it's okay to do it, right? Yeah. He loves us enough to prepare a place.

I like this word, mansion. I've never owned one here and I never plan on it. But there's something about that in that old version that captivates my imagination, that mansion.

Not because I want to live in a mansion, but what really gets to me is that Jesus, my Jesus, would say for you, this for you. And if you wonder what drives me sometimes around the world to preach the gospel, it's that. I can look in the face of somebody in Vietnam and know that they might never have anything on this earth, but this for you.

I can stand beside a dry well with somebody in Niger and know that it's a big and a mighty problem, but there is one who enables our love, who says this, this is for you, this love. Huh, I might be done in less than 105 minutes. You know what I love? I love how he answers prayer to prove it.

And I love how on Sunday morning, the presence of God just sweeps into this place. You know, in his presence, there's room to move. There's room to change.

There's room to set down the burdens. There's room to deal with all those issues that overwhelm us in his love. And maybe you're here this morning and you never experienced his love, his presence.

There's a missionary doctor in China called Charles Barlow. God called him to China and he loved the Chinese people. And a disease came along that started to kill people and they could find no answer for it.

And they have no real way of research where he is. And so he managed to extract some of those germs that were killing people. And he headed home to the United States.

He headed to Johns Hopkins Hospital. And on the way to the hospital, the doctor took the germs and injected them into himself. Now that's love.

Because he's saying to those who trained him and those who worked with him before he went on the field, help me find the answer. Isn't that exactly what Jesus did? Isn't that powerfully what Jesus did? In 2 Corinthians 5 and 21, it says, he who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. The doctor from China helped the team find a cure and took it back to China and saved thousands of people's lives.

Oh, as he thinks upon us, it enables our love. When I think about how Jesus loves us enough to take all of that sin and guilt and pressure that we might be free. Lastly, when I consider he thinks upon me, it makes me remember that he establishes our purpose and our direction.

If God thinks on me, I don't need to be anxious. I can rest in him. I can surrender to him.

And if I've trusted Christ with my soul, can I not trust him with everything else? If I've trusted Christ with my soul, that which is most precious, can I not trust him to work out the other things that can burden and beset

me? Yes, I believe we can. I can trust him with every circumstance of life, with health, with business and busyness, and I can surrender every step to him. But you know, sometimes we lose our perspective.

I don't know if you'll ever get a chance to read it, but there's a great little story by Tennessee Williams. He wrote it in 1931 called *Something by Tolstoy*. And with this illustration, I'll close.

It's a story of Jacob Brodsky, shy Russian Jewish man. His father owns a bookstore, and all that Jacob wants to do is marry Lila, his childhood sweetheart. Dad wants him to go to college, so he sent him off to college.

And in his first year at college, Jacob's father died. So he came back to run the bookstore and quickly married Lila, and everything should have been good for all time, right? But you know, Lila was bored in the bookstore. She needed adventure, did a great singing voice.

And an agent picked up and said to her, I'll set up a tour of Europe for you. And so she left to do the tour of Europe and to go and sing. Before she left, Jacob reached in his pocket and took out the key of the bookstore, and he said to her, you'll need this for when you come back, and I'm gonna wait for you coming back.

You know, Jacob loved books, and he got in the back corner of the bookshop, and he would just read. He was waiting for his love to come back, but he would just read. And then 15 years later at Christmastime, Lila came back.

She came into the store, and she was quite shocked that Jacob didn't recognize her. She said to him, I'm looking for a book. He said, okay, tell me a little bit about the book.

And she said, well, it's a love story. It's the story of Jacob and Lila. And you know, they were childhood sweethearts, but Lila's music came between them, and it's kind of, I'm not sure how it ends yet.

Do you know the story? Jacob said to her, I think it's something by Tolstoy. She dropped the key and ran out of the shop. You see, Jacob had waited 15 years, but in that time, he forgot who he was waiting for.

He forgot why he was longing for her. He lost his purpose. No wonder this morning, dear ones, am I speaking to someone, and you've lost that purpose, that closeness, that nearness, with the one who thinks upon you.

He is here this morning and thinks upon you still and invites you to come to him and to know the depth of his love. Oh, may the Lord encourage our faith and enlarge our hope and enable our love and establish our direction in his will this morning. May we just pause and pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, as we pause in your presence, there's something about that story of Jacob and Lila that can be so real in our hearts. It's so easy to get focused on that which is right in front of us and forget the one who loves us and who thinks upon us. Lord, this morning, we want to just come to you and pray that you would keep our focus and our purpose and our direction centered in Christ Jesus.

Lord, you know the burdens that we carry, but you're bigger than the burden. You know the disasters that we face, but you're bigger than the disasters. You know the difficulties, but oh, my great God and Savior, you're bigger than the difficulty.

And so, Lord, in the power of your Spirit this day, continue to minister to us. Let us not forget in the days of this coming week that you think upon each as individual. Lord, continue to bless your word, we pray.

In Jesus' strong name.

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