

# Pierce My Heart

by Paul Negrut

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*Paul Negrut's sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine prayer and transformation through faith, drawing from personal experiences in Romania's communist era.*

**Duration:** 39:13

**Scripture:** Psalm 40:3-8, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Heart Transformation", "Worship Renewal"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by reading from Psalm 40 and invites a young man named Steve to do the reading. The speaker discusses the concept of slavery and liberation as taught in the book of Deuteronomy and Exodus. He shares a powerful story from the history of Romania, where people protested against a dictator and were met with violence. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and the need for a transformed heart in order to receive a new song from God. He also expresses concern about the shift in modern worship songs towards focusing on feelings rather than biblical doctrines.

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## Transcript

I invite you to open God's Word at Psalm 40, Psalm 4-0. And I will invite Steve, one of my young hero. I have a number of young heroes here and Steve is one of them.

I invite Steve to do the reading for us. I wait to patiently for the day when I am also out of my rock and establish my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praising to our God, many shall see it, and fear and shall trust in the Lord.

Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.

If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, my ears hast thou opened. Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Then said I, Lo, I come in the volume of the book, it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart.

Thank you very much. Let's bow for prayer. Lord, we are here.

And we pray that you meet us right here. Speak to us. And let your Holy Spirit prepare our hearts and minds.

So we receive the word. Teach us to enjoy, to do your will. And help us to be more like Jesus.

Every day, until we shall see you face to face. In the name of Jesus, Amen. Psalm 40.

Psalm of David. Written in one of those moments when David underwent a very difficult time in his life. David describes his experience at that time as being in a pit.

We do not know what his pit was like. Was it one of those times when David lost his job? And he was made redundant? That is a difficult time. Was this one of those times when David ran away for his life? Was this one of those times when he had family crisis? Or was it a time when David underwent a spiritual crisis? He sinned against the Lord.

And now he was in a pit. We do not know exactly what the time was. What caused David to be in a pit.

But he describes his life as being in a muddy, murky pit. Have you ever been in a pit? Did you ever experience something like that? I was born in a pit. The pit in which I was born and I grew up was called the communist pit.

To be a Christian in a communist country was like being buried alive. The communists were determined to destroy Christianity within 20 years after seizing power. They made it a public prophecy that within 20 years Christianity will belong to the past.

And they meant that. In order to achieve their plan, they controlled the whole country. Controlled absolutely everything.

They controlled the media. They controlled the government. They controlled local and national administration.

They controlled all the public institutions because there were no private institutions. They controlled the army. They controlled secret police.

They controlled the daily life of the people. According to the reports that we have now in Romania, one out of three Romanians was a secret police agent. One out of three.

They controlled everything that was happening in the country. And they were determined to destroy family life and church life. In order to destroy the church, the communists spotted the real Christian leader of the country.

And they arrested them. They put them in jail. Many of them died in the communist prisons.

They look at the real leaders among the lay people in the church. And they will target them. Try to break them, to compromise them.

Destroy their moral reputation, or their integrity, or their families. And break them. They targeted the young people.

Every day those children that were born in Christian families and they will attend church with their parents. They were spotted by teachers and brought in front of the whole school. And being mocked, humiliated

every day. They were the stupid ones.

They were the mystical, closed-minded, incapable of understanding science and philosophy. They were the stupid that had no future. Can you imagine a boy or a girl at the age of 7, or 8, or 12, or 15 being humiliated every day? They were in business.

They do not allow, the communists do not allow us to meet in homes for prayer. They do not allow us to meet with our children for Bible study and prayer. Actually to give someone a Bible.

It was a criminal offense in Romania. One could spend up to 10 years in jail for giving someone else a Bible. Whenever the communists could, they confiscated all our Bibles and burned them down to ashes.

And in the last years of communist rule in Romania they decided to do something even more humiliating. They turned the Bibles into toilet paper to prove how they can mock a God in which they didn't believe. In those days, churches were apparently seemingly on the losing end.

A church was not allowed to choose to elect its own pastor. The pastors were imposed on churches from among those who accepted to work for the communists. Can you imagine being a pastor to work with the communists to destroy the church? Those were allowed to be pastors.

The church was not allowed to elect deacons. Only those men in the church that accepted to work with the communists to destroy the church were allowed to be deacons. I can go on and on and on.

I grew up in such a pit. Now, David said, I was there and was muddy and was mighty, was hopeless and was despairing. Have you ever experienced something like that? Do you have a crisis in your life? And you feel that you are buried alive? Now, David said, I was there and what do you do when you are in a pit? There are many things you can do, but they won't help you.

When you are in a pit, you can look down and see how deep your pit is. You can look around and study the walls of your pit. You can blame your pit.

You can be angry with your pit. You can even write a book about your pit and call it My Life and have it on display. But those things will not help you.

When you are in a pit, the only thing that helps is to look up. David said, I was in a pit and I cried out. When you are in a pit, there is only one way.

Cry out. And David said, I cried out. Now, I'm sure that we all had those experiences when being in our pits, whatever they were like.

We went to prayer. And we had those experiences when we prayed and before we said Amen, God heard our prayer and the answer was right there at the door. Now, those are glorious moments.

You pray and before you finish, there is the answer. But did it ever happen to you to pray and things do not get better? On the contrary, they seem to get worse. Have you prayed and you are in a pit and the more you pray, the more muddy your pit becomes? That is a very difficult time.

David said, I waited patiently for the Lord. That means I was there for a long time. And he cried out to God and there was no answer.

Why not? There are many reasons why not. But I selected just one reason for this afternoon. It seems to me that David didn't pray as he should.

He was in a pit, but his prayer was not the prayer. It was the right prayer. You see, not every prayer is the right prayer.

Let me put it this way. When I give such examples, I know that they do not apply to the American people. You are so gracious.

You are so kind. I cannot imagine you having fightings at home. I cannot imagine you being disappointed with your wives.

Or with your children. Or the other way around. But I come from Romania and in Romania we are not perfect yet.

And we do have family crisis. Now let me tell you how a typical Romanian Baptist will go to pray when he has a crisis at home. He will go to his prayer room and he will kneel down and he will cry out to God.

Oh God, oh my God, have mercy on our family. And dear Lord, change my family. And dear Lord, start with my wife.

Because she is the troublemaker in the home. Oh how I love Lord to see her change. And let me enjoy the benefits of a transformed wife.

I know you do not pray like that here. But you see when we pray like that, things do not change at home. Things are getting worse.

Because we do not pray as we should pray. Now David was there in the pit. And what makes me feel that he was there for a long time.

And he did not pray the right prayer. Later on he says, he put a new song in my mouth. Now you see in the Bible, God never put a new song in an unchanged and transformed life.

God always gives a new song to a new person, a new heart. Now we live in a time when people are almost obsessed with new songs. And there is something about our new songs, they are not new at all.

There is something in our songs that deeply concerns me because some of the new songs are magnifying our feelings. There is a shift from doctrines to feelings. We never sing our doctrines because in our theology there is a shift from Christology to Anthropology.

Christ is no longer the center of our preaching but man is the center of our preaching. Five steps to overcome fear. Ten steps to positive self-image.

How to discover self-worth. And people love that. And we sing that.

Now you see that has led to a kind of schizophrenic spirituality. I call that Elvis Presley spirituality. You know how that goes.

He could be downstairs in his living room playing piano and singing Amazing Grace with tears in his eyes finishing that and walk upstairs to his prostitute. And there was no conflict in his life. He could have both.

And that's schizophrenia. Because if it's Amazing Grace downstairs it's Amazing Grace upstairs. If saves a wretch like me downstairs saves a wretch like me upstairs.

So those songs are not new songs. Because we are not dealing with new people. Now David was there.

And until he prayed that prayer that brought him before God and God changed his heart he was still in the pit. I told you about us in Romania. We were in a pit.

The church where I'm serving now as one of the pastors was a very small church when communists took power. And they appointed a man as pastor of that church. There was one of the most effective secret police agent in the whole area.

He will spy on his church members to see if they meet for prayers at home in hiding. And betray them to secret police. And people were put in jail based on the information given by the pastor.

If one will go to that pastor and confess his or her burden he will report that to secret police. He was there and the church was dying. We were allowed to meet once a week Sunday morning under strict surveillance of secret police.

And the church was dying. And we were in a pit. In 1973 that pastor had a heart attack.

He was taken to hospital and for six months he was in hospital and then he could no longer carry the responsibilities of being a pastor. And he asked his communist bosses because he was working for the communists as I told you to allow him to have an assistant pastor. And the communists granted him that request because it was their man.

They had no concerns about what will happen in their church. So this pastor with heart attack approached an anonymous young lawyer in Romania. He was a sort of wishy-washy Christian.

And he asked that lawyer to become his assistant pastor and the communists agreed with that. That young lawyer accepted the call and between the time he accepted the call until he joined the church something happened to him. He had a fresh encounter with the living Lord.

And that encounter transformed his life dramatically. He became the greatest man of prayer I ever met in my life. He spent about 8 hours every day on his knees before the Lord.

Nobody knew about that. He used to wake up at 3 o'clock every morning and kneel by the bedside and cry out to God. Later on I learned what he cried out to God.

He said, Lord, change my life and let the communists take the benefits of my changed life. He asked God to change his life in such a way that the communists will hear the real gospel. And God changed his life.

When he came on the platform and he began to preach we were trembling in our pews. Literally we were trembling, we were convicted and we began to cry and we began to repent and he taught Christians to repent. In Romania, evangelical conservative Christians are called repenters.

And he taught the repenters to repent. And he taught us to take God seriously and have time every day to read the Bible and pray and pray for ourselves and pray by name for our neighbors pray by name for the communist leaders for the people in the media and he taught us to pray. And we began to meet in homes for prayer.

And the persecution started. Unmerciless persecution. But as a result of that prayer life and ministry within one summer a church with less now than 40 members baptized 600 new converts.

And that fire of revival caught the whole city of Oradea. And people were flooding that place. Standing there in that building, jam-clamped, took off the seats opened the windows so people could hear from the outside.

And people were saved. And the persecution was bigger. And the grace was even greater.

And the more persecution, the more grace and more people will be saved. At that time we were taught to pray and cry out to God not to give us an easy life. But we pray and just give you some of the prayers we pray in those days.

Lord, bring the day in Romania when the gospel will be proclaimed on radio and television in sports arenas and sports stadiums in prison, in secret police headquarters in the parliament, in the presidential building in public schools. Bring the day when the Romanian people will hear the gospel from the biggest one to the lowest one. And that time Ceausescu was in power.

And we pray that the gospel will be proclaimed in Ceausescu's palace. Those who heard us praying like that thought that we are crazy or eccentrics, hysterical people. We went on praying.

Three years later, that pastor was forced to leave the country, exiled from the country. But the fire continued. Another pastor came and he could stay for four hours and he was forced to leave the country.

In 1991, I was a young clinical psychologist at the age of 28, working in a psychiatric hospital. And God called me to take over the pastorate of that church. I cannot tell you what followed after that.

The amount of persecution we underwent. But I cannot tell you that the church began to grow from 1,200 in 1981 to over 3,000 in 1989. Thousands of people saved.

Life transformed. And persecution that cannot be described in words. Now David said, Lord, you gave me a new song.

You gave me a new heart, a new life. And God gave us a new song. And he gave us a new life.

And that persecution spread across the country of Romania. Now David, look at what God has done. And the man who was in the pit, the man who learned how to pray, is now the man who is praising God.

He said, O Lord, now you opened my eyes and I can see the wonders you have done. Can you imagine the man that was in despair in the pit? Now he could see. And he saw that God is a God of miracles.

He's a God who can work and he changes history. You see, when we are not changed, we are blind. When we are transformed, our eyes are open.

And David said, Lord, you are working so many miracles. If I were to tell, recount, there are too many to declare. Can you imagine a man from the pit suddenly having so many miracles to tell about them that there is no time? Well, I can identify with him.

Thank you very much, Brother Harold. Now David said, Lord, I saw so many miracles. And we have seen miracles.

You see, after the revival started in 1973, it went on and on and on until 1989. 1989. December.

13th of December. A number of 36. Baptist pastors that refused to pay the obedience to the communist authorities.

All of them under heavy persecution, met for a day of fasting and prayer. As they prayed, God impressed on them to write a letter to the communist dictator Ceausescu. And I tell you what was in that letter.

They call upon the dictator to humble himself before God. And let God's people worship freely. Let Bibles be translated and printed into Romanian and distributed in Romanian.

Let Christian families teach their children in the ways of the Lord. Let church building be built up. Stop forcing God's people to work on Sunday.

And they said, Sir, we call upon you to humble before God. Before his judgment will fall upon you. When that letter was signed, it was like signing our death certificate.

Because it was a communist country. And the communist dictators do not tolerate opposition of any kind. But the letter was sent and two days later, December 15th, in the major newspapers of Romania was another letter published written by the patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Romania.

Romania has a majority Orthodox Church. About 85% of the Romanian people are Romanian Orthodox. And the patriarch wrote a letter to the dictator but a different kind of letter.

Totally supporting the dictator. Endorsing whatever the dictator wanted. Declaring him almost divine.

Told him that he led Romania on the loftiest places of progress and civilization. And we were starving in darkness and misery. But he praised the dictator.

Well, we felt that this is a scenario. Here is the Orthodox Church endorsing the government. Here are this little group of Baptists protesting.

And we felt that what comes is probably the end of our physical human lives. December 17th. Unexpectedly, I was invited to preach the Baptist Church in Timisoara.

Because an evangelist from America that was invited to lead the revival was not allowed to enter the country. The borders were completely closed at that time. So the pastor called upon me in the last minute and said, Brother Paul, please do come.

I announce the revival. Not knowing where I go, I went. That Thursday night, when we concluded our first evening of revival, there were two gentlemen from a nearby Hungarian church that came to plead us to join them for a night of prayer around the house of their pastor.

Because the communist police is about to arrest their pastor and take the pastor away from his church. And they said, we decided to surround his house and pray for him. But we are so few.

Please do join us. And the Romanian joined the Hungarians and there were about 200 Thursday night. The crowd grew to about 2,000 Friday night.

And 10,000 Saturday night. Not all of them were believers, but people in the city heard that the believers are standing for something and they joined. So as the crowd was there and they were praying for this

pastor, someone came with a crazy idea and said, you know it's not enough to pray here.

Let's go downtown and pray over the headquarter of the communist party. And you know, you know crowd psychology. Yeah, this is great.

Let's go. Yeah. And the crowd began to march down the streets of the city.

And the dictator sent his army. The army came with war ammunition. The army collided with the protesters, opened fire and shot dead many, many people.

There was a turning point in the history of Romania. Because when the first people were shot dead, the other men in the crowd took off their jackets. It was December.

It was December 19. Took off their jackets, shirts, and with open chest they began to shout, there is God. God turned his face toward Romania.

Let's go and die. There is God. And they marched toward the armored vehicles.

And the army was confused. They didn't know how to respond. A few hours later the army sided with the protesters.

And the army officers began to shout, there is God. God turned his face toward Romania. And they began to pray the Lord's Prayer there.

So the dictator sent more troops from the surrounding cities. And that night more troops came in and those armies came and they joined with the protesters. A few days later, the dictator called upon the Romanian people to have a huge rally in the capital city, Bucharest.

And he came on the balcony of his palace to address the Romanian nation. And he told that the people in Timișoara are hooligans and that they are manipulated by foreign intelligence services. And he called the country to rally and just smash what is happening in Timișoara.

As he spoke to the crowd, someone in the crowd shouted, down with the dictator, there is God. And that electrified the crowd. And the crowd began to join in that shout, down with the dictator, there is God.

God turned his face toward Romania. And the more they shouted, the dictator was just frightened, he panicked. He entered the building, tried to come back on the balcony.

You may remember, he was on television. He couldn't calm the crowd. Then in fear, he woke up on the top of the building, got his helicopter, tried to escape from Romania.

But he was arrested that night by his own army. Then his own army put him on trial. Few days later, Christmas day 1989, the dictator was shot dead by his own army.

And the headline news of the Romanian newspaper and television and radio were like this, Christmas day, Christ is born, Antichrist is dead, there is God. My friends, my friends, the people of Romania were caught in that moment and we saw how great our God is. And our God are working miracles, I will tell you more about them in the following session and tomorrow morning.

But David said, there are so many miracles, let me mention you two more. Ceausescu put a huge building in the capital city of Romania, called the Palace of the Victory of Communism. The second largest building

on earth.

The second largest building on earth to celebrate the victory of communism. In that huge building he put a major office, it was the office designed for the victory of communism and Marxism, the very center of atheism in Romania. Do you know what that office is now? A chapel.

There, every Wednesday morning, the members of the Romanian parliament who believe in Jesus Christ meet there for prayer. Now can you see the miracles God allowed this mad dictator to build up a chapel? In his madness he didn't know what he do. But David could see, oh Lord, many are your miracles.

In his hometown, our students from our seminary planted a baptist church, just a few hundred meters, yards, from Ceausescu's home where he was born and raised. There is a church there. But there are more.

I will tell you later on and tomorrow. Now David saw how God is working, how great this God is. He saw the miracle and he was a devout Jew.

If God is such a great God, I feel like responding to God. I feel like doing something. It was a great idea that crossed his mind.

He said, Lord, I will bring you offerings and sacrifices. Can you imagine David saying, Lord, if you are working, you are doing such great things in my generation, I will bring the greatest sacrifice I ever gave you. A bullock, or a calf, or a ram.

And looking up to God, expecting God to smile on him, I said, well done, David. But he was surprised. I looked at him and God didn't smile.

And David was intrigued. He said, Lord, you do not want sacrifices and offerings? It would be like in our days, hearing all these great reports, someone would say, okay, if God is doing such great things, I will write the biggest check I ever wrote to Brother Von for the ministry in Romania, and I think God will be pleased with my offering. I hope I'm not ruining your offering.

I do. Well, God looked at David and said, no, I'm not interested in your fat check. And David said, Lord, you are not interested? Then what do you want? Now he says, instead you opened my ears, and in another meaning of the word, he said, you pierced my ear.

Instead, you didn't want offerings, you pierced my ears. Now what does that mean? We live in a culture of piercing. Everybody is pierced almost everywhere.

But that was not the trend in David's day. In David's time, that was not the trend. There were not piercing shops everywhere.

It was not the fashion. It was not popular. But that sends us back to the book of Deuteronomy and Exodus.

Through Moses, God taught the people of Israel that slavery, bondage, is limited to six years. If anyone, a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, will end up in slavery, lose everything and become a slave, it should be only for six years. Then the seventh year is the year of liberation.

Now that was the great day of liberation. Can you imagine? After six years of bondage, someone decided over your life. Now suddenly, you are in charge.

You are free to go. New York City, Manhattan. Go to Dallas.

Go to Vegas. Go to Reno. Go to Europe.

Go to Asia. Go wherever you want. You are free.

Go to your business. But there were some servants who in those six years of slavery came to love their master and loved their master so much that when the day of liberation came, they didn't want to go. They came to their master and said, Master, it's true that I am free.

But master, I love you so much. I do not want to go. Master, allow me to remain your servant.

I love you so much. I would rather be your servant than be free somewhere else. You know what the master did with those servants.

He took them and pierced their ears. And whosoever saw a man or woman with pierced ears knew that that person is a slave not by misfortune, not by force. It's a slave out of love.

There is such a love that will lead that person to remain the servant, the slave the rest of their lives. Now David said, if you are such a great God, I want to bring an offering. And God said, no David.

I'm not interested in your offerings. Then Lord, what do you want? And the Lord said, David, do you love me? Do you love me so much that you will allow me to pierce your ears? That the whole world will see that you are my slave, born slave, because you love me? Now do you know who took that scripture from Psalm 40? Our Lord Jesus Christ when He went to the Calvary. Jesus Christ, our Lord, with His body, took that scripture and said, Lord, here is my body and in this body I want to do Thy will, my God.

And not only His ears were pierced, His hands and His feet and His heart was pierced because He loved God the Father. Now we are saved by such a Savior. How would you respond to Him? Give Him a check? Give Him one hour? Or do you respond to Him and say, Lord, I love you.

And Lord, I love you so much that today I say, pierce my heart. Lord, I want to be yours. I want to dedicate, I want to consecrate myself to you.

I want to live for you now and for the whole eternity. I want to be yours. Do you love Him? Because if you don't, He is not after our checks.

He is not after our services. He came and the Bible says that we love Him because He first loved us. To His love we do not respond with our checks.

To His love we do not respond with our services, our volunteer work. To His love we respond with our total surrender. Total surrender.

Do you love Him? Let's bow our heads for prayer.

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