

Exposition on Psalm 40

by St. Augustine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's faithfulness and promises, and seeking His guidance in all things.

Scripture: Psalm 39:2

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Faithfulness"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the fulfillment of God's promises through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of faithfulness and trust in God's faithfulness. He highlights the need for believers to patiently wait for God's promises to be fulfilled, as God is a faithful Promiser and a faithful Paymaster. St. Augustine also discusses the concept of surrendering to God, acknowledging one's sins, and seeking God's mercy and salvation. He encourages believers to focus on the wonderful works of God, to seek after righteousness, and to trust in the Lord's guidance and salvation.

Transcript

1. Of all those things which our Lord Jesus Christ has foretold, we know part to have been already accomplished, part we hope will be accomplished hereafter. All of them, however, will be fulfilled, because He is the Truth who speaks them, and requires of us to be as faithful, as He Himself speaks them faithfully....

2. Let us say then what this Psalm says. I waited patiently for the Lord Psalm 39:1. I waited patiently for the promise of no mere mortal who can both deceive and be himself deceived: I waited for the consolation of no mere mortal, who may be consumed by sorrow of his own, before he gives me comfort. Should a brother mortal attempt to comfort me, when he himself is in sorrow likewise? Let us mourn in company; let us weep together, let us wait patiently together, let us join our prayers together also. Whom did I wait for but for the Lord? The Lord, who though He puts off the fulfilment of His promises, yet never recalls them? He will make it good; assuredly He will make it good, because He has made many of His promises good already: and of God's truth we ought to have no fears, even if as yet He had made none of them good. Lo! let us henceforth think thus, He has promised us everything; He has not as yet given us possession of anything; He is a sponable Promiser; a faithful Paymaster: do you but show yourself a dutiful exactor of what is promised; and if you be weak, if you be one of the little ones, claim the promise of His mercy. Do you not see tender lambs striking their dams' teats with their heads, in order that they may get their fill of milk?...And He took heed unto me, and heard my cry. He took heed to it, and He heard it. See you have

not waited in vain. His eyes are over you. His ears turned towards you. For, the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. What then? Did He not see you, when you used to do evil and to blaspheme Him? What then becomes of what is said in that very Psalm, The face of the Lord is upon them that do evil? But for what end? that He may cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Therefore, even when thou were wicked, He took heed of you; but He took no heed to you. So then to him who waited patiently for the Lord, it was not enough to say, He took heed of me, He says, He took heed to me; that is, He took heed by comforting me, that He might do me good. What was it that He took heed to? and He heard my cry.

3. And what has He accomplished for you? What has He done for you? He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings Psalm 39:2. He has given us great blessings already: and still He is our debtor; but let him who has this part of the debt repaid already, believe that the rest will be also, seeing that he ought to have believed even before he received anything. Our Lord has employed facts themselves to persuade us, that He is a faithful promiser, a liberal giver.

What then has He already done? He has brought me out of a horrible pit. What horrible pit is that? It is the depth of iniquity, from the lusts of the flesh, for this is meant by the miry clay. Whence has He brought you out? Out of a certain deep, out of which you cried out in another Psalm, Out of the deep have I called unto You, O Lord. And those who are already crying out of the deep, are not absolutely in the lowest deep: the very act of crying is already lifting them up.

There are some deeper in the deep, who do not even perceive themselves to be in the deep. Such are those who are proud despisers, not pious entreaters for pardon; not tearful criers for mercy: but such as Scripture thus describes. The sinner when he comes into the depth of evil despises. Proverbs 18:3 For he is deeper in the deep, who is not satisfied with being a sinner, unless instead of confessing he even defends his sins. But he who has already cried out of the deep, has already lifted up his head in order that he might cry out of the deep, has been heard already, and has been brought out of the horrible pit, and out of the mire and clay.

He already has faith, which he had not before; he has hope, which he was before without; he now walks in Christ, who before used to go astray in the devil. For on that account it is that he says, He has set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. Now that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4 Supposing that we are upon the rock, and that our goings are ordered, still it is necessary that we continue to walk; that we advance to something farther. For what did the Apostle Paul say when now upon the Rock, when his goings had now been established?

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. Philippians 3:12-13 What then has been done for you, if you have not apprehended? On what account do you return thanks, saying, But I have obtained mercy? 1 Timothy 1:13 Because his goings are now established, because he now walks on the Rock?...Therefore, when he was saying, I press forward toward the prize of my high calling, because his feet were now set on the Rock, and his goings were ordered, because he was now walking on the right way, he had something to return thanks for; something to ask for still; returning thanks for what he had received already, while he was claiming that which still remained due.

For what things already received was he giving thanks? For the remission of sins, for the illumination of faith; for the strong support of hope, for the fire of charity. But in what respects had he still a claim of debt on the Lord? Henceforth, he says, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. There is therefore something due me still. What is it that is due? A crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. He was at first a loving Father to bring him forth from the horrible pit; to forgive his sins, to rescue him from the mire and clay; hereafter he will be a righteous Judge, requiting to him walking rightly, what He promised; to him (I say), unto whom He had at the first granted that power to walk rightly. He then as a righteous Judge will repay; but whom will he repay? He that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved. Matthew 10:22

4. And He has put a new song in my mouth. What new song is this? Even a hymn unto our God Psalm 39:3. Perhaps you used to sing hymns to strange gods; old hymns, because they were uttered by the old man, not by the new man; let the new man be formed, and let him sing a new song; being himself made new, let him love those new things by which he is himself made new. For what is more Ancient than God, who is before all things, and is without end and without beginning? He becomes new to you, when you return to Him; because it was by departing from Him, that you had become old; and had said, I have waxed old because of all mine enemies. We therefore utter a hymn unto our God; and the hymn itself sets us free. For I will call upon the Lord to praise Him, and I will be safe from all mine enemies. For a hymn is a song of praise. Call on God to praise Him, not to find fault with Him....

5. If haply any one asks, what person is speaking in this Psalm? I would say briefly, It is Christ. But as you know, brethren, and as we must say frequently, Christ sometimes speaks in His own Person, in the Person of our Head. For He Himself is the Saviour of the Body. Ephesians 5:23 He is our Head; the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin, suffered for us, rose again for our justification, sits at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us: Romans 8:34 who is also to recompense to the evil and to the good, in the judgment, all the evil and the good that they have done. He deigned to be come our Head; to become the Head of the Body, by taking of us that flesh in which He should die for us; that flesh which He also raised up again for our sakes, that in that flesh He might place before us an instance of the resurrection; that we might learn to hope for that of which we heretofore despaired, and might henceforth have our feet upon the rock, and might walk in Christ. He then sometimes speaks in the name of our Head; sometimes also He speaks of us who are His members. For both when He said, I was an hungred, and you gave Me meat, Matthew 25:35 He spoke on behalf of His members, not of Himself: and when He said, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? Acts 9:4 the Head was crying on behalf of its members: and yet He did not say, Why do you persecute My members? but, Why do you persecute Me? If He suffers in us, then shall we also be crowned in Him. Such is the love of Christ. What is there can be compared to this? This is the thing on account of which He has put a hymn in our mouth, and this He speaks on behalf of His members.

6. The just shall see, and shall fear, and shall trust in the Lord. The just shall see. Who are the just? The faithful; because it is by faith that the just shall live. Habakkuk 2:4 For there is in the Church this order, some go before, others follow; and those who go before make themselves an example to those who follow; and those who follow imitate those who go before. But do those then follow no one, who exhibit themselves as an ensample to them that come after? If they follow no one at all, they will fall into error. These persons then must themselves also follow some one, that is, Christ Himself....The just, therefore, shall see, and shall fear. They see a narrow way on the one hand; on the other side, a broad road: on this side they see few, on the other many. But you are a just man; count them not, but weigh them; bring a just balance, not a deceitful one: because you are called just. The just shall see, and fear, applies to you.

Count not therefore the multitudes of men that are filling the broad ways, that are to fill the circus tomorrow; celebrating with shouts the City's Anniversary, while they defile the City itself by evil living. Look not at them; they are many in number; and who can count them? But there are a few travelling along the narrow road. Bring forth the balance, I say. Weigh them; see what a quantity of chaff you lift up on the one side, against a few grains of grain on the other. Let this be done by the just, the believers, who are to follow. And what shall they who precede do? Let them not be proud, let them not exalt themselves; let them not deceive those who follow them. How may they deceive those who follow them? By promising them salvation in themselves. What then ought those who follow to do? The just shall see, and fear: and shall trust in the Lord; not in those who go before them. But indeed they fix their eyes on those who go before them, and follow and imitate them; but they do so, because they consider from Whom they have received the grace to go before them; and because they trust in Him. Although therefore they make these their models, they place their trust in Him from whom the others have received the grace whereby they are such as they are. The just shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Just as in another Psalm, I lift up my eyes unto the hills, we understand by hills, all distinguished and great spiritual persons in the Church; great in solidity, not by swollen inflation. By these it is that all Scripture has been dispensed unto us; they are the Prophets, they are the Evangelists; they are sound Doctors: to these I lift up my eyes, from whence shall come my help. And lest you should think of mere human help, he goes on to say, My help comes from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. The just shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord....

7. Blessed is that man that makes the name of the Lord his trust, and has not respected vanities or lying madneses Psalm 39:4. Behold the way by which you would fain have gone. Behold the multitude that fill the Broad way. It is not without reason that road leads to the amphitheatre. It is not without reason it leads to Death. The broad way leads unto death, Matthew 7:13 its breadth delights for time: its end is straitness to all eternity. Aye; but the multitudes murmur; the multitudes are rejoicing together; the multitudes are hastening along; the multitudes are flocking together! Do not thou imitate them; do not turn aside after them: they are vanities, and lying madneses. Let the Lord your God be your hope. Hope for nothing else from the Lord your God; but let the Lord your God Himself be your hope. For many persons hope to obtain from God's hands riches, and many perishable and transitory honours; and, in short, anything else they hope to obtain at God's hands, except only God Himself. But do thou seek after your God Himself: nay, indeed, despising all things else, make your way unto Him! Forget other things, remember Him. Leave other things behind, and press forward Philippians 3:14 unto Him. Surely it is He Himself, who set you right, when turned away from the right path; who, now that you are set in the right path, guides you aright, who guides you to your destination. Let Him then be your hope, who both guides you, and guides you to your destination. Whither does worldly covetousness lead you? And to what point does it conduct you at the last? Thou at first desired a farm; then you would possess an estate; you would shut out your neighbours; having shut them out, you set your heart on the possessions of other neighbours; and extended your covetous desires till you had reached the shore: arriving at the shore, thou covet the islands: having made the earth your own, you would haply seize upon heaven. Leave thou all your loves. He who made heaven and earth is more beautiful than all.

8. Blessed is the man that makes the name of the Lord his hope, and who has not regarded vanities and lying madneses. For whence is it that madness is called lying? Insanity is a lying thing, even as it is sanity that sees the Truth. For what you see as good things, you are deceived; you are not in your sound senses: a violent fever has driven you to frenzy: that which you are in love with is not a reality. Thou applauded the charioteer; you cheer the charioteer; you are madly in love with the charioteer. It is vanity; it is a lying

madness. It is 'not' (he cries). Nothing can be better; nothing more delightful. What can I do for one in a state of high fever? Pray ye for such persons, if you have any feelings of compassion in you. For the physician himself also in a desperate case generally turns to those in the house, who stand around weeping; who are hanging on his lips to hear his opinion of the patient who is sick and in danger. The physician stands in a state of doubt: he sees not any good to promise; he fears to pronounce evil, lest he should excite alarm. He devises a thoroughly modest sentence: The good God can do all things. Pray ye for him. Which then of these madmen shall I check? Which of them will listen to me? Which of them would not call us miserable? Because they suppose us to have lost great and various pleasures, of which they are madly fond, in that we are not as madly in love with them as they are: and they do not see that they are lying pleasures....And has not respected vanities, and lying madnesses. Such a one has won, he cries; he harnessed such and such a horse, he proclaims aloud. He would fain be a kind of diviner; he aspires to the honours of divination by abandoning the fountain of Divinity; and he frequently pronounces an opinion, and is frequently mistaken. Why is this? Even because they are lying madnesses. But why is it that what they say sometimes comes true? That they may lead astray the foolish ones; that by loving the semblance of truth there, they may fall into the snare of falsehood: let them be left behind, let them be given over, let them be cut off. If they were members of us, they must be mortified. Mortify, he says, your members which are upon the earth. Colossians 3:5 Let our God be our hope. He who made all things, is better than all! He who made what is beautiful, is more beautiful than all that is such. He who made whatever is mighty, is Himself mightier. He who made whatever is great, is Himself greater. He will be unto you everything that you love. Learn in the creature to love the Creator; and in the work Him who made it. Let not that which has been made by Him detain your affections, so that you should lose Him by whom you yourself were made also. Blessed, then, is the man that makes the Name of the Lord his trust, and has not respected vanities and lying madnesses....

9. We will give him other sights in exchange for such sights as these. And what sights shall we present to the Christian, whom we would fain divert from those sights? I thank the Lord our God; He in the following verse of the Psalm has shown us what sights we ought to present and offer to spectators who would fain have sights to see? Let us now suppose him to be weaned from the circus, the theatre, the amphitheatre; let him be looking after, let him by all means be looking after, some sight to see; we do not leave him without a spectacle. What then shall we give in exchange for those? Hear what follows.

Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works which You have made Psalm 39:5. He used to gaze at the wonderful works of man; let him now contemplate the wonderful works of God. Many are the wonderful works that God has made. Why are they become vile in his eyes? He praises the charioteer guiding four horses; running all of them without fault and without stumbling. Perhaps the Lord has not made such wonderful works in things spiritual. Let him control lust, let him control cowardice, let him control injustice, let him control imprudence, I mean, the passions which falling into excess produce those vices; let him control these and bring them into subjection, and let him hold the reins, and not suffer himself to be carried away; let him guide them the way he himself would have them go; let him not be forced away whither he would not. He used to applaud the charioteer, he himself shall be applauded for his own charioteering; he used to call out that the charioteer should be invested with a dress of honour; he shall himself be clothed with immortality. These are the spectacles, these the sights that God exhibits to us. He cries out of heaven, My eyes are upon you. Strive, and 'I will?' assist you; triumph, and I will crown you.

And in Your thought there is none that is like You. Now then look at the actor! For the man has by dint of great pains learned to walk upon a rope; and hanging there he holds you hanging in suspense. Turn to

Him who exhibits spectacles far more wonderful. This man has learned to walk upon the rope; but has he caused another to walk on the sea? Forget now your theatre; behold our Peter; not a walker on the rope, but, so to speak, a walker on the sea. And do thou also walk on other waters (though not on those on which Peter walked, to symbolize a certain truth), for this world is a sea. It has a deleterious bitterness; it has the waves of tribulations, the tempests of temptations; it has men in it who, like fish, delight in their own ruin, and prey upon each other; walk thou here, set thou your foot on this. You would see sights; be yourself a spectacle. That your spirit may not sink, look on Him who goes before you, and says, We have been made a spectacle unto this world, and unto angels, and unto men. 1 Corinthians 4:9 Tread thou on the waters; suffer not yourself to be drowned in the sea. You will not go there, you will not tread it under foot, unless it be His bidding, who was Himself the first to walk upon the sea. For it was thus that Peter spoke. If You are, bid me come unto You on the waters. Matthew 14:28 And because He was, He heard him when praying; He granted his wish to him when expressing his desire; He raised him up when sinking. These are the wonderful works that the Lord has made. Look on them; let faith be the eye of him who would behold them. And do thou also likewise; for although the winds alarm you, though the waves rage against you, and though human frailty may have inspired you with some doubt of your salvation, you have it in your power to cry out, you may say Lord, I perish. Matthew 14:30 He who bids you walk there, suffers you not to perish. For in that thou now walkest on the Rock, you fear not even on the sea! If you are without the Rock, you must sink in the sea; for the Rock on which you must walk is such an one as is not sunk in the sea,

10. Observe then the wonderful works of God. I have declared, and have spoken; they are multiplied beyond number. There is a number, there are some over and above the number. There is a fixed number that belongs to that heavenly Jerusalem. For the Lord knows them that are His; 2 Timothy 2:19 the Christians that fear Him, the Christians that believe, the Christians that keep the commandments, that walk in God's ways, that keep themselves from sins; that if they fall confess: they belong to the number. But are they the only ones? There are also some beyond the number. For even if they be but a few (a few in comparison of the numbers of the larger majority), with how great numbers are our Churches filled, crowded up to the very walls; to what a degree do they annoy each other by the pressure, and almost choke each other by their overflowing numbers. Again, out of these very same persons, when there is a public spectacle, there are numbers flocking to the amphitheatre; these are over and above the number. But it is for this reason that we say this, that they may be in the number. Not being present, they do not hear this from us; but when you have gone from hence, let them hear it from you. I have declared, he says, and have spoken. It is Christ who speaks. He has declared it, in His own Person, as our Head. He has Himself declared it by His members. He Himself has sent those who should declare it; He Himself has sent the Apostles. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. How great the number of believers that are gathered together; how great the multitudes that flock together; many of them truly converted, many but in appearance: and those who are truly converted are the minority; those who are so but in appearance are the majority: because they are multiplied beyond the number.

11. ...These are the wonderful works of God; these are the thoughts of God, to which no man's thoughts are like; that the lover of sight-seeing may be weaned from curiosity: and with us may seek after those more excellent, those more profitable things, in which, when he shall have attained unto them, he will rejoice....

12. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire Psalm 39:6, says the Psalm to God. For the men of old time, when as yet the true Sacrifice, which is known to the faithful, was foreshown in figures, used to celebrate rites that were figures of the reality that was to be hereafter; many of them understanding their meaning; but more of them in ignorance of it. For the Prophets and the holy Patriarchs understood what they were celebrating; but the rest of the stiff-necked people were so carnal, that what was done by them was but to symbolize the things that were to come afterwards; and it came to pass, when that first sacrifice was abolished; when the burnt-offerings of rams, of goats, and of calves, and of other victims, had been abolished, God did not desire them. Why did God not desire them? And why did He at the first desire them? Because all those things were, as it were, the words of a person making a promise; and the expressions conveying a promise, when the thing that they promise has come, are no longer uttered....Those sacrifices then, as being but expressions of a promise, have been abrogated. What is that which has been given as its fulfilment? That Body; which you know; which you do not all of you know; which, of you who do know it, I pray God all may not know it unto condemnation. Observe the time when it was said; for the person is Christ our Lord, speaking at one time for His members, at another in His own person. Sacrifice and offering, said He, You did not desire. What then? Are we left at this present time without a sacrifice? God forbid!

But a Body have You perfected for me. It was for this reason that You did not desire the others; that You might perfect this; before You perfected this, You desired the others. The fulfilment of the promise has done away with the words that express the promise. For if they still hold out a promise, that which was promised is not yet fulfilled. This was promised by certain signs; the signs that convey the promise are done away; because the Substance that was promised has come. We are in this Body. We are partakers of this Body. We know that which we ourselves receive; and you who know it not yet, will know it by and by; and when you come to know it, I pray ye may not receive it unto condemnation. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation unto himself. 1 Corinthians 11:29 A Body has been perfected for us; let us be made perfect in the Body.

13. Burnt-offerings also for sin have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come! Psalm 39:7. It is time that what was promised should come; because the signs, by means of which they were promised, have been put away. And indeed, Brethren, observe these put away; those fulfilled. Let the Jewish nation at this time show me their priest, if they can! Where are their sacrifices? They are brought to an end; they are put away now. Should we at that time have rejected them? We do reject them now; because, if you chose to celebrate them now, it were unseasonable; unfitting at the time; incongruous. You are still making promises; I have already received! There has remained to them a certain thing for them to celebrate; that they might not remain altogether without a sign....In such a case then are they; like Cain with his mark. The sacrifices, however, which used to be performed there, have been put away; and that which remained unto them for a sign like that of Cain, has by this time been fulfilled; and they know it not. They slay the Lamb; they eat the unleavened bread. Christ has been sacrificed for us, as our Passover. 1 Corinthians 5:7 Lo, in the sacrifice of Christ, I recognise the Lamb that was slain! What of the unleavened bread? Therefore, says he, let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of wickedness (he shows what is meant by old; it is stale flour; it is sour), but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Corinthians 5:8 They have continued in the shade; they cannot abide the Sun of Glory. We are already in the light of day. We have the Body of Christ, we have the Blood of Christ. If we have a new life, let us sing a new song, even a hymn unto our God. Burnt offerings for sin You did not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come!

14. In the head of the Book it is written of me, that I should fulfil Your will: O my God, I am willing, and Your Law is within my heart Psalm 39:8. Behold! He turns His regards to His members. Behold! He has Himself fulfilled the will of the Father. But in what beginning of a Book is it written of Him? Perhaps in the beginning of this Book of Psalms. For why should we seek far for it, or examine into other books for it? Behold! It is written in the beginning of this Book of Psalms! His will is in the Law of the Lord; that is, 'O my God, I am willing,' and 'Your Law is within my heart;' that is the same as, And in His Law does he meditate day and night.

15. I have well declared Your righteousness in the great congregation Psalm 39:9. He now addresses His members. He is exhorting them to do what He has already done. He has declared; let us declare also. He has suffered; let us suffer with Him. He has been glorified; we shall be glorified with Him. Romans 8:17 I have declared Your righteousness in the great congregation. How great an one is that? In all the world. How great is it? Even among all nations. Why among all nations? Because He is the Seed of Abraham, in whom all nations shall be blessed. Genesis 22:18 Why among all nations? Because their sound has gone forth into all lands. Lo! I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, and that You know. My lips speak; I will not refrain them from speaking. My lips indeed sound audibly in the ears of men; but You know mine heart. I will not refrain my lips, O Lord; that You know. It is one thing that man hears; another that God knows. That the declaring of it should not be confined to the lips alone, and that it might not be said of us, Whatsoever things they say unto you, do; but do not after their works; Matthew 23:3 or lest it should be said to the people, praising God with their lips, but not with their heart, This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; Isaiah 29:31 do thou make audible confession with your lips; draw near with your heart also. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:10 In case like which that thief was found, who, hanging on the Cross with the Lord, did on the Cross acknowledge the Lord. Others had refused to acknowledge Him while working miracles; this man acknowledged Him when hanging on the Cross. That thief had every other member pierced through; his hands were fastened by the nails; his feet were pierced also; his whole body was fastened to the tree; the body was not disengaged in its other members; the heart and the tongue were disengaged; with the heart he believed; with the tongue he made confession. Remember me, O Lord, he said, when You come into Your kingdom. He hoped for the coming of his salvation at a time far remote; he was content to receive it after a long delay; his hope rested on an object far remote. The day, however, was not postponed! The answer was, This day shall you be with Me in Paradise. Paradise has happy trees! This day have you been with Me on the Tree of the Cross. This day shall you be with Me on the Tree of Salvation....

16. I have not hid my righteousness within my heart Psalm 39:10. What is meant by my righteousness? My faith. For, the just shall live by faith. As suppose the persecutor under threat of punishment, as they were once allowed to do, puts you to the question, What are you? Pagan or Christian? A Christian. That is his righteousness. He believes; he lives by faith. He does not hide his righteousness within his heart. He has not said in his heart, I do indeed believe in Christ; but I will not tell what I believe to this persecutor, who is raging against me, and threatening me. My God knows that inwardly, within my heart, I do believe. He knows that I renounce Him not. Lo! You say that you have this inwardly within your heart! What have you upon your lips? I am not a Christian. Your lips bear witness against your heart. I have not hid my righteousness within my heart....

17. I have declared Your Truth and Your Salvation. I have declared Your Christ. This is the meaning of, I have declared Your Truth and Your Salvation. How is Your Truth Christ? I am the Truth. John 14:6 How is

Christ His Salvation? Simeon recognised the infant in His Mother's hands in the Temple, and said, For my eyes have seen Your Salvation. Luke 2:30 The old man recognised the little child; the old man having himself become a little child in that infant, having been renewed by faith. For he had received an oracle from God; and it said this, The Lord had said unto him, that he was not to depart out of this life, until he had seen the Salvation of God. This Salvation of God it is a good thing to have shown unto men; but let them cry, Show us Your mercy, O Lord, and grant us Your Salvation....

18. I have not concealed Your mercy and Your Truth from the great congregation. Let us be there; let us also be numbered among the members of this Body: let us not keep back the mercy of the Lord, and the Truth of the Lord. Would you hear what the mercy of the Lord is? Depart from your sins; He will forgive your sins. Would you hear what the truth of the Lord is? Hold fast righteousness. Your righteousness shall receive a crown. For mercy is announced to you now; Truth is to be shown unto you hereafter. For God is not merciful in such a way as not to be just, nor just in such a way as not to be merciful. Does that mercy seem to you an inconsiderable one? He will not impute unto you all your former sins: you have lived ill up to this present day; you are still living; this day live well; then you will not conceal this mercy. If this is meant by mercy, what is meant by truth?...

19. Remove not Thou Your mercies far from me, O Lord Psalm 39:11. He is turning his attention to the wounded members. Because I have not concealed Your mercy and Your Truth from the great congregation, from the Unity of the Universal Church, look Thou on Your afflicted members, look on those who are guilty of sins of omission, and on those who are guilty of sins of commission: and withhold not Thou Your mercies. Your mercy and Your Truth have continually preserved me. I should not dare to turn from my evil way, were I not assured of remission; I could not endure so as to persevere, if I were not assured of the fulfilment of Your promise....

Innumerable evils have compassed me about Psalm 39:12. Who can number sins? Who can count his own sins, and those of others? A burden under which he was groaning, who said, Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults; and from the faults of others, spare Thou Your servant, O Lord. Our own are too little; those of others are added to the burden. I fear for myself; I fear for a virtuous brother, I have to bear with a wicked brother; and under such burden what shall we be, if God's mercy were to fail? But You, Lord, remove not afar off. Be Thou near unto us! To whom is the Lord near? Even unto them that are of a broken heart. He is far from the proud: He is near to the humble. For though the Lord is high, yet has He respect unto the lowly. But let not those that are proud think themselves to be unobserved: for the things that are high, He beholds afar off. He beheld afar off the Pharisee, who boasted himself; He was near at hand to succour the Publican, who made confession. Luke 18:9-14 The one extolled his own merits, and concealed his wounds; the other boasted not of his merits, but laid bare his wounds. He came to the Physician; he knew that he was sick, and that he required to be made whole; he dared not lift up his eyes to Heaven: he smote upon his breast. He spared not himself, that God might spare him; he acknowledged himself guilty, that God might ignore the charge against him. He punished himself, that God might free him from punishment....

20. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I could not see. There is a something for us to see; what prevents us so that we see it not? Is it not iniquity? From beholding this light your eye is prevented perhaps by some humour penetrating into it; perhaps by smoke, or dust, or by something else that has been thrown into it: and you have not been able to raise your wounded eye to contemplate this light of day. What then? Will you be able to lift up your wounded heart unto God? Must it not be first healed, in order that you may see? Do you not show your pride, when you say, First let me see, and then I will

believe? Who is there who says this? For who that would fain see, says, Let me see, and then I will believe? I am about to manifest the Light unto you; or rather the Light Itself would fain manifest Itself to you! To whom? It cannot manifest Itself to the blind. He does not see. Whence is it that he sees not? It is that the eye is clogged by the multitude of sins....

21. They are more than the hairs of my head. He subjects the number of the hairs of his head to calculation. Who is there can calculate the number of the hairs of his head? Much less can he tell the number of his sins, which exceed the number of the hairs of his head. They seem to be minute; but they are many in number. You have guarded against great ones; you do not now commit adultery, or murder; you do not plunder the property of others; you do not blaspheme; and do not bear false witness; those are the weightier kind of sins. You have guarded against great sins, what are you doing about your smaller ones? You have cast off the weight; beware lest the sand overwhelm you. And my heart has forsaken me. What wonder if your heart is forsaken by your God, when it is even forsaken by itself? What is meant by fails me, forsakes me? Is not capable of knowing itself. He means this: My heart has forsaken me. I would fain see God with mine heart, and cannot from the multitude of my sins: that is not enough; mine heart does not even know itself. For no one thoroughly knows himself: let no one presume upon his own state. Was Peter able to comprehend with his own heart the state of his own heart, who said, I will be with You even unto death? Luke 22:33 There was a false presumption in the heart; there was lurking in that heart at the same time a real fear: and the heart was not able to comprehend the state of the heart. Its state was unknown to the sick heart itself: it was manifest to the physician. That which was foretold of him was fulfilled. God knew that in him which he knew not in himself: because his heart had forsaken him, his heart was unknown to his heart.

22. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me Psalm 39:13. As if he were saying, 'If You will, You can make me clean.' Matthew 8:2 Be pleased to deliver me. O Lord, look upon me to help me. Look, that is, on the penitent members, members that lie in pain, members that are writhing under the instruments of the surgeon; but still in hope.

23. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it Psalm 39:14. For in a certain passage he makes an accusation, and says, I looked upon my right hand, and beheld; and there was no man who sought after my soul; that is, there was no man to imitate Mine example. Christ in His Passion is the Speaker. I looked on my right hand, that is, not on the ungodly Jews, but on My own right hand, the Apostles,-- and there was no man who sought after My soul. So thoroughly was there no man to seek after My soul, that he who had presumed on his own strength, denied My soul. But because a man's soul is sought after in two ways, either in order that you may enjoy his society; or that you may persecute him; therefore he here speaks of others, whom he would have confounded and ashamed, who are seeking after his soul. But lest you should understand it in the same way as when he complains of some who did not seek after his soul, He adds, to destroy it; that is, they seek after my soul in order to my death....

24. Let them be turned backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Turned backwards. Let us not take this in a bad sense. He wishes them well; and it is His voice, who said from the Cross, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34 Wherefore then does he say to them, that they should return backwards? Because they who before were proud, so that they fell, are now become humble, so that they may rise again. For when they are before, they are wishing to take precedence of their Lord; to be better than He; but if they go behind Him, they acknowledge Him to be better than they; they acknowledge that He ought to go before; that He should precede, they follow. Thence He thus rebukes

Peter giving Him evil counsel. For the Lord, when about to suffer for our salvation, also foretold what was to happen concerning that Passion itself; and Peter says, Be it far from You, Matthew 16:22 God forbid it! This shall not be! He would fain have gone before his Lord; would have given counsel to his Master! But the Lord, that He might make him not go before Him, but follow after Him, says, Get behind, Satan! It is for this reason He said Satan, because you are seeking to go before Him, whom you ought to follow; but if you are behind, if you follow Him, you will henceforth not be Satan. What then? Upon this Rock I will build My Church. Matthew 16:18 ...

25. Let them speedily bear away their own confusion, that say unto me, Well done! Well done! Psalm 39:15. They praise you without reason. A great man! A good man! A man of education and of learning; but why a Christian? They praise those things in you which you should wish not to be praised; they find fault with that at which you rejoice. But if perhaps you say, What is it you praise in me, O man? That I am a virtuous man? A just man? If you think this, Christ made me this; praise Him. But the other says, Be it far from you. Do yourself no wrong! You yourself made yourself such. Let them be confounded who say unto me, Well done! Well done! And what follows?

Let all those that seek You, O Lord, rejoice and be glad Psalm 39:16. Those who seek not me, but You; who say not to me, Well done! Well done! but see me glory in You, if I have anything whereof to glory; for he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:31 Let all those who seek You, Lord, rejoice and be glad.

And say continually, the Lord be magnified. For even if the sinner becomes righteous, you should give the glory to Him who justifies the ungodly. Romans 4:5 Whether therefore it be a sinner, let Him be praised who calls him to forgiveness; or one already walking in the way of righteousness, let Him be praised who calls him to receive the crown! Let the Name of the Lord be magnified continually by such as love Your salvation.

But I Psalm 39:17. I for whom they were seeking evil, I whose life they were seeking, that they might take it away. But turn you to another description of persons. But I to whom they said, Well done! Well done! I am poor and needy. There is nothing in me that may be praised as my own. Let Him rend my sackcloth in sunder, and cover me with His robe. For, Now I live, not I myself; but Christ lives in me. Galatians 2:20 If it is Christ that lives in you, and all that you have is Christ's, and all that you are to have hereafter is Christ's also; what are you in yourself? I am poor and needy. Now I am not rich, because I am not proud. He was rich who said, Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men are; Luke 18:11 but the publican was poor, who said, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner! The one was belching from his fullness; the other from want was crying piteously, I am poor and needy! And what would you do, O poor and needy man? Beg at God's door; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matthew 7:7 -- As for me, I am poor and needy. Yet the Lord cares for me.-- Cast your care upon the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass. What can you effect for yourself by taking care what can you provide for yourself? Let Him who made you care for you. He who cared for you before thou were, how shall He fail to have a care of you, now that you are what He would have you be? For now you are a believer, now you are walking in the way of righteousness. Shall not He have a care for you, who makes His sun rise on the good and on the evil, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust? Matthew 5:45 ...

You are my Help, and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God Psalm 39:17. He is calling upon God, imploring Him, fearing lest he should fall away: Make no tarrying. What is meant by make no tarrying? We lately read concerning the days of tribulation: Unless those days should be shortened, there should no

flesh be saved. Matthew 24:22 The members of Christ-- the Body of Christ extended everywhere-- are asking of God, as one single person, one single poor man, and beggar! For He too was poor, who though He was rich, yet became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9 It is He that makes rich those who are the true poor; and makes poor those who are falsely rich. He cries unto Him; From the end of the earth I cried unto You, when my heart was in heaviness. There will come days of tribulations, and of greater tribulations; they will come even as the Scripture speaks: and as days advance, so are tribulations increased also. Let no one promise himself what the Gospel does not promise....

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