

Sermon Series: Transformation
Sermon: A New Song
Text: Psalm 40

Discussion Questions:

Most all of us have had the experience of getting stuck. Unable to move any further.

We've had our car stuck in the snow.

We've gotten stuck in the mud.

We've been stuck in an airport having missed a connection.

We've gotten stuck while working on a project - with no clue what to do next.

We get stuck emotionally, completely paralyzed by fear or grief or anxiety.

We just get stuck in ruts, doing the same thing over and over again.

Go around the room and share some "stuck" stories. Draw from any of these examples I've just listed. Or perhaps you've found yourself stuck (perhaps even stranded!) in a most unusual way. Share it with the group. It's nice to commiserate. It's good to laugh about it. We've all been there - we all understand what it feels like to get stuck!

Examination:

- Look at **Genesis 39**. Have someone read it out loud if there are those in the group unfamiliar with the story. Focus in on **verses 19-20**. Joseph is thrown into prison for something he didn't even do. In **Genesis 40**, Joseph interprets a dream for the King's cupbearer. The dream comes true - and the man promises that he will speak to the king on Joseph's behalf. But as we see in **Genesis 41:1**, that never happened - Joseph spent another two full years stuck in prison. And all of this after his brothers had thrown him into a pit (Genesis 37:18-24).
 - From the age of 17 until the age of 30, Joseph found himself "stuck" places he didn't want to be (in a pit, in slavery, in prison); places he couldn't escape from - places that would have left him feeling completely abandoned by God. Put yourself in Joseph's sandals. What do you think was going through his mind? Perhaps, in some ways, you HAVE actually been in his sandals (maybe not in prison, but in very difficult circumstances) - how have you felt? What has gone through your mind during the times or seasons of your life when you've felt completely stuck?
 - The million-dollar question is: Was Joseph stuck? From his lower-story perspective, Joseph would have certainly felt as though he had completely fallen off of God's radar screen - but had he? Viewed from the God's upper-story perspective, what was really going on? Was Joseph making "progress" in his life - even sitting in prison? What do you think God was teaching Joseph, that Joseph could only have learned in his "stuck" places?
 - Do you think Joseph ever lost faith?
 - Read **Genesis 50:18-21**. At what point do you think Joseph came to realize that what his brothers had meant for evil - God intended for good? Joseph is most

definitely catching a glimpse of the upper-story in this statement. How can you apply this upper-story perspective to whatever you're going through right now?

- Read **Jonah 1**.
 - By the time we get to the last verse of this chapter, Jonah finds himself stuck in one of the most unusual and desperate places imaginable...the belly of a great fish. What factors contributed to Jonah's "stuckness."
 - Joseph was stuck in prison - and Jonah was stuck in a fish belly. Compare and contrast these two situations. Who or what caused them? Were they avoidable? How did personal holiness or obedience play a role?
 - What can we learn from Jonah's prayer in **chapter 2**?

- Read **Psalm 40**.
 - David begins this psalm by describing how he has been in a muddy, slimy pit. Describe his "tone of voice" as he talks about this.
 - David provides more detail about this pit that he's in - see verses 11-17. He actually sounds a lot like Jonah - minus the presence of a big fish. What seems to be the cause of David's dire situation (v. 12)?
 - Go back up to verse 1. How does patience play a part in David's attitude? How hard is it to be patient when we feel stuck?
 - When David says that God set his feet upon a rock and gave him a firm place to stand (v. 2) - what do you think he means by this?
 - What speaks to you about the imagery of God "putting a new song in his mouth" (v. 3)?
 - David seems to understand that in the upper-story, God will receive greater glory by his (David's) being stuck in this muddy pit. Talk about that. How hard is it to have this perspective? How important is it to have this perspective? How does this perspective change the way we think about whatever pit we find ourselves stuck in?
 - How does faith play a role in this new song that David sings here (vv. 4-6)?
 - What do you make of verses 6-8? Who is David talking about here? Is he the one that's been written about in the scroll? Could this in any way be pointing to Jesus?

Application:

Take some time this week to think about whatever "pit" you currently find yourself in. What responsibility do you need to take for your situation? What do you need to repent of? Consider how God might be intending your circumstances for good. How can you take the same hopeful "tone of voice" that David does? How might God receive greater glory by delivering you?