

Psalm 36 • Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds

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Psalm 36. You'll notice that this Psalm is listed as, *“To the choirmaster. Of David, the servant of the LORD.”*

He begins this Psalm by saying:

*“Transgression speaks to the wicked
deep in his heart;
there is no fear of God
before his eyes.*

*² For he flatters himself in his own eyes
that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.” (ESV)*

Did you notice there in those first 2 verses you see a reference to his eyes? First, we learn that there's no fear of God before his eyes. And then we see that he flatters himself in his own eyes. It's interesting, that phrase is today what you and I would probably call narcissism, because everything is in his own eyes. In other words, it's as he sees it; what he sees, he believes. And what he sees in himself is a very excessive regard. In fact, it's been said that he who makes little of God makes much of himself.

Notice that this man makes little of God. There's no fear of God before his eyes. He doesn't take into account that God is going to ultimately judge him at the last day. He's not concerned about being accountable to God. So, God is small in his eyes, but he himself is big in his eyes because it says he flatters himself to the point where he can't even be convicted anymore of his sin.

He can't even be convinced that what he's doing is wrong because he is involved in such intense self-flattery that he thinks everything he does is good. And he has convinced himself that all that he does is good, and he will not be convinced that it is evil in any way.

Have you ever met that kind of a person? It's interesting when people do that; when they've just convinced themselves this is okay. And we've had years and decades of being preached at by the world to tell us how we determine things are good. Like the lyrics to that one song, it can't be wrong when it feels so

right. We're told over and over again that what's right is what's right in our eyes. Not according to what God says, according to what I say. I am the center of my own universe. That's basically the idea here of this individual.

David goes on then to describe this person in verse 3. He says:

“The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;”

Wow. So everything that comes out of his mouth. In other words, he's been given over to the work of the enemy. The Bible says that satan, when he speaks, he lies. That's his native language.

Just like my native language is English, American English. And It's what I speak. I can't speak any other language. Satan can't speak any other language but lies and deception. It's all he can do. That's what Jesus told us.

This individual whom David is describing here has literally given over his tongue to that use of such evil that all his words are deceit. It says here that: *“he has ceased to act wisely and to do good.”*

No more wisdom, no more good. And: *“⁴ he plots trouble – look at this – while on his bed;”*

And that is a poetic way of saying that this individual isn't just the kind of person who finds his way into trouble because he kind of drifted into it foolishly or ignorantly. No, this guy is planning evil on his bed. He is deliberately resolving to do evil. And then it says: *“he sets himself in a way that is not good;”*

In other words, he sets his path and he does not reject evil. David is basically describing here the corruption of man by sin, isn't he? I mean, it's a description that we're not unfamiliar with from the standpoint of understanding the corruption of our own hearts.

But I want you to notice that he changes his words here to contrast man's corruption, and he begins to describe the goodness of God. Look what he says in verse 5. This is amazing. You would think the next words out of his mouth would be, and God said, fire is your future! or something. No, he says:

*“Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.*

⁶ Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;

*your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O LORD.”*

You save men. They don't deserve it, but you save them. And then he says:

*“⁷ How precious is your steadfast love, O God.
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.”*

Here's what's interesting about this – David is making a point by contrast. He begins by speaking of the evil heart of man, which we all are very intimately acquainted with, and then he begins to contrast that with the mercy, steadfast love, and graciousness of God who actually saves people.

Have you ever used a backdrop so that you could understand something better? We do it sometimes when we're looking at clothes where we pull up something out of our closet and we go, is this clean? Did this get clean? And so what do you got to do? You've got to take it out into the light. You've got to let the light shine on it.

You've got to see the contrast and you have to look at it, maybe even alongside another shirt of the same color or pants or whatever and look at it and go, oh, okay...yeah, that's not clean. Back in the wash it goes because we've made a comparison right? And we've seen things as they are.

David is making a comparison for you and I that we might highlight, or that he might for us highlight, the mercy of God. And what it does in David is It produces a joyful praise response.

Do you get it? Sometimes I think we fail to praise the Lord for His goodness because we're not really so sure it's all that big of a deal. We say, God is good, or we sing, *“He's a good, good Father,”* and we're just singing. The words just go in our ear. *“He's a good, good Father.”*

You know when that goodness really makes a difference in somebody's life? When they know they don't deserve it. When they've seen the depth of their own sin. When they've seen the depravity of their own human heart become so dark and so challenging. And then they receive the forgiveness, and they understand how they've been restored.

And they're like, God, you still love me! And then you can start saying, oh, He's a good, good Father, with a completely different attitude. Why? Because you've seen a contrast. You've seen a comparison. And you're like, wow!

Verse – did I read verse 8? Did I do 8 and 9? No? Well, I'll read it here again.

*“⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.”*

Wow! These people who are so... deserving of hell. They don't get hell though, those who turn to you. They actually end up feasting on the abundance of your house. You let them into your house! And they drink from the river of your delights.

*“⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.”*

Isn't that interesting? It's in your light that we see real light. We think that the light of man is something special, but it's not. The light of God is real light. And then David ends with his petition, verses 10, 11, and 12, he says:

*“Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, (in other words, those who have reached out to you; those who have turned their ways. He says)
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!*

*¹¹ Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.*

*¹² There the evildoers lie fallen;
they are thrust down, unable to rise.”*

I find this very interesting. These last few verses by faith, David calls upon the Lord for both his protection and he recognizes the ultimate defeat of all those who rebel against the Lord.