

Human Darkness and God's Light

Psalm 36:1-12

¹ *I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:*

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

² *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.*

³ *The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful; they fail to act wisely or do good.*

⁴ *Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful course and do not reject what is wrong.*

⁵ *Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.*

⁶ *Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep.*

You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

⁷ *How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*

⁸ *They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.*

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

¹⁰ *Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.*

¹¹ *May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.*

¹² *See how the evildoers lie fallen— thrown down, not able to rise!*

A message from God concerning sinful people

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

1. The wicked do not fear God.
 - What does this tell you about the nature of sin?
 - What will happen when people do not believe that there is a God who made us for His purpose and that we are accountable to Him?
 - What can replace Him as a source of authority and truth?
2. We live in a world where the authority of God and His word is challenged. There are those who believe that they can do a better job in determining what is good apart from God.
 - Have these ideas influenced us? Has it affected the way we think of God?

The voice of flattery

² *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.*

³ *The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful; they fail to act wisely or do good.*

⁴ *Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful course and do not reject what is wrong.*

1. There are people who evaluate themselves in a way that totally excludes God from the process. They believe that they can determine their worth without God.
2. The wicked have come to a place where they must resort to self-flattery in order to feel good about themselves. Self-flattery can be so intoxicating that it blinds them to their sins. Even when their actions expose their sinfulness, they cannot see it because they believe that they are better than others.
3. Flattery is a powerful tool for deception. Even today, it is used effectively to manipulate others. Wickedness is built on deception.
4. God and His people are not the kind who flatters people but earnestly seek the well-being of others.
 - Why is flattery effective? What drives us to seek the praises and approval of others?

1 Thessalonians 2:3-7

³ *For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.* ⁴ *On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.* ⁵ *You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.* ⁶ *We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.* ⁷ *Instead, we were like young children among you.*

5. Read the text below. How does pride blind us to the glory of God?

Isaiah 14:13-14

¹³ *You said in your heart,
“I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.
¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”*

A better revelation

⁵ *Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.*

⁶ *Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep.*

You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

⁷ *How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!*

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ *They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.*

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

1. The psalmist reflects on the character of God: its heights, depths, and grandeur. The glory of God is so great that its heights are unscalable and its depths unknowable.
 - Can anything be compared to God? Can we boast of our achievements in His presence? Do we possess such knowledge and understanding?
2. The psalmist finds hope in the knowledge that all wisdom is in the hands of the Lord who loves him and cares for all the earth. His hope rises in worship. The psalmist speaks of four of God's virtues.
 - i. Love
 - ii. Faithfulness
 - iii. Righteousness
 - iv. Justice
 - Why are these virtues important?

Self-Praise Flattery	God's Love Faithfulness Righteousness Justice
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God is great and He is good. There is no other that can be compared to Him. In our broken and unjust world, His steadfast love can lift us, His faithfulness is our strongest refuge, and only God is able to act rightly and establish justice. We deceive ourselves when we believe that we can determine what is right apart from God. We are blinded when we seek the praises of people instead of the mercy and kindness of God. We are deeply infected when we let our pride cast a shadow over the glory of God.

3. “How priceless is your unfailing love”. True joy and freedom come to us only when we discover God’s unfailing love. This love is displayed on the cross and is found in the life that Jesus Christ gives us.

Romans 5:8

⁸ *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Peter 5:7

⁷ *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Romans 8:39

³⁹ *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

4. The psalmist gives a beautiful description of life under the care of God.

Spend some time meditating on these words.

- What do they tell us about God?
- What do the verses above and below tell us about worth?
- What really satisfy the soul: the praises of people or the unfailing love of God?

⁸ *They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.*

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

Victory over darkness

¹⁰ *Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.*

¹¹ *May the foot of the proud not come against me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.*

¹² *See how the evildoers lie fallen—
thrown down, not able to rise!*

1. The psalmist finds his place in the presence of God. No matter how proud and powerful wickedness may seem, it has no power over the people of God. God’s unfailing love is the victory banner of Christians; and nothing can separate us from the love of God.
2. By faith we now profess that God will put an end to wickedness; and those who look to Him will be saved.

Hebrews 11:1-2

¹ *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* ² *This is what the ancients were commended for.*

Prayer Items

1. We may know of God's unfailing love
2. We may turn away from pride and look to God with humility
3. We may be assured of the victory we have in Jesus Christ
4. Church
 - Guidance on restarting services at church
 - Renovation
 - Open doors for us to reach out to our new community
 - Empowerment to confidently lead in the workplace
5. Ministries
 - Life Explorers, Redeeming Roses, Sunday School, Destiny Kids & Teens, Lifeline Youth, Worship
 - Leaders to lead and actively engage with the community
6. Covid-19 pandemic
 - Deliverance
 - Protection
 - God will give the leaders wisdom and understanding as they lift restrictions and restart the economy
 - Grace and favour upon the foreigners, poor and vulnerable
7. Salvation of souls; opportunities & courage to witness
8. Healing: Andrew (presently admitted in Gleneagles, undergoing tests)