



Pictures: Seattle trip with Jodi for JT & Lyra's wedding; 2016

Context: This is listed among the lament psalms as David reflects on the wicked opposing the faithful (ESV).

The Big Idea: In the backdrop of our own wickedness, by grace we see and experience the comforting, protecting beauty of God's Goodness.

Verse 1 - What is the Fear of God? Fear is awe and wonder - seeing something of such beauty you don't know exactly how to put it in words.

The wicked do not see God as beautiful, nor do they dread his rightful wrath over their sin.

Instead, they settle for their own beauty and get crushed under the weight of their own worship. They flatter themselves thinking they are more beautiful. This leaves a wider blind spot where undetectable sin hides, and they forget to hate it.

Do we find God first to be useful or beautiful?

What do you find beautiful about God? In the events of Christ's life, where do you see his unbelievable character revealed? Do you catch glimpses of this today from leaders we enjoy following and watching?

Psalm 36 - NIV: The Stark Contrast of God's Goodness

I. The wicked live in abandoned sinfulness.

1 I have a message from God in my heart¹
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked²:

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.

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

4 Even on their beds they plot³ evil;
they
commit themselves to a sinful course
and do not reject⁴ what is wrong.



¹ David is reasoning: "David finds himself listening intently to, and catching the meaning of, the ideas that govern such a man" (Kidner p163).

² This is a portrait of us all and not just the abnormally wicked person: Paul quotes this in Romans 3:18 to wrap up section one of Romans arguing that both Gentile and Jew - every human - are guilty before the holy Creator God and therefore justly deserving his wrath.

³ There is downward spiral in choosing this path: This life's outflow is from the corruption of thought (plot), will (commit), and feeling (not reject).

⁴ Sin is crouching: Not rejecting sin is like God exhorting Cain that sin crouches at his door like a lion. Do not play with sin but be wary around it, and be on your guard.

Verse 5-9 - God's love is

both awesome AND

personal: His love "is unsearchable (heavens, clouds), impregnable (mountains), inexhaustible (the great deep); yet, for all that, welcoming and hospitable" (Kidner). It is a stark contrast for David with Nabal's low hospitality and similar to Barzillai's hospitality as David flees Absalom in 2 Sam. 17:27 (see notes).

"Judgements" includes all God's judgements or case law - a reference to all of Scripture.

Verse 9 - The joy and truth in God's light causes us to MORE clearly see the

world around us: In "The BreakPoint" Podcast John Stonestreet made the argument in a lecture opposite to the famous hymn that says, "and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace." All truth is God's truth. Knowing God in Christ shows us how to more fully live our calling.

Verse 10-11 - David prays in urgency and assurance:

David has already praised the steadfast love of God two times (vs 5&7), and now he wants to feel it and rest in it and taste it.

The "last verse shows the victory already claimed; it speaks as though the scene were present and clearly visible... This is the faith defined in Hebrews 11:1 as 'putting our full confidence in the things we hope for; ... being certain of things we cannot see'" (Kidner p166).

II. God is characterized by abundant Goodness.

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 man and beast⁵.

7 How precious⁶ is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings⁷.

8 They feast on the abundance of your house⁸;
you give them drink from your river⁹ of delights.

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

III. In response, the faithful pray with urgency.

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

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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!

⁵ God cares for all his creation. Matt 6:25 says he cares for the birds so he will feed us. Jonah ends his book with God's merciful caring for Nineveh, a city with 120,000 souls and also much cattle (Jonah 4:11).

⁶ NIV translates this word "priceless" but Kidner shows how I memorized it - "precious." God's steadfast love is both too great to grasp (vs 5) AND is too good to let slip (vs 7) (Kidner p165).

⁷ This metaphor shows "an aspect of salvation which is as humbling as it is reassuring" (Kidner). We see this picture beautifully played out with Ruth protected under Boaz (Ruth 2:12) and contrasted with Jerusalem stiff necked under Jesus (Matt 23:37).

⁸ David experienced abundant houses: In 1 Samuel 25 while David is fleeing Saul, he comes to the house of Nabal, a rich descendant of Caleb, during the sheering festival. David is not received by Nabal but his wife Abigail sends food. Nabal dies shortly after the feast and David marries Abigail. David says this beauty is a foretaste of God's abundant house.

⁹ "River" alludes to the Garden of Eden and the river in Revelation 22 when all things are set right, and the bad is undone.

¹⁰ -- these are beaks between memory cards for this passage

