

## Psalm 36

### Introduction and Theme

1. Many psalms are easily recognized as falling into well-defined types like...
  - a. Personal or national laments (pouring out troubles before the LORD in the form of a prayer)
  - b. Hymns of praise or thanksgiving
  - c. Wisdom psalms
  - d. Psalms of confidence
  - e. Royal or Messianic psalms
2. This psalm doesn't fall neatly into any one particular type, but instead shares similarities to at least three different types: wisdom, praise, and prayer
3. Theme: the contrast between man's wickedness and God's loyalty:
  - a. This is a bit striking because normally wickedness is contrasted with righteousness
  - b. Here, it is unexpectedly contrasted with God's faithfulness
  - c. This is actually much like what we find in the book of Romans and the Gospel!

### A. Structure and Poetic Elements

1. Structure (topical):
  - a. 1-4 are written like a wisdom psalm and focus on the wickedness of man
  - b. 5-9 are written like a hymn of praise and focus on the faithfulness of God
  - c. 10-12 are written like a lament or prayer and focus on God's protection
2. Structure (mechanical):

A: Man's wickedness (1-4)  
A': God's faithfulness (5-9)  
B': God's faithfulness (10)  
B: Man's wickedness (11-12)
3. Poetic Elements:
  - a. The expected parallelism
  - b. Word pictures (planning wickedness on one's bed, drinking one's fill from the abundance of God's house and the river of His delights, fountain of life, foot of pride, hand of the wicked)
  - c. Simile (righteousness like the mountains of God)
  - d. Zoomorphism (shadow of your wings)

### B. Teaching

1. David bemoans the character of the wicked (1-4):
  - a. The ungodly do not fear God (1-2): **"Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes. For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it."**
    - 1) If you have an NIV, Holman or NKJV you may notice a slightly different translation (1-2):  
**"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) The reason for this is that Hebrew poetry can be difficult to translate, and in this particular case it's not completely clear how to translate the authors words
  - 3) However, the main point of verses is fairly obvious: the wicked do not fear God because they flatter themselves and are incapable of seeing or hating their own sin
- b. The ungodly commit themselves to sin (3-4):
- 1) Jesus said that what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart (Matthew 15:18): **“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.”**
  - 2) This is reflected here: Look at what David says about the ungodly (five things, 3-4):
    - a) **“The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit;”**—which simply reveals what's in his heart
    - b) **“He has ceased to be wise and to do good.”**
    - c) **“4 He plans wickedness upon his bed;”**—this means that he thinks about and plans ways to do wicked things
    - d) **“He sets himself on a path that is not good;”**—the NIV and NET render this as committing himself to sinfulness
    - e) **“He does not despise evil.”**—another way to think of this is that he doesn't reject evil, but welcomes it
- c. We sometimes forget that this is the nature of every man, woman and child apart from a saving relationship with the Lord:
- 1) We have a tendency to separate people into good people and bad people, but the Bible says that without Christ all people are ungodly
  - 2) You may say, “Well I know some non-Christians and they really aren't bad people or they aren't that bad” but the problem with this statement is that it fails understand the sin nature of all of mankind
  - 3) Paul describes this in Romans 3:9-18 (READ)
  - 4) So, it shouldn't surprise us when we look around and see a world filled with all sorts of ungodly and unspeakable things

Recent child sex trafficking sting in Delaware, Franklin and Fairfield counties (mid September): 100 people arrested including a youth pastor, ER doctor, and 36 women who were associated with groups that were supposed to be helping victims of sex trafficking

2. David praises the LORD for His faithfulness (5-9):
  - a. Generally, the Bible contrasts ungodliness and wickedness with righteousness so we would expect that here—however, David contrasts man's wickedness with something else, God's faithfulness (e.g. covenant loyalty):

**\*\*David highlights three things about God's faithfulness**

- 1) The first is that God's faithfulness is endless and has no bounds (5): **“Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”**

- a) This is a theme that we see repeated throughout the Bible, especially in God’s relationship with Israel in spite of their constant rebellion throughout their entire history
  - b) In fact, Paul wrote in Romans 9-11 that God is still faithful to Israel today and will remain faithful until His redemptive plan is complete
  - c) This is no less true of us as Christians:
    - 2 Timothy 2:13: “[even] if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny Himself.”
    - 2 Thessalonians 3:3: “The Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”
    - 1 Corinthians 10:13: “...God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear”
    - 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”
    - 1 Corinthians 1:9: “God is faithful by whom you are called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our lord”
    - Hebrews 10:23: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful”
- 2) The second is that God’s faithfulness is seen in the way He preserves mankind: (6):  
**“Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast.”**
- a) I like the way the NET renders this because I think it captures the meaning quite well: **“Your justice is like the highest mountains, your fairness like the deepest sea; you preserve mankind and the animal kingdom”** (did you notice the simile here?)
  - b) David’s point is that God’s faithfulness is seen in the way He preserves both man and the animal kingdom through His righteous justice—we might refer to this as God’s general preservation that extends to all things—His common grace
  - c) However, in a moment we’re going to see God’s special or specific preservation that only extends to those who know Him
- 3) The third is that God’s faithfulness is a refuge for those who seek it (READ 7-9)—notice all the word pictures (wings, drink, river, fountain of life, light):
- a) David writes that the LORD’s faithfulness is **“precious”** which refers to being highly valued or prized
  - b) God’s faithfulness is precious because it offers protection (a refuge) and hope for this life and the next for those who trust in it
  - c) Have you ever noticed that John’s encouragement for believers when they sin is to go to the Father because He is faithful and just?—1 John 1:9: **“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleans us from all unrighteousness”**
  - d) Paul wrote in Romans 2:4 that this kindness is intended by God to lead us to repentance
  - e) In other words, when we sin rather than running away and hiding from Him like Adam and Eve did in the Garden, we can seek refuge in His faithfulness—we know He will forgive us!

3. David prays for the LORD's continued faithfulness (10-12):
  - a. David knows that the LORD's faithfulness is reserved for those who know Him (10): **"O continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, And Your righteousness to the upright in heart."**--Notice that David defines those who know the LORD as those who are **"upright in heart"**
  - b. In this instance, David calls on the LORD to be faithful by protecting him from the wicked (11-12): **"Let not the foot of pride come upon me, And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away. There the doers of iniquity have fallen; They have been thrust down and cannot rise."**
    - 1) David uses a word picture straight out of the military and it describes being trampled by his enemies and driven away
    - 2) The question is, driven away from what?
    - 3) Verse 12 suggests David is referring to be driven away from the presence of the LORD (e.g. Jerusalem and the Tabernacle) and facing the same demise as the wicked (fallen, thrust down and unable to rise)
    - 4) Only God's faithfulness to him can protect him from that

Conclusion
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1. One of the things I love about this psalm is that it's actually a foreshadowing of the Gospel
2. In the book of Romans, Paul does just what David did here—he contrasts the sin and wickedness of mankind with the faithfulness of God in providing forgiveness and redemption through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
3. Think about this: the Gospel is essentially our wickedness overcome by God's faithfulness