

Have you ever found yourself getting distressed while watching the nightly news? When David wrote **Psalm 36** he was motivated by the evil he was seeing around him. And what was it that motivated God to send His only Son to give His life as a sacrifice on a cruel cross?

Let me suggest that it was the same thing that motivated David in writing this insightful psalm. He was looking around and seeing the spread of evil and wondering how it was going to be dealt with, because he had become so burdened and concerned by what he was seeing. Three things come out of this psalm that I think will put the whole purpose of Easter into perspective for us and give us an appropriate solution to the problem of evil in this fallen world.

DISTRESS OF WICKEDNESS v1-4.

The first thing David noticed about those who were perpetrating these acts of evil – there was no fear of God. I was listening to a news report on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. One of the Palestinians being interviewed responded to a question by stating that they were not frightened to give their lives for their cause because they were not afraid of death. It is a concerning comment in terms of how we view fellow human beings and consider life as something that can be extinguished to bring about their agenda. The other thing that comes out of this situation is that such people are ill-informed about what their actual destiny is. Only those who have genuinely come into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ will enter into eternity with God in Heaven.

Combined with this the wicked are marked by arrogance about their lot in life. This is underlined by their speech which is full of pride. All this points to the fact that they think they are in control of their own life but nothing could be further from the truth. I think of Kerry Packer's response to the media after a heart attack. Asked if there was anything beyond death, he responded by saying in expletive form that there was nothing. This is why the psalmist says that such people are not wise in what is important in life.

PRaise the Lord for:

- A very positive response from churches to increase their distribution numbers for Easter edition
- Challenge newspapers being distributed into 350 prisons around USA + 20 prisons in Malawi
- The many speaking opportunities for Carl to promote and develop Challenge

Lastly, the wicked are marked by a determination to do evil. Such people devise evilness on their bed and refuse to turn from their wickedness. Romans 3:10-12 sum up these people well when Paul says; *"there is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable."*

This sad demise could only be turned around by Jesus dying on the cross to deliver us from the power of sin. The bottom line is that all of us, left to our own devices, will only sin and keep on sinning, because we are under the power of sin and are unable to deliver ourselves.

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OVER**

DELIGHT OF WORSHIP v5-9

The cross of Calvary does a wonderful thing in revealing to us the blessings of God's character. Firstly we see the breath of His love in that His mercies are in the Heavens. This means that there are no limits to the unfailing love of God in delivering us from the power and penalty of sin. God's overwhelming desire is to see that no one perishes but comes into a personal relationship with Him through His Son the Lord Jesus.

Then we see that God is incredibly faithful in His dealings with us. Friends and family can betray us in many ways but God can be trusted in every way. Paul put it this way in 2 Timothy 2:13; *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."*

Then despite the injustice of the Cross we can have absolute confidence in the fact that the God we know and love is a perfectly righteous and Holy God. One often hears the complaint that God sends people to Hell. God is not the one sending them to Hell, but people go there as the result of their own choice.

As we continue to see the joy of worshipping God, the psalmist then rejoices over the fact that we are constantly under His care and protection.

Then we as God's children can delight in the blessings of God's providential and sovereign care. As we worship God in spirit and truth we discover how precious it is to know God and to experience His loving kindness moment by moment.

This then gives confidence to the children of men to put their trust in God's loving care pictured for us by the image of wings. This alludes to a mother hen and how she gathers her young under her wings to protect them. Jesus used this same image when referring to His desire to care for Jerusalem.

As we do this we discover that God abundantly meets our every need whether they be spiritual, physical, emotional, financial or otherwise. We also discover that not only is God the giver and sustainer of life, He also gives us wisdom day by day.

DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER v10-12

As a result of his wonderful discoveries the psalmist burst into a clarion call of prayer. The main theme of his prayer is to stay true to God. Now we could all do with a dose of this sort of praying because the church in the western world has definitely lost its way when it comes to staying true to God. He lists four things that he wants from God. **(i)** *He desires to see God's love poured out on those who know God* **(ii)** *He desires to see the righteousness of God in the lives of those who know God* **(iii)** *He desires to see God's care and protection for those who know and love God. He was concerned that the arrogant and prideful people spoken of earlier would not have any influence on the Lord's people* **(iv)** *In closing the psalmist then sounds the trumpet of victory over the wicked showing that ultimately these people would and continue to be dealt with by God.*

{ CARL CARMODY
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PRAYER needed for:

- Upcoming editions of Challenge with Easter content – Australia, USA, South Africa, Malawi and Military. Pray for effective distribution and impact
- Promotion and development trip to USA for Carl (March 13-April 12). Many outreach opportunities
- USA - The opportunity to reconnect with a number of ministries to discuss recommencement of various editions

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