

Precious Love

Psalm 36

Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart;
there is no fear of God before his eyes.
For he flatters himself in his own eyes
that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.
The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;
he has ceased to act wisely and do good.
He plots trouble while on his bed;
he sets himself in a way that is not good;
he does not reject evil.

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O LORD.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.

Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!
Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.
There the evildoers lie fallen;
they are thrust down, unable to rise.

Trouble. It's everywhere. You see it on television. It's on the internet. It's in school and at work. It's in your home and in your heart. You cannot avoid it, because you cannot avoid sin. Sin has infected everything in this world.

This psalm starts out with that scene. It's like the opening of a television show, showing a person lying on his bed, plotting the evil he will do that day. He flatters himself. Doesn't think he'll get caught. All he can think about is the trouble he will cause that day. Trouble for others, good for him. Or so he thinks.

Are you the target of his trouble this day? You are. The target of the wicked one, the evil one. Satan. The devil. You are always his target, his prey. He wants to devour you. Peter describes him as a lion looking for whom he can devour (1 Peter 5:8). Ever watch one of those nature shows on television, and see the lion sneaking up on its prey? When the target sees the lion, how often is it too late?

That's a frightening picture, isn't it? Knowing that Satan and his minions are somewhere around you, targeting you, sneaking up on you, ready to pounce. Is it too late for you?

No! The Lord, who sees all and knows all, is on your side! For He loves you and will provide for you. And then this too - the psalmist gives us another image for our minds, to think about the protection the Lord is providing for us. He says: ***The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*** Jesus uses this image when He talks about Himself as a mother hen wanting to gather her chicks under her wings, to protect them from predators (Luke 13:34). What a comforting picture that is! We may not see the danger coming, but we have a safe place, a safe space, to hide.

But where is that place? Jesus doesn't have wings! No, He doesn't. But there is a place where Jesus spread out His arms to protect us and deliver us from evil . . . and that is the cross. The devil will not quit attacking, and sin will continue as long as we live in this sinful world, but the cross gives us hope.

For there we see sin and evil do its worst to Jesus, but we see Jesus emerge victorious in His resurrection. The victory He won for you!

So while you might have to endure times of trouble and evil for now (and mabe you've even caused your share of it!), still we can have confidence. Confidence in His forgiveness of our sin, and confidence that in the end (and as the psalm ends), **the evildoers [will] lie fallen; they are thrust down, unable to rise.** But we will rise, to everlasting life, with our Saviour!

No wonder the psalmist cries out in the middle of this psalm: **How precious is your steadfast love, O God!** How precious indeed! Precious love. For you.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your precious love for me! I know that today I am surrounded by trouble and evil, and that the evil one is always on the attack. Protect me! And forgive me for the trouble I cause and the evil I do. When I wander from the protection of Your wings, call me back. And help me not to wander again. Give me Your Spirit, that in every time of trouble or doubt, I look to Your cross and see Your precious love for me. How wonderful to know Your love and forgiveness that never ends, just like the life You have for me and provided for me. Thank You, O Lord! Amen.