

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PSALM 36 (NIV)

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC. OF DAVID THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

- <sup>1</sup> I have a message from God in my heart  
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:  
There is no fear of God  
before their eyes.
- <sup>2</sup> In their own eyes they flatter themselves  
too much to detect or hate their sin.
- <sup>3</sup> The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;  
they fail to act wisely or do good.
- <sup>4</sup> Even on their beds they plot evil;  
they commit themselves to a sinful course  
and do not reject what is wrong.
- <sup>5</sup> **Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the skies.**

— PART 1 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

“Psalm 36 is an elegant composition that pits two contrasting forces against each other: the character of the wicked and the character of God.”

NANCY L. DECLAISSE-WALFORD, ROLF A. JACOBSON AND BETH LANEEL TANNER, *The Book of Psalms* (NICOT)

On Sunday we were reminded of Jesus’ words that “**repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached IN HIS NAME to all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem.” Why is sin so important to God? Why does repentance matter so deeply?

I know, none of us particularly wants to think about sin, repentance or wicked people on a lovely Tuesday morning — especially after taking a day off (if you were able to) after a national holiday.

However, that very holiday, MEMORIAL DAY, exists **because** of sin. It is the sinfulness of human beings that leads to “wars and rumors of war” (Matthew 24:6).

Eugene Peterson paraphrases that verse in this way: “When reports come in of wars and rumored wars, keep your head and don’t panic. **This is routine history**; this is no sign of the end. Nation will fight nation and ruler fight ruler, **over and over**” (THE MESSAGE).

It never ends. And now we are in a war against an invisible enemy, the coronavirus that can cause COVID-19. There is no compelling evidence to indicate that this disease was caused by **human** hands . . . the CDC informs us that, although it is

rare, “**animal** coronaviruses **can** infect people and then spread between people,” and this appears to be the case with the novel coronavirus.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Coronavirus-Disease-2019-Basics>

However, it can be **spread** by human hands. The CDC says “the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from **person to person**, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. ...Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).”

Alas. We are broken people, living on a broken planet, among other broken people. **“This is routine history.”**

And in the middle of the disruption we are living through, we are also impacted by human sinfulness . . . our’s, and others’. The church was broken into three times last week. Thieves broke into some storage rooms and stole some tools. Some belonged to the church; some to our wonderful head custodian, Billy Lopez.

One of our staff was fooled by a “phishing” email — from me! Or at least it appeared to be from me. Someone claiming to be me asked them to buy Amazon gift cards for some of our hard-working staff. Many other church and school employees received similar emails. It was a noble gesture. It just wasn’t from me. And one staff member, at the end of a very draining work week, took the bait and bought the cards on their own credit card — **this is the good heartedness and faithfulness of our staff!** — and sent them to me. Except it wasn’t me. It was thieves deviously posing as me. (FYI, I will make sure that our employers are compensated for this theft, and I am confident you will stand with that decision!)

Sin is **upsetting**. Sin causes **frustration**. Sin **demoralizes** us. Sin makes us **angry**.

**Why do people do such horrible things?** As King David puts it, “they fail to act wisely or do good.”

What’s the remedy?

The remedy begins arriving in verse 5: **“YOUR LOVE, LORD, REACHES TO THE HEAVENS, YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO THE SKIES.”**

The **love** of God is bigger than the **sinfulness** of humanity. **“Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens”!**

The steadfast **faithfulness** of God is more reliable than the **shiftiness** of sinful men and women. **“Your faithfulness, Lord, reaches to the skies.”**

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Loving Creator, we **repent** of our sinful ways. We are **grieved** by our hard hearts. We **mourn** that we fear financial setbacks and workplace disruptions more than we revere you: *“There is no fear of God before their eyes”* (v. 1b). **But Abba, this isn’t what we want.** We **want** to know you deeply, revere you more wholeheartedly, and follow you more sincerely. **Teach us to LIVE in your love that reaches the skies!**

Pastor Doug