

## ***Session 10. David's Oracle of the Burning Heart***

### **INTRODUCTION**

And what God wants to give him seemed utterly sinful to him. He said, "No way, I can't do that. I can't give myself to that." Two more verses on the oracle. Acts 7:38: Stephen is preaching and he talks about Moses. He says, "Moses received the Word of God like a living oracle burning in him" (paraphrased). He received the living oracle from the living God on Mt. Sinai when the mountain was a flame of fire. That's Acts 7:38, describing when Moses received the living oracle. It's more than a teaching. I give a lot of teachings, but every now and then I get hold of an oracle and I'm willing to take whatever losses I incur. That's what I'm praying: that the Lord will cause this message to become like an oracle within your heart. That's the point of why I'm taking it, and because I believe it happened in this season of David's life that we just looked at in the last session.

### **PETER APPEALS FOR THE FIERY PROPHETIC PREACHING OF DEEP REVELATION**

In 1 Peter 4:11, Peter is exhorting people. He says, "Let the person who speaks the Word, speak it as the oracle of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). He's saying, "Get a flame of fire in you." He's not just pressuring them to turn up the amps and acquire a lot of soulful enthusiasm. He isn't telling them to shout and scream and froth around and stuff. That's not what he's saying. Peter is saying, "Get into the flow of reality so that when you speak, you have an oracle flowing out of you." He's appealing for fiery prophetic reality preaching: preaching that comes from revelation that comes from experience that comes out of reality with God. Oracle preaching, if you will, is the need of the hour. It's not the only need of the hour, by the way. We need line-upon-line teaching; we need pastoral preaching, but we need that oracle preaching restored to the pulpits again across the land. When that volcanic eruption makes a man or woman a trumpet of God, it won't matter if there are ten people there. It's something that's living and burning within them. That's what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about the size of the audience; I'm talking about the size of the fire in the heart, and that this eruption would take place as they're speaking or singing or writing or praying as the very oracle of the Lord. An intercessor can pray as an oracle before the Lord; or they might be a singer or a writer or a preacher.

### **THE DANGERS OF AVOWEDLY AVOIDING THE HASSLES THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS BRINGS**

There's too much performance preaching going on, where we try to endear the people to ourselves. That performance thing that endears people, it's like, "Wasn't that lovely? He's such a good man. Isn't she something special?" Or that political preaching that gets us to avoid the necessary conflicts that are related to righteousness; that political preaching where we get it just right so that we can avoid the hassles that righteousness brings in a fallen world. I've done enough of both of those in my life to know what I'm talking about, and that those things don't bring life. They really don't bring life.

### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PSALM 36: MAN'S SINFULNESS AND GOD'S REDEMPTION**

There are four sections to Psalm 36, and it's a magnificent psalm. It's wonderful. Psalm 36:1-4 is a graphic picture of sinful man without the beauty of God, a graphic picture. It's a graphic picture. It's one of the most poignant pictures of sin, these four verses, because they depict how ugly the human heart gets without the beauty of the Lord in redemption. It's really bad. I believe that David is thinking of Saul when he writes this, and the court around Saul that's yielding to Saul's evil spirit and are turning things on David. I believe David has got names and faces in mind when he's writing this from the pain in his heart. Psalm 36:1-4 is that graphic picture of sinful man without the beauty of God in redemption. Psalm 36:5-6 is a picture of the beauty of the

God who is patiently enduring sinful man. Psalm 36:5-6 is a picture of the beauty of God. It's four magnificent statements of the beauty of God as God patiently endures the sinful people of the first four verses. The contrast is deliberate.

The next section, the third section, is Psalm 36:7-9. It's the picture of the beauty that God offers sinners in redemption. One of the commentators said of this section that it was perhaps one of the most wonderful, powerful passages of descriptions of redemption in the whole Old Testament. Psalm 36:7-9 is the picture of the beauty that the beautiful God offers sinful people in redemption if they want it. Psalm 36:7-9 is magnificent, magnificent. I know it seems I'm overdoing, it but I'm really not. It's magnificent. It's one of those especially-highlighted passages in the Word of God.

Psalm 36:10-12, the fourth section, is the picture of David praying for this full redemption to come into his experience and into the experience of the redeemed. It's a picture of David praying for more of the manifestation of this beauty of redemption. It's for a greater manifestation. He's praying, "Lord, bring us into it now." He turns it into prayer. He turns his revelatory insights of the first three sections into intercession, which of course is one of the main practices of David in the Psalms. He gives revelation at the beginning, and then at the end he turns the revelation into intercession. David has tremendous confidence that the Lord's redemption will be manifest.

#### **THE VERY PERSONALITY OF GOD IS ROOTED IN FIERY GLADNESS AND DELIGHT**

Let me tell you where it's going, because I'm breaking my outline here. I have to give you the feel of it so you can get excited as we're working our way there. Psalm 36:8 is one of the pinnacle passages in which David describes the personality of God. We looked at it in the first couple of sessions of this course. "You will give them drink from the river of Your pleasures" (Ps. 36:8). The very personality of God, the beauty of God made known to the human spirit, is depicted as a river of pleasure. God will give these outrageously sinful men the beauty of God and let them drink from the river of divine pleasure if they are but willing. His patience is so great that He will give them access to the river of delights, the river of pleasures. There are so many implications to that statement. The very personality of God is rooted and grounded in gladness and delight. The God we serve is a God of indescribable, inexhaustible delights within Himself, about Himself, about His Son, and about His kingdom and about His people. He is a God of fierce passion and fierce delight. When He reveals that and brings us into the experience of it, it's called the river of pleasures. What a statement.

#### **GOD FREES US FROM INFERIOR PLEASURES WITH THE SUPERIOR PLEASURE OF HIMSELF**

David's paradigm of God, David's view of the person of Jesus Christ, is the God of infinite spiritual pleasure. He can't get enough of him. David's theology, and we've underlined this many, many times, is that God's way to get us freed from inferior pleasures of sin is to introduce into our experience the superior pleasures of the knowledge of God. I'll say that again. The clearest doctrine of holiness that I know in the Bible, and the way that God motivates us out of the inferior pleasures of sin, is that He introduces into our experience the superior pleasures of the beauty of God. When the human spirit is touched with the knowledge of God, it's so satisfied that sin loses some of its dominating power in our experience. The power of sin is diminished. I didn't say that sin is gone away and you don't feel temptation. It's diminished in its dominance in our lives. A man or woman who's touched in the delight of the discovery of God in the inner man is significantly less prone to yield to sin. I didn't say that they won't sin. David sinned after this, but the power, the hold of sin in the soul is significantly diminished when we walk in the pleasure that erupts when God reveals God to the human spirit. When the

paradigm, the view of God is one of a delightful, beautiful God who brings us into His beauty, it exhilarates the human spirit and sin doesn't look nearly so appealing.

**“GOD IS MOST GLORIFIED IN US WHEN WE ARE MOST SATISFIED IN HIM”**

Something I say a lot is that a man or woman of God who is happy in the Lord sins less, strives less, quits less, divides less, complains less, works more, and gives more. A person happy in God does all the good stuff more and all the bad stuff less. I tell you, they do. A happy person descends a lot less and complains a lot less. Something is beating alive in their spirit. There's a heartbeat of God. Someone treats them wrongly and they say, “Oh, so what? That's nickel-and-dime stuff. Something big is going on in my life. They just stole my car? I can always get another car.” You can get another car. We lose our life over little \$100, \$500, \$5,000 things that happen. We lose our life in God over it. A person who gets hold of divine pleasure finds that those things begin to appear smaller in their estimation. That's the power of David's theology, the holy passion. I love what John Piper said; he said, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” I love that sentence. God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him. That's from the book *The Pleasures of God*, a tremendous book, and I really recommend it. It will thrill you. The subtitle of the book is something like, “The Delight That God Has in Being God,” or something like that. It's a wonderful subtitle. *The pleasures of God: The Passions of God's Personality*. That's where David is taking us.

**THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD WAS THE ANCHOR OF DAVID'S LIFE**

David is stabilized in the 1 Samuel 17, 18, 19, and 20 season. He's on the verge of being exiled from the king's court under Saul and not under Absalom (Ps. 20:11). It's the first setting. Again, the commentators say, “We aren't sure which one it is.” I believe it's the beauty of the Lord that David beheld in the early days of his life that sustained him all through those years. It was the stabilizing force in David's life. I mentioned Sunday that it was the stabilizing force in Job's life, as you know if you read Job 26-31, those five chapters when Job speaks of the beauty of the Lord. It stabilized him. We looked Sunday at the beauty of the Lord that stabilized the bride in Song of Solomon 5. She was lovesick in Song of Solomon 5:8 because of the grandeur of Jesus in verses 10-16. We looked at that briefly. It's the idea that the beauty of God stabilizes us.

I think that's what's happening in this season of his life of turbulence. It says at the very beginning that David wrote this psalm to give to the chief musician. The chief musician was a man named Chenania. He led the singers, he led the musicians, and he led the public worship. He was in the tabernacle of David and he was over the whole thing. David went to him and gave him this song. David had already put it to music. He says, “Now get the singers to sing it and the musicians to play it and the people to worship. Bring them into the experience of the Lord.” David wrote this purposefully for public worship. This is the kind of thing where I don't know if you would sing it line by line, but in the unfolding of the meaning of it there are tremendous seeds there for worship songs and prophetic singing. That's why David wrote it in the tabernacle of David, so that these truths could be unlocked and unpacked, if you will, not that you have to sing it line upon line. These songs contained themes in the Lord that the singers unfolded.

**SIN ONLY APPEARS IN ITS FULL HORROR IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEAUTY OF GOD**

Okay, let's look at the first section: Psalm 36:1-4. I don't want to go too long on it, but it's such a graphic, striking description of sin. It's a picture of sinful man before the beauty of redemption. They said no to God. Again, the reason this is such an important first four verses is that it's a striking, graphic description. But the next two verses, Psalm 36:5-6, is what God is like in light of these evil, wicked people, and what He wants to give them. It's striking. The contrast is deliberate. Sin only appears in its full horror in the light of the beauty of

God and in the light of what God is offering us. As I was studying this last week, I saw the horror of sin and the unthinkable perseverance of sinful people before a God who wants to offer the experience of pleasure. I said, "I'm never going to sin again! Sinning is stupid." Of course I'll sin again, but the logic of this passage is powerful. When you get caught up in it, you say, "Why am I doing this? Why am I feeding on mud when I have the splendor of God to delight myself with? Why am I doing this? It doesn't make sense."

### **AN ORACLE AGAINST THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE WICKED**

It's an oracle within David's heart against the transgression of the wicked. I think he's thinking of the wicked in Saul's court and I think he's thinking of Saul as well. He gives a full picture of the height and depth of sin in contrast to the beauty of God. Then sin appears exceedingly sinful in the contrast. This is how the psalm begins: "There is no fear of God before his eyes" (Ps. 36:1b). He says, "They don't have any respect for God. They don't have desire for God's approval." That's what he means. They have no desire for God's approval. They aren't thinking about it; they're thinking about getting ahead in the king's court. They're thinking of getting Saul happy with them instead of God being happy with them. They don't fear the Lord; they fear Saul right now. Saul had a whole machinery that had to operate to get David kicked out. He had a number of people who had to sign on with him to make David's life miserable. Saul didn't just do it by himself; he got his key men saying, "Why yes, that young kid is causing a lot of trouble. I agree." It was just rank wickedness going on.

### **THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD'S JUDGMENT OR DISAPPROVAL IN A SIN-CALLOUSED HEART**

David said, "They have no desire for God's approval." Equally perilous is that they have no fear of God's disapproval. They have no fear of God's disapproval. They have no thoughts of God's judgments. That's what he means by no fear of the Lord, no thought of His judgments, no fear of God's disapproval, and no concern or respect for who God is. He says, "Look at them: They only care about what Saul will give them." I think that's what's specifically on his mind. He goes on in Psalm 36:2 and says, "Let me tell you why." He has the singers singing his theology. He says, "Let me give you the logic." The reason they have no respect for God is because they flatter themselves in their own eyes. They live in self-flattery. They live in an elevated sense of their importance outside of the economy of God. Beloved, you'll never exhaust your importance in the economy of God. You'll never know how important you are to God, to the heart of God, and the height of the exaltation He has given His bride. We'll never exhaust who we are in the economy of God, but this was opposite. They had a false esteem of who they were outside of the economy of God. Where they were in their position seemed so important to them. They flattered themselves. They didn't see in themselves what sin was about. These kinds of people are really easy in their own lives about sin. They see sin in everyone else's life, but not their own. They are really easy with themselves. Of course, the unbeliever flatters himself that eternal judgment isn't real, that eternity isn't real, and that God isn't real. They flatter themselves that if they don't sin that much, they'll live a long time. They deceive themselves and flatter their hearts. Of course, when people lose respect for God, it isn't long before they lose respect for people. Killing David seems logical. It's the way forward in Saul's scheme.

### **THE UNRIGHTEOUS HEART FLATTERS ITSELF AT THE FOUNTAINS OF WICKEDNESS**

David goes on to say, "He flatters himself in his own eyes, when he finds out his own iniquity and when he hates" (Ps. 36:2). He connects with new veins and new fountains of iniquity in his own life. The perverse man sins and sins, and after a few years he gets good at it. He discovers new propensities of sin. He discovers new fountains of iniquity in him as he goes on the path. It says that he begins to hate himself. He even hates the very thing he's doing, but he's addicted to it. He hates everything around him. He is filled with self-disgust; what a graphic description! How perilous it is when we discover a new fountain, a negative propensity, and a perversion, because we've followed the path of sin. We discover that experience that Paul talks about when he

says God gave them over, or He allowed the next series of consequences of emotional depravity to take place in their lives (Rom. 1:18-32). When they discover new veins of sin within their makeup, it's horrible.

“The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit” (Ps. 36:3). Of course, a flattered heart, a self-flattering heart, always has deceptive words. When a man or woman lives in flattery about him- or herself, about the fact that his or her sin doesn't really matter, it becomes easy to walk in deceptive words. Again, in David's situation in the court, the very thing David wouldn't do that we so easily do was present himself as the victim or the hero and the other people as the perpetrators against us. In our language, our conversations, our fellowship, we are the victim or the hero of the story. We are the one delivering everyone, or the one that's being victimized. That's the very thing David militated against in 1 Samuel 18. Three times he acted wisely. He wouldn't give himself to self-flattering deceitful words. He said, “I won't do it. I won't go there.” That's a powerful thing. He said, “I'm not going to endear myself to them and undermine others. I'm giving myself to God. I fear the Lord.” When we tell the story differently, when we are the victim and the hero and we undermine others, then we endear ourselves at the expense of others and we lack the fear of the Lord. David is being very direct about what's happening in the king's court. He's talking about people in Israel. He's talking about the king's leaders around him. He says, “No, I'm going to walk in wisdom. I'm going to hold my speech. I'm not going to flatter myself. I'm not that important in the scheme of Saul. It doesn't matter where I am. I'm God's. That's who I am.” It's very, very powerful.

#### **THE GRADUAL HARDENING IN THE HEART BECAUSE OF SIN**

He goes on and he says, “He has ceased to be wise and to do good” (Ps. 36:3). The occasional good that Saul and men like him did gave way. They gave up on good and now they were doing evil without restraint, without remorse. They did evil without repentance. That's how sin works. Sin gradually lays hold of us. That's why I tell young people, “You don't want to play around with late night little pornographic shows and stuff. That thing will get hold of you.” People cease to do good. There's a time in their life where perversion, where addictions to things that we played around with in the early days enables us to sin where we have no remorse about it. We have no grief about it; we've no restraint. We give up the fight and the argument to resist. That's what David says. It's graphic. He says, “They cease even to do good.” They've given up the struggle even to fight against it. They just yield without remorse, without restraint. “They devise wickedness on their bed” (v. 4, paraphrase). Of course, what David said he did on his bed was to meditate on the law of the Lord. He said, “On their bed they are thinking of ways to commit sin.”

#### **JUDGMENT FALLS ON A NATION WHEN THERE IS NO LONGER ABHORRENCE OF SIN**

“They have set themselves in a way that is not good” (Ps. 36:4b, paraphrased). They have resolved to give up on the inward fight. They have no abhorrence of evil at all. There's no aversion; there's no horror; there's no grief. They aren't scandalized when sin comes forth. This is what's happening in our nation right now. It's what's happening in the media surrounding the White House. The young people and the nation aren't scandalized by sin. Judgment always follows on a nation when the abhorrence of sin is gone. There are only a few frail voices lifting up. The inner debate is gone. The hesitation is gone. There's no protest. There's not even the patronizing of good. It's like it doesn't even matter. “Do it because it's what you're called to do! That's how you're made.” Sin is completely secularized and called a liberal spirit of doing your own thing, etc. It's a very, very difficult thing.

We'll leave this graphic picture of sin, and there's so much more that you can do with that. Some of the commentaries that I was reading, I said, “Whoa.” It was stinging. I was reading some of the old Puritan writings

on the subject, and those men can really preach against sin. I'm telling you, they had some real exposés on those verses. I was thinking, "My goodness; sin is utterly sinful."

### **THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE BEAUTY OF GOD AND THE EXCEEDING HORROR OF SIN**

But this is what God does. All of a sudden David turns to the heavenly court. He suddenly begins to bring into focus who it is that he lives before; the One who's available to Saul whom Saul doesn't care about. Again the contrast between Psalm 36:1-4, the sinfulness of man, and the beauty of God, Psalm 36:5-6, is deliberate. The contrast magnifies both of them. When you see the beauty of God in the fact that He offers it freely, then it's ridiculous to persevere in sin. What are we doing? Why are we compromising when the beauty, which is the third section, is freely offered us by God? Again, the contrast magnifies both the beauty and the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

David gives four statements in a row. His message here in these four statements is that God is wooing and desiring the rebels of Psalm 36:1-4. That's a powerful message. God longs to express mercy, faithfulness, and righteousness to these very people who have no regard. He is wooing them to give them His mercy that reaches to the heavens. That's the oracle that's burning inside of David's heart right there. Let's look at the first one. There are four attributes. There are four lines of thought that capture David in his early life.

### **THE VASTNESS OF GOD'S MERCY IS VASTER THAN THE MILLION-STARRED UNIVERSE**

"Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens" (Ps. 36:5). There are different ways to interpret this. His mercy. It's likened to the vastness of the heavens. The idea is that the mercy of God is as vast as the heavens, and the stars in the atmosphere up above. Of course, we looked at Psalm 19. David was really captured by the spirit of revelation. It was an illumination on his heart. He looked up at the stars. David saw the beauty of the Lord in Psalm 19, and we looked at it. David said, "As immeasurable as the galaxies"—beloved, there are 10 billion suns bigger than our sun in the galaxies, 10 billion of them and more than that. They say that the galaxy is expanding. If you heard it the other day, it's expanding at the speed of light. I don't understand that, but the scientists are saying it's growing. It's going on and there's more and more of it continually. It's ongoing. There are immeasurable galaxies, and there are 10 billion suns brighter than the sun that shines upon the earth, and here is what God says: "The vast galaxies above you are a dim picture of the vastness of what My mercy will do if you'll say yes to Me. My mercy is vaster than the heavens above."

Beloved, this is a stunning statement. God is willing in kindness and in patience to utterly forgive and utterly embrace those described in Psalm 36:1-4 if they would but come. David says, "Why would you play Saul's game and not fear God and commit wickedness and evil? There's a God of mercy that's as vast as the skies above." There are no ways to exhaust it. There's no way to count it. There's no way to measure it. It's so vast that God would become a man and be crushed by the wrath of God so that you would be enthroned; that you would be embraced and adorned by this God in the likeness of man. He says, "It's unthinkable—with never, ever a word brought up of your sin, utterly delighted in by God, adorned, enthroned and embraced by the very God who crossed that vast expanse to become a man and to be crushed by the wrath of God. The mercies of God are as vast as the 10 billion suns in their width and length and breadth." Beloved, the uncreated God became a man, put His arms around us, gave us His beauty, and shares His throne with us. The mercy of God is as vast as the heavens. "It's as the heavens," is what David said. That's the first thing he hits. You can work on that one for a lifetime. You'll never exhaust that one. This isn't just one line of a song. This is a theme that David lived his entire life developing. These are themes; these are life messages that David grappled with and

sought to grow in. He was awestruck. He fell down in adoring worship before these four themes. He summarizes them all in Psalm 36:7.

### **DAVID MARVELS AT THE EVERLASTING FAITHFULNESS OF GOD**

Theme number two: the faithfulness of God. Every promise that God has ever made—it's more than every promise. Every single person to whom He has made them receives His loyalty. He's not just faithful to promises; He's faithful to you. Every single one of you who have been heartbroken in a relationship by someone who was unfaithful—father, mother, brother, sister, lover, unfaithful—there's One who is faithful forever and forever, not just to His Word, yes, He's faithful to you, to you as an individual. He will be loyal to you forever. David said, "He's faithful to me. He's faithful like the clouds" (Ps. 36:5b, paraphrased). The clouds covered the sky, the whole globe; he looked up and saw the clouds. They were majestic. They were hard to control and difficult to comprehend. The clouds above him were out of his reach. He said, "The faithfulness that I can't walk in is bigger than my capacity. His faithfulness I can't comprehend. It's like the clouds. They refresh the whole earth the faithfulness of God does. It's like the clouds that are majestic. They are high. They are out of reach. They are mysterious and they refresh the whole world. The faithfulness of God is the source of the refreshing of the whole earth. It's like the clouds. They are high, mysterious, beautiful, and refreshing.

### **"YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS LIKE THE VERY MOUNTAINS OF GOD"**

Look at the third life message of David. Again, these aren't just sentences; these are themes he lived his whole life in. "Your righteousness is like the great mountains" (Ps. 36:6)—the Hebrew says, "like the very mountains of God." We'll talk about the great mountain ranges. Look at the width of the Rocky Mountains. As the pioneers wanted to go west and get through the mountain range, some of the stories indicate that they were overwhelmed not just at their beauty but at their immensity, because they said, "We'll never, ever make them. We'll cross through them, but we'll never get through them." The vastness of the mountain ranges is how God describes His righteousness. It's His character. His character is immovable. It's firm; it's stable; it's set. Nothing can change it. The hurricane can come; the earthquake can come; it can destroy the whole town and village. They can destroy the buildings of man, but I tell you, the Rocky Mountains are unmoved when the hurricane comes or the tornado or anything else. It's unmoved. The mountains aren't moved by the fierceness of changing circumstances. They endure forever, the Scripture says. Of course that's poetic language, because one day the earth will be cast aside as a garment. Still, it's impossible to move them. It's impossible to change them. It's impossible to shake a mountain. If you get all the bulldozers of man, you can't plow through a mountain. It's unmoved by the winds, the storms, and the technologies. Those things are there. God says, "Try as you might, nothing will shake what's true about Me, My character, and My righteousness."

David is looking at those men in Saul's court and saying, "Guys, you aren't going to deceive Him. You aren't going to manipulate Him. You aren't. You might as well imitate Him and receive the power to walk in that righteousness."

### **"THAT WHICH IS FAR OFF AND EXCEEDING DEEP, WHO CAN FIND IT OUT?"**

The fourth message: God's judgments are like the deep or like the ocean, the deep seas. When it says "the deep," it's talking about the deep seas. God is perfect in the administration of His creation, in the timing of releasing negative things that put a check to sin, that cause righteousness to increase, in the administration of His judgments. All God's judgments are calculated. None of them are too severe. None of them last too long. None of them come too late. None of them are in any way disproportionate to checking sin and producing love in the hearts of people who will say yes to God. God's administration of His judgments is like the great deep.

Stand before the seashore. I was in Florida at the seashore during the last two weeks or so. The mystery of the sea is really something. The irresistible power of the sea is terrifying. It's perplexing. It's distressing. There are 10,000 worlds below the sea of life. There are 10,000 stories of created order and beauty beneath that water there. The way of the deep is unsearchable in its mysteries. You can't measure it. You can't comprehend it. You can't control it. It has a hidden logic in it. It baffles scientists. They want to know how they can control the clouds and the seas to get control of planet earth. The angry man stands before the judgments of God and dares to challenge God's wisdom and kindness in His judgments. "Why, God?" he demands in an angry way. "Why? Why, God?"

God says, "My judgments are beyond your grasp of understanding. They are like the deep seas in their mystery and their power."

"But God, I made an 'A' in math..." We're like the first grader arrogantly saying, "But I made the 'A' in math. Tell me the secrets of advanced calculus." The arrogant man stands so confident in his reason and his logic.

God says, "I have mysteries profound like the sea. In all your skill and your first grade math you can't understand the secrets of advanced calculus. You have no capacity to understand My judgments."

David honors the judgments of God. I love what he says in Psalm 36:6. He says this actually four times. He says the word *oh*. *Oh* expresses the overwhelming adoration of the discovery of these beauties. *Oh* is the discovery, the fresh realization; he says, "Oh." He says it in Psalm 36:5, 6, 7 and 10. Four times the oracle, the burning heart is loosed. David says, "Oh, God." He's overcome. Don't read that and say, "Oh Lord, You preserve man..." No, no, no, you don't do that. The *oh* is the burning oracle. David is beside himself. He's on fire. He looks at the wicked man in Psalm 36:1-4; he looks at the beauty of God's mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, and the mystery of His judgments. He says, "You do all these things to preserve the welfare of human beings. You exercise such power and such transcendent majesty for the good of humans and for the good of the beast of the field." He says, "What king would use his power for lowly people who sin against him? The king that I serve, I've served him well. He's trying to get rid of me with his power, but God, You use Your power. Even the rebels You seek to preserve, that they might turn so that You can give them the mercies and the beauties of God."

### **GOD NEVER SUSPENDS ONE ATTRIBUTE TO EXERCISE ANOTHER**

Look at it. When David saw these four things about the beauty of God, he was overwhelmed. This was the conclusion of David's theology, David's whole application of life: "God does it for the care of human beings, that You would preserve us." Who is the us? It's the people in Psalm 36:1-4, sinners, that He could redeem them. God is very, very patient, that He might bring the wicked to repentance. That's what He says. The ocean, the deep ocean of judgment, that vast deep ocean, is like a mirror across the Pacific Ocean that reflects the blue heavens which is the mercy of God. David says, "Your judgments reflect Your mercies," all four of them together. You don't want to just take them one by one. It's good to study them one by one, but what David was overwhelmed by was the combination of the four of them together. God never suspends one attribute to exercise another. In God's judgments, in those deep blue judgments, was the mirror of the sky of mercy. God's judgments and mercies are perfectly in line with one another and they are all for the good of God's creation. God uses His power not as a bully, but to glorify broken, sinful, fragile human beings who might come to Him. These are four facets of one gleaming diamond, the heart of Jesus Christ. It's not four different propensities; it's four facets. It's four ways to look at one diamond. It's one heart.

### **GOD IS BEAUTIFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF PARTS THAT COMPRISE HIS UNITY**

I remember reading some years ago from A.W. Tozer that the beauty of who God is, is not the unity of all His parts. It's not. It's better than that. It's the absence of parts that describes the unity of God. God is 100% infinitely everything He possesses. He's infinite in it. He has no parts. He's one undiluted flow of the complete symmetry of all these attributes of beauty coming together in fullness out of the same diamond. I read it some years ago. That's what David is captured by. It's not just the mercy, not just the faithfulness, not just the righteousness, and not just the judgment, but the four of them together for the people of Psalm 36:1-4. He says, "Oh God, why do people keep sinning? Why do they think that You're a bad deal? Why do they think You're burdensome? All You've ever done on our behalf is reign to bring us into glory."

I tell you, after I got through studying this I said, "Lord, I'm just going to quit sinning. This is ridiculous. It's stupid to sin." Of course I'll sin again, but it just seems so stupid.

### **THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE JEWEL OF GOD'S LOVE—HOW INFINITE IN ASPECT**

Then in Psalm 36:7, David sums it up. He's now completely overwhelmed. He throws in one of the "Oh God"'s again. It's one of those—"Oh, the burning oracle." He says, "How precious is Your kindness, Your loving-kindness, O God." He sums up the four attributes all together in the passion of God's love. He says, "How precious." David is now entering the holy of holies, that vast ocean of the love of God. He stands and says, "Oh, how precious, how rare, how valuable, and how beautiful the very jewel of life itself, the love of God," and the diamond that David gazes in at every facet he can see by the Spirit of God. That's the diamond, the love of God right there, with all the facets of righteousness, judgment, mercy, and faithfulness. Beloved, it does you well to focus your whole life on studying the preciousness of that jewel. That diamond, that many-faceted diamond is the heart of our God, Christ Jesus, filled with passion and desire for you, for you. It overwhelmed the great worshipper of the Old Testament as he entered literally into the very holy of holies of understanding in the Old Testament sense. There it is in Psalm 36:7.

### **THE GOD OF DELIGHT WANTS HIS PEOPLE DELIGHTED**

David has now moved into the third part of the psalm, Psalm 36:7-9, describing his experience. The God of beauty wants to give it to sinners now. The God of beauty wants to bring people into the delight of it themselves. The God of delight wants His people delighted. The God of pleasure wants us filled with pleasure. The power of our lives is the fact that pleasure courses through our beings. It's the superior pleasures that come by the revelation of God. The divine illumination that was on David is flowing on him in a powerful way as he writes this Psalm.

### **WHEN AUGUSTINE HEARD THE THUNDEROUS VOICE OF GOD**

I love the story of St. Augustine: As he was doing his commentary on Psalm 36:8, "You give them to drink from the river of Your pleasure," as he was writing on and contemplating the joys of revelation and eternity, the audible voice of the Lord broke out like thunder over him as he was writing. He had heard the audible voice of the Lord a few times in his life. The audible voice of the Lord broke in like thunder at the very moment he was writing the commentary on Psalm 36:8. God said, "Are you able to put all the oceans of the world into one little pot?" It was a stunning question. It came like thunder. "Are you able to put all the oceans of the world in one little pot?"

Augustine said, "No."

“Then neither are you able to comprehend with your small mind the eternal joys that await you. Neither are you able to comprehend with your small mind the ocean of joys that await you.” He heard that by the audible voice of God.

Let me tell you, beloved, you can't comprehend in the very beginning the ocean of pleasure awaiting you in redemption. Yet we walk around without the fear of God, making ourselves victims and making ourselves heroes and telling stories, lying and deceiving, climbing up the ladder and twisting things trying to get ahead with Saul. David says, “Why would you want to get ahead with Saul when you can be in the embrace of the monarch, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Ruler of all the ages?” This was real to David. That's why he acted wisely. When it says he acted wisely, that's just not poetry. He held himself. He said, “No, I don't care about growing in Saul's court. I know the court I'm going to live in.” He enters into the very court of the Lord here in Psalm 36:7-9, the river of God's pleasure. As David is describing this, he is abundantly satisfied. Psalm 16:9-11 brings us into the same thing. David gives a number of descriptions of this satisfaction. The problem is that this vast ocean of love and pleasure is something we've watered down into Easter and Christmas cards, making a neat little thing from the fullness of joy. It's no longer a reality; it's a postcard.

The voice thundered to Augustine, “Neither are you able to comprehend in your small mind the ocean of delight awaiting you, the eternal delights that are awaiting you, the vast ocean.”

### **GOD'S SUPERIOR PLEASURES ROB THE DELIGHT FROM INFERIOR SINS**

David's doctrine is stated clearly: God gives us superior pleasures. That's how He gets us out of sin. That's how David passed the test in Saul's court, because of the superior pleasures. He knew a little, just a little, but a little goes a long way in the satisfaction of God's house.

David here makes one of the greatest statements in the book of Psalms. He's talking to God. He's talking with permission. He's talking by revelation. “The divinely created thirst that You put in our design—we thirst and You let our thirst be satisfied at the river of Your pleasure.” He says, “God, there is a thirst that You put in me when You created me as a man; You put a thirst in me.” As Jesus Christ hung on the cross and said, “I thirst,” so every sinful man who has ever walked on the earth, we thirst with a thirst that has been put in us by God.

### **“THERE IS A RIVER WHOSE STREAMS MAKE GLAD THE CITY OF GOD”**

David prophesied and proclaimed by the spirit of revelation: “God not only permits, but woos us to drink at the river of pleasure if we want to go and drink, but He won't force anyone to drink of His delights. It's contrary to the very understanding of delight.” Voluntary lovers are the ones He's calling. David introduces the river here. In Psalm 46:4 it's called the river that makes the people of God glad. There's a river. Beloved, it's a real river. It's not just a metaphor; it's real. In Daniel 7:10 it's a river of fire. In Revelation 22 it's a river of water. There's a river. It's the person of the Holy Spirit. He manifests as fire and water. He manifests in His liquid form as water and in that other form as fire. He manifests His presence in these ways in the eternal city for real. That's not just imagery. He literally manifests His splendor as water and fire, as one river with two different manifestations of it flowing out of the throne of God. We'll drink from it forever. Beloved, it doesn't just begin then. It doesn't just begin then. It began the day we were born again if we'll give ourselves to Him. David says, “I found something more important than Saul. I found something more important than being the main man in his army. I found something more important than the armies of Israel. I'm drinking and satisfying my thirst at the river. I found a river.”

I want to ask you a question: Have you found the river? I don't mean people who have been talking about the renewal lately; I'm talking about is the revelation of God touching the inner man. There's a river that God created for you to drink from.

“Well, I haven't found the river and I'm just really mad about everything! I will satisfy my thirst at every other spoiled, poisoned well.” Beloved, there's a river you can drink in. So what if they ripped you off? So what if they lied about you and took your money and you lost your place? There's a river you can drink at. There really is. I'm only now beginning to find some of that river in these last couple of years. I'm thinking, “I don't need this other stuff. I'll do it. If God wants to make me rich and famous, I'll do it at gunpoint.” Because let me tell you, being rich and famous will nearly destroy your ability to walk in God unless you're a rare person because of all the cares of life that consume you. I said, “I'll do big stuff at gunpoint, but if You don't force me, I'm going to the river. I know. I've already found what I'm about. I've found my way to the river a little and I'm going to live in it. If I have to mess around with people, well, God likes people.” If you don't have the river, you'll fight, cheat, lie, twist stories, be a victim and a hero, undermine, and everything else to get ahead, because you haven't found any river. That's the only river you know, and that's a real sick river. I don't care whose court it is; it has poison water. I don't care if it's the best man on earth. It's a spoiled, poison river and it will get you nowhere but heartsick at the end of the day.

#### **IF YOU WANT TO STOP A MYSTIC, DON'T PUT HIM IN PRISON**

I don't want to say, and I want to take back the phrase “mess around with people,” because people are what God is about, but I want to say this, that if God gives you a big platform or great wealth, it will cause trouble to your life. He may really make you do it, but don't beg Him for those things; do them at gunpoint. I was talking on Sunday about the contemplative people throughout history, people like St. John of the cross. Others treated them all wrong, because they were threatened by the power, the oracle burning in their heart, and it was the same crazy strategy throughout history: They would take them and cast them into prison. They gave them a lifestyle of being alone, praying and fasting. That was the only thing they ever wanted. No one could get to them, no appointments. No one could disrupt them. They were in prison. You don't take a contemplative and give them prayer and fasting and take everything off their plate. If you want to shut the mouth of St. John of the cross, make him popular and he will lose his fire. Let him stand before kings. Don't put him in prison and let him pray and fast. Then they gave him a pencil and paper; he started a revolution that's burning to this day. You don't give them pen and paper and you don't let them pray and fast. You get them busy. You make them popular. You give them money. You help them out. You give them what other men want that they hate. You'll wreck them, destroy them, and they'll lose their fire. That's how you beat St. John of the Cross. You don't put him in prison. You don't let him pray and fast. That's the one thing that you don't want those men doing if you're an evil king.

#### **DO YOU HAVE A VISION OF A RIVER THAT'S BETTER THAN A KING'S COURT?**

My question is, have you found the river a little, just a little? I don't mean are you in it deeply. In your view, is there a vision in your mind that there really is a river that's better than the king's court? I tell you, there is one. I know just a little about it. God is awakening my thirst more and more. The crazy thing is that men would rather live in sin than drink the river of pleasure. They would pursue pleasure in sin and refuse the free river.

#### **THE INEXHAUSTIBLE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE**

It goes on to say in Psalm 36:9 that David saw an inexhaustible fountain of life in God. He said, “God, You, You, not Saul and not his court, You are the fountain of life” (paraphrased). The spirit of revelation is all over

him. All the origins of natural and spiritual life, of angels, people, animals, insects, plants, and the planets themselves, all life flows from You. The created beings have life, but God, the Creator, is the fountain of life. Jesus stood before John on the island of Patmos in Revelation 1, when John fell down as a dead man, and said, "I have the keys of life" (Rev. 1:18, paraphrased). "You have life, but life is Mine because of who I am. I drink from My own well. I gave you life as a gift. I'm the fountain of life, John." God draws existence from his own supply.

We have an existence given to us as a gift. God draws from the well of His own supply of His eternal existence. He's the fountain. I tell you, the most vigorous, powerful, people in Saul's court are like dead men without the life of God flowing and coursing through their beings.

### **"IN YOUR LIFE WE SEE LIGHT": GAZING INTO THE LIGHT OF GOD**

Look at what he says to sum it up right there: "In Your light we see light" (Ps. 36:9). It's one of the great statements of the Psalms. David says, "I posture myself to look at Your light." There are two lights mentioned. The first one, he says, is the idea that "I posture myself to gaze at Your light. I derive my truth and my pleasure from looking at the light of God through the Word." We call it devotional prayer. We call it meditating on the Word. We look into God's light, the light of God's Word. David says, "I will posture myself by gazing into light, and in that place I receive the spirit of illumination. I posture myself to look at Your light through the Word of God, through creation. I study Your handiwork to see Your beauty. I study Your written Word to see Your beauty. In studying for You, You give me the spirit of illumination. In Your light, in the gazing on You I receive the spirit of understanding." That's the place where we receive it. David knew where his life was, gazing into the light of God.

### **"OH CONTINUE YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS TO THOSE WHO KNOW YOU"**

Then the fourth part is David's prayer. I'll just look at a thought or two of it, because we're running out of time here. Look at Psalm 36:10. I love Psalm 36:10. He's now in the prayer mode. He wants more. "Continue to manifest the ocean of Your love to me" (paraphrased). That's in essence what he's saying. He says, "Lord, continue. I've seen it. I saw it" (Ps. 36:5-6). "It's precious" (v. 7). "The pleasure has touched me. Lord, I'm not sending out my résumé to get back on Saul's team. I'm not getting on the telephone lines telling everyone what Saul did. No, that's not where I'm going. I'm going swimming in the river of God." He says, "Oh, continue the unfolding of the vast ocean of God to my experience." Look at that verse; that's the same thing as saying, "I behold the beauty of the Lord." He says, "Unfold the beauty of Your love to me. Let me swim in it. Let me get lost in it. Let me stand before that vast ocean, that thrilling, terrifying, dangerous ocean called the love of God. It's vast; it's strong; it's deep."

### **THE MYSTERIOUS, OVERPOWERING, ENDLESS OCEAN OF GOD AND HIS LOVE**

Again, I was standing a week or so ago before the ocean looking at it and thinking of the vast ocean of the love of God. I've said that phrase. I like that phrase. I was looking at it. Oh, the mystery of it! There were little weak storms on the horizon with a little lightning and thunder. I said, "Oh man, this is a dim picture of something really big." I was looking out there and I was thinking of the mysterious, overpowering, endless ocean of the being of God and His love. The billows of God's love crush all doubt and brokenness in us and bring us into His love. I was terrified and delighted. I said, "O God, who are You anyway? Who are You anyway?" I was beckoning that escort into that vast ocean called the Holy Spirit. I said, "Those are scary waters out there. I was thinking of the Holy Spirit whispering in my ear and imagining Him saying, 'Let me bring you 500 miles out there, just you and me.'"

I said, "I would rather stay on the shore for now."

He says, "Oh, that fiery, terrifying, thrilling ocean of God. I can escort you out there safely." He's terrifying. He's bigger than you think.

I said, "Lord, I want to do it. I want to go in slow. I want to go in slow." The Lord puts in our hearts that in endless eternity we'll be exploring that vast ocean.

### **"THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY HAVE FALLEN, TO RISE NO MORE"**

Then David speaks of righteousness being released into his life. He means that the injustice will be checked, the injustice happening in the court. He gives two or three descriptions of the injustice there in Psalm 36:11-12. He talks about the injustice. He's saying, "Bring me to the ocean of divine love and stop the injustice in Your timing. I'll leave to You the timing to check the injustice. I want You to stop it, but I'll leave the timing with You. I'm not going to stop it; I want You to stop it. I'm not going to get on the phone lines and stop it. I'm going to let You stop it. You stop the injustice. You establish righteousness for me. You cause the proud men to be stopped."

Then he gives a prophecy in Psalm 36:12. He says, "There the workers of iniquity have fallen; they have been cast down and are not able to rise." That's understood by the majority of the commentators as a prophecy of the ultimate demise of the wicked at the very end of the age. There in the manifestation of love and the manifestation of righteousness, therein Psalm 36:12 goes to Psalm 36:10 as the manifestation of love and the checking of injustice in the final hour. God will cause all sinners to be brought down and totally stopped. David says, "Why then would you want to live a life of sin? It can't prevail."

There's an ocean of pleasure. There's divine light that God wants to release into us. Amen and amen. Let's stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

O Lord, I've been joking but I mean it. Lord, I don't want to sin anymore. I don't want to do that stuff anymore. I don't want to give my heart to other things. I don't want to give my tongue to deceitfulness. I don't want to manipulate things. I want the river of pleasure. I want the light of God. O God of Psalm 36:10, bring me more. O God, let the oracle of the burning heart touch these people, Lord. O Lord, let the oracle of the burning heart lay hold of these people. Make this a fellowship of the burning heart, O God. Let the oracle touch them. He may only speak to ten. I don't care about the size; I'm talking about the quality of the fire. We love You, Lord. Calm us, Lord.

I'm going to invite some folks to come up who are saying, "Lord, I'm not drinking in the river. I've heard of the river, but I haven't really seen it in my heart yet. I want to go for the river. What am I doing anyway? There's a river God wants me to drink in." I want you to come and stand right here if it's a new resolve. I trust that many of you are already resolved, but tonight you're saying, "I need to do this. Lord, I want to drink of the river. I don't want to do the wickedness thing. I don't want to go there. Preserve me, O God. O God show me Your lovingkindness." Say, "Lord I'm willing to be famous. I'm willing to be well-known, but God, I'm not going after that if You don't make me." It's a different paradigm of life. If God makes you a person of high position then just bear the burden of it. He has called you to it, but don't try to go there if He doesn't make you. It's

insanity. Give yourself to the river of God. Let that oracle touch you; let the fire of God begin to rest on you. Let Your fire begin to rest on these people, Lord.

Just as we're worshipping, denounce ways of thinking that are contrary to the truth that you bought into a little. Say, "Lord, I renounce this and that. I'm not going to do it this way. What am I doing?" Realign yourself right now to the Lord. "Lord, I'm taking my mind off of that position. If you give it to me, fine, but that's not what I'm after right now. I'm after You, God. I'm after Your river. I put my dreams aside. I lay my dreams aside. I want Your river. I want Your light. My dream is You, God. That's my dream: You."

I'm going to have as many as will come to help me pray for them. We just want to lay hands on them. I want to ask the Lord to touch their heart. I believe in this. I believe when the saints pray for the saints, when believers pray for believers, more and more things happen if we pray for people than if we don't. Just lay hands on them and say, "Lord, let that burning oracle touch them. Make them an oracle. Set them on fire. Let the Word be like a hammer that shatters the stone."