

Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

I can't help but be saddened by what I see on the nightly TV news. If one is not careful watching such material it can have a depressing effect on one's mind. When David wrote Psalm 36 he was motivated by the evil he was seeing around him. 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 David was motivated by 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.

1. **Distress of Wickedness verses 1-4.** The first thing that David noticed about those who were perpetrating these acts of evil that there was no fear of God. I was listening to the ABC one morning reporting on the Palestinian and 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 this sort of comment that is so concerning 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 when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. I think of Kerry Packer's response to what happened when he had a heart attack. Asked if there was anything beyond death, he responded by saying in expletive form that there was nothing. Unfortunately he has discovered how wrong he was with his recent death. This is why the psalmist says that such people like this are not wise in what is important in life.

Last, but sadly not least, the wicked are marked by a determination to do evil. Such people devise evilness on their bed and refuse to turn from their wickedness. The book of Romans chapter 3 verses 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.

2. **Delight of Worship verses 5-9.** 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. Often we are disappointed with a friend who we have trusted with our most treasured secrets only to find that you have been betrayed by his or her unfaithfulness. God is not like that but can be trusted in every way. Paul put it this way in 2 Timothy, verse 2 and verse 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 a Holy God. Combined with that He is a just God who deals justly with the Christian and the non-Christian. One often hears the complaint that God sends people to Hell. The truth is that 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 in 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 to live by, day by day.

3. **Discipline of Prayer verses 10-12.** As 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 to that he wants from God.

- (i) He desires to continue to see God's love poured out on those who know God.
 - (ii) He desires to continue to see the righteousness of God in the lives of those who know God.
 - (iii) He desires to continue to see God's care and protection for those who know and love God. He was concerned that the
- (Please turn over)

- 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.

Easter is all about how God dealt with the fact that we all once could be counted with the wicked and the arrogant and prideful, but because of His death and resurrection we have been set free to love and serve Him.

Amen to that and may you all have a wonderful and real Easter.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



Praise:

1. Praise the Lord for a very successful trip by Carl Carmody to New South Wales and Queensland. If everything comes to pass we will see an increase to our monthly print run of 20-30,000 papers. We have already had some other new orders come from this visit and are praying for more.
2. We are really experiencing the result of all your prayer because we have seen some wonderful gifts come into Challenge over the past month, again. We have probably had one of the best years in terms of gifts given to our work at home and for Africa. Let's rejoice in the amazing goodness of the Lord, and that it continues.
3. Praise the Lord for another wonderful opportunity to do a special edition of the paper in Brisbane. We are thrilled to be able to do this in our desire to expand the work of the paper in Australia.
4. Continue to praise the Lord for the Impact Africa mission trip coming up in July. At this stage we have about 28 folk who are coming. We have been amazed at the amount of interest in this trip. If you would like to come please contact our office on the number below, or get information for 2007.
5. We continue to rejoice in the fact that some more new churches have included Challenge in their mission support program. Also we have seen an excellent response to personal support for our staff. We worship a mighty God, and we are trusting Him for this to continue.
5. We continue to rejoice with the number of responses we are getting from the distribution of the various editions of the African Challenge.

Pray:

1. Continue to pray for the work in Africa as we endeavour to consolidate and develop the work. Finance is an ongoing challenge and we would value your prayer for this and for the ministries we work with.
 - (i) Pray for South Africa and for our partner Multi Ministries, who do a great job with all the administration and distribution of the paper. Continue to pray for the effectiveness of our main edition and for the prison edition. Pray for the resources to do quality follow-up to the numerous commitments we are receiving.
 - (ii) Pray for the work in Botswana and for our partners there in Andrew and Sandra Freeman. They are also distributing both editions of the paper and do a great job.
 - (iii) Pray for the work in Kenya and for our partner Peacemakers International headed up by Paul Dondoh. Paul is working under difficult conditions and is in need of a vehicle such as a Hi-Ace Toyota van. We have had \$750 given so far and need a further \$3,500.
 - (iv) Pray for Malawi as we are ready to start there this month if the funds were available. We have a committee already in place and have received costing for printing 10,000 papers. We need a \$1,000 per month to meet commitments.
2. Continue to pray for the preparations going on in Argentina. This has taken us much longer than we had anticipated. Getting the infrastructure in place is critical to sustaining the work once we start.
3. We have some needs for our home office. We are looking at a new subscription program to update our existing system. We need about \$8,000 to get the basic system which is much needed as we have limped along with a setup that is far from adequate. We are also getting another computer.
4. Please pray for the work in NZ done in partnership with the Challenge Weekly. Distribution has grown slowly and we would love to see it grow much more.
5. Pray for the Challenge families as the enemy is never happy with the spread of the gospel. We desire to have all our staff on full personal support and would appreciate your prayer on this matter.



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