

Oh what a Difference

Psalm 36: 1-9

We have read again from a psalm of David. This one bears an interesting title – *A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD*. Along with [Psalm 18](#), these two alone bear that distinction in title. [Psalm 18](#) appears to have been written following the long and difficult struggle with King Saul. Finally David enjoyed rest from his enemies. While we can't know for certain, it certainly appears plausible that this particular psalm may have been written during that time. At the very least it was written in a similar time in the life of David.

Our text today offers a definite contrast between those who know the Lord, desiring to serve Him, and those who have neglected the Lord, rebelling against His will for their lives. As I considered this particular psalm, I was reminded of the contrast revealed in [Psalm 1](#). I continue to rejoice in the relevance of God's Word for our modern day. While this psalm was written many years ago, the truth it contains is timeless. There are two classes of people in this world – those who are born again in Christ, saved by His grace, and those who remain separated from God in their sin. While we all fit into one of these categories, I am reminded of the significance it reveals as well. The difference in those described in the text will be heaven and hell. Those within the body of Christ will be accepted of God and those who have denied the offer of salvation will be condemned and rejected. This great difference cannot be overemphasized today.

Let's take a few moments to consider the [contrasts](#) in the text as we discuss the thought: [Oh what a Difference](#).

I. The Rebellious Sinner (1-4) – Here David described the rebellious condition of those apart from God. He mentioned:

A. His Perception (1) – [The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes](#). David had encountered those who lived as if there was no God, living a life completely void of any recognition or fear of the Lord. These may not have openly expressed such sentiment, but their lives revealed the passions of the heart. They lived as if there was no accountability to the Lord, even behaving in such a way that questioned His very existence. He had no fear of God and no desire for a relationship with Him. [Psalm 14:1 – The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.](#) (We live in a world today where many believe and behave as if there is no God. Their lives are lived without any regard or fear for the Lord.)

B. His Pride (2) – *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*

Typically such pride goes hand in hand with the denial of God's existence and a lack of reverence toward Him. The rebellious live a life filled with pride and arrogance. They view themselves as the keepers of their own destinies, the masters of their own lives. Their lives are viewed as the product of personal effort and success. These see no need for God because they depend solely upon themselves and their personal achievement. They reject the idea that all will stand before the Lord in judgment when this life is over. (Such pride and self-confidence has had a devastating effect on society as a whole. Few see the need to honor God, repent of sin, or the reality of heaven and hell. They are consumed with their own sinful pride.)

C. His Proclamation (3a) – *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.* Jesus proclaimed that our mouths would reveal the desires and intents of our hearts. David speaks of the heart of sinners being revealed through their words. Their hearts are filled with iniquity and deceit, and thus they speak of the same. These have no shame or remorse. In fact, they are intent on promoting their sinful rebellion, and lashing out at anyone who would challenge such iniquity. (You don't have to be around someone very long to figure out where their heart is and where their loyalties lie. If you listen a few moments, they will reveal their inward desires through their conversation.)

D. His Pursuit (3b) – *he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.* The rebellious have no desire for that which is holy, wise, or good. He appears to have been instructed in the right way at some point in life, but made a conscious decision to leave that behind. There is no desire to walk in the ways of God or seek His righteousness. These are intent on the ways of depravity and indulgence. (Do we not experience such behavior by many in our modern society? Many know what is right and true, but consciously abandon truth to indulge in sin.)

E. His Passion (4) – *He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.* David speaks of the deviant passions of the rebellious. They lay awake at night contemplating new ways of mischief and indulgence. They purposely pursue a path of sin and wickedness. They have no guilt or regret for their sin. In fact, they encourage and pursue it! (Sadly many today are following this destructive path. They are never content with current indulgence, but continually seeking a new thrill for the flesh. All standards have been abandoned and nothing seems to be off limits when it comes to sinful pleasures.)

II. The Redeemed Saint (5-9) – Here David revealed the great contrast between the rebellious sinner and the redeemed saint. We have much to rejoice about. He mentioned:

A. The Saint's Security (5-7) – While the sinner has no real security, the believer enjoys the security of the Lord. This security is founded in:

1. God's Compassion (5) – *Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* David rejoiced in the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord. While none are deserving of God's favor, His mercy withholds the punishment we deserve, and His grace provided the blessing we could never deserve. While men pursued their sin, being rebellious and unreliable, God was always faithful to those who belonged to Him. (I rejoice in the mercy and grace of our Lord. He remains faithful even when we are not. We are bound by His loving care!)

2. God's Character (6a) – *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.* David knew the redeemed found security within the divine character of the Lord. He is righteous in all His ways and His judgments are always right. When men had mistreated and abused David, he could always depend on the consistent, righteous nature of the Lord. (I am glad our Lord never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We may face abuse and betrayal by those around us, but we can always depend on the righteous nature of our Savior.)

3. God's Commitment (6b-7) – *O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.* ^[7] *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* David had faced many frightening situations when it appeared he would not survive. Through all of his adversity, God had remained faithful. He had preserved David and allowed him a place of shelter beneath the shadow of His wings. David had nothing to fear. He was secure within the grasp of the Lord. (We too can rejoice in the commitment of our Savior. His loving commitment for humanity took Him to the cross. He gave His life a ransom for our sin. We are kept within the security of His mighty hand! We have nothing to fear. Our Lord is faithful and we are covered in His abundant grace!)

B. The Saint's Satisfaction (8-9) – Finally David dealt with the satisfaction available in the Lord. While the rebellious face a continual search for satisfaction, the redeemed have complete satisfaction in one source – the Lord. This satisfaction is found through:

1. God's Provision (8) – *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* David rejoiced that God was able to provide for man's entire being. He provided abundance for our physical needs, while also providing joy and pleasure within the spiritual man as well. David faced nothing the Lord could not provide. He

rested in the abundance available only in the Lord. (I am thankful the Lord is mindful of our needs and able to provide for us. I have never had a need that He was unable to supply. He daily meets our needs, providing for our physical well-being and allows us to drink from the deep river of His abundant grace. In the Lord there is pleasure this world cannot provide!)

2. God's Salvation (9) – *For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.* David also knew the Lord was the source of life for all who believe. He had brought David out of the darkness of sin and despair, allowing him to walk in the light of righteousness. He was no longer as those who walked in darkness, separated from the Lord. He enjoyed life available only in the Lord. (Many today seek the source of real life, a life of peace and contentment. This is available only in Christ. I am so thankful for the day He offered me life more abundantly, bringing me out of the darkness of sin and allowing me to walk in the light of His marvelous grace!)

Conclusion: While David's thoughts do not provide an exhaustive list of the differences between the rebellious and the redeemed, it does provide enough to reveal the great need for Christ. I was saved at an early age, but even then I identified with the rebellious. I had no desire for the things of God and sought only to please the flesh; but oh what a difference when Jesus passed by! I do not live a life of sinless perfection, but I do enjoy fellowship with my Lord. He has delivered me from the bondage of sin. I am secure and completely satisfied with my Lord.

I am confident we all can identify with the passage we have considered. All are born in sin and walk in rebellion toward God. The question that must be answered is – has there been a change in your life? There is a difference in the eternal destiny of those described in the text. I rejoice to be counted among the redeemed. How about you? Has Jesus made a difference in your life? If not, I urge you to respond to His offer of salvation with a repentant heart of faith.