

Psalm 12 • The faithful have vanished!

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Psalm chapter 12. I don't know if you've ever looked around at the world in which you live and just given a cry of, Lord, what is it coming to!? But that is what we see in this Psalm. And so that's what we're going to read about.

Let's pray first.

Jesus, use this time, use the ministry of Your word to speak words of grace and insight. Lead us in truth. Your word is truth. You are the truth. Be with us in Jesus name, amen.

David says this, we'll read through the Psalm. He says,

"1 Save, O Lord, for the godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.

2 Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts,

4 those who say, "With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?"

5 "Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

6 The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

7 You, O Lord, will keep them; you will guard them from this generation forever. (correction- you will guard us)

8 On every side the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man." (ESV)

We're not really sure what David was going through or what he, what, if there was even a particular event that motivated these words by David. But you can tell he is looking around at the world in which he live and he is finding that basic morality and human kindness appears to be gone.

And he's very distressed about it. Lord, what's happening? Have you ever felt that way when you watch the news or you see what's going on around you? It's like, Lord, what is going on? What has happened to this world that it has taken such a downward spiral?

Now, since we know that David was considered a prophet, there are many who wonder if David is actually speaking words prophetically of a time to come. Perhaps even during the time of The Great Tribulation and I suppose that's possible. But it's also possible that these words just describe the condition of man in general, in the world, apart from Christ and so forth.

Paul told us or tells us in the New Testament, the character of man that we've been seeing since the very beginning, will increase. The sin of man will increase over time.

And in verse 2, David goes on to describe the character of unbelievers this way. Verse 2. He says, *"Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak."* And of course, the emphasis here is on the words, is on the language. The perverse language that is going on.

David uses terms such as a *"double heart."* Interesting term, is it not? It refers to deceptive language where someone says one thing and yet means another. And then he talks about *"with flattering lips... they speak."* And this refers to those who say what their hearers want to hear. I'm just telling you things you want to hear so that I can gain something for myself later on. And David says this is the character of what he is seeing.

And so, in verse 3, he brings his request to the Lord. And he says, *"May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that makes great boasts, and those who say, 'With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?'"* Or as the New King James says, *"Who is Lord over us?"*

You can see that, David reveals the attitude of these people as they express their personal freedom. They use their words however they wish without concern for God's judgment. In fact, they deny that there will be any judgment. And I think that's probably what bothered David the most. I think it was bad enough to

witness pride and rebellion. But David also understood the destructive power of words. Words that are spoken, hateful, hurtful words.

Man, are we seeing that? I don't know if it's on the rise today or if it's just because we have social media and our audience has increased. And, I think our reach has increased, hasn't it? To the degree that if I want to make a statement about someone or something and speak hatefully, I can probably gain a pretty quick audience.

Let me show you a proverb. Proverbs chapter 12, verse 18 on the screen says,

Proverbs 12:18 (ESV)

"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

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I think that's interesting that the words of an individual can be likened to a sword thrust. And yeah, so much of what we're seeing today, so much hatred being spewed. And even by some who would consider themselves tolerant, so much hatred going on today. And, we've seen how well placed accusations can ruin someone's life, someone's career, someone's future. And it seems like we love to do that.

Let me show you another proverb. This one's Proverbs 18. Look at this one. It says,

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Isn't that interesting? *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."* It means that you can kill or you can build up, give life. It's up to us. But believers in Jesus need to recognize this truth. That there is either life in the tongue or there is death in the tongue, one of the two.

And then in verse 5, the Lord speaks up saying, *"Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."*

Certainly this is prophetic of a time to come when the Lord will arise to judge the earth. And silence every willful, destructive tongue that has spoken in rebellion and anger and so forth against the Lord. And at the same time, He promises that He will bring safety at that time to the one who longs for it.

And then as if to contrast the reckless, damaging words of sinful man, David speaks of the words of the Lord in verse 6. Look with me there. He says, *"The words of the Lord are pure..."* They're pure words. They're *"like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times."*

Now I've never seen silver purified. I've never actually seen that process. I understand how it works, essentially. But this is probably something David saw on a regular basis. This sort of process by which silver was purified.

But he says, the words of the Lord are like silver that has been purified. Notice he says 7 times and remember 7 is God's number of completion. In other words, he's saying God's words are flawless. They've been completely purified. There's nothing impure, if you will, that comes from them and they are flawless.

And that's, isn't that the way we look at the Scriptures? We look at the Bible as that which has, God has given us and there is flawless element to the Word of God. And how sad it is that the world looks upon the words of the Bible in just the opposite way. It sees them as worthless and irrelevant. And instead, they value the words of sinful man, which are not just flawed but they're also dangerous.

You know what I find interesting? When you get into a conversation with people about the Bible and you start talking about the Bible. And maybe you even ask them some questions or a conversation kind of ensues related to the origins of the Bible. And they'll say, well, I just don't happen to believe that the Bible, it came from God. I believe it's just written by man.

And what they mean by that... They might not say it, but what they mean by that is, therefore, I reject it. Why? Because they believe it was written by man. Okay? Here's what's really interesting about that. These very same people go on and they choose to believe the conclusions in the writings of men.

In other words, they tell you on the one hand that they don't believe the Bible because they believe it was written by just men. But then they'll believe a science textbook. And you want to ask him, well, who is that written by? Was that written by monkeys? I mean, why would you believe that and...You're saying to me that because this was written by men, I reject it. Isn't it interesting?

David ends this Psalm with a couple of statements here about God's Word. Look in verse 7. He says, "*You, O Lord, will keep them;*" And he's referring to His Word here. Okay. He's just, contextually, he just got done talking about the Word of God, how it's been purified. And now he says, You will keep Your Words. You will keep Your Words.

And he says, "*you will guard us from this generation forever.*" Isn't that an interesting statement? Here David speaks of the Word of God and he says, Lord, You're going to, You're going to preserve Your Word. That's what he means by keep. You're going to preserve Your Word. And it is that same word that guards you and I, from the deception of this generation.

How do we know the difference between the truth and the lie? Well, we know it because of God's Word. We know it because the standard of His Word. His Word is to us like a measuring stick, like a yardstick or something like that. And we measure other things according to it, to recognize whether or not those things are true or false. Okay.

What David is saying here is that, Lord, here's Your Word, which You have pure... You've given to us this pure Word that's flawless. But not only have You given us this Word, but You will preserve it. You will keep it for us. And it will protect us against this generation. And oh boy, don't we see that! I mean, what a blessing we have in the Word of God related to the protection we have from all the things that the world claims.

And then finally in verse 8 he says "*On every side the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man.*" Let me read that verse out of the New Living Translation (NLT). They say, "*even though the wicked strut about, and evil is praised throughout the land.*" And again, I have to say, yes to what David is saying related to our own time.

In other words, the very thing that God condemns, I mean, look at our culture. The very kind of behavior that God condemns in the Word is everywhere. Splashed on screens from our entertainment industry. And we even give awards to them for creating those movies. Showing everything that the Lord actually condemns in this world, so kind of messed up.