

Total Truth in a World of Lies

Text: Psalm 12:1-8

Introduction:

1. The Author of the Psalm: The preface to the Psalm reveals that David was the author of this Psalm.
2. The Structure of the Psalm: The Psalm can be divided into three sections.
 - Vs. 1-2 – David cries out to God for help in light of the dwindling numbers of godly, trustworthy people.
 - Vs. 3-5 – David expresses confidence in the sure intervention of God. This confidence is rooted in David's understanding of the nature of God as well as the fact of God's spoken Word on the matter.
 - Vs. 6-8 – David finds comfort in the fact of God's perfect Word. The faithfulness of the Word of God is a rock to the believer in a world filled with liars and ungodly men.
3. The Overview of the Psalm: In this Psalm, David cries out to God for help as he observes the decline in the godly and the increase of the ungodly. In the face of a deceitful and wicked world, David takes comfort in the infallibility of God's pure, preserved Word. What a contrast the Word of God is to the words of men! Psalm 12 contains some of the most important verses on the doctrine of preservation in the Bible. C.H. Spurgeon writes, "In the first and second verses David spreads his plaint before the Lord concerning the treachery of his age; verses 3 and 4 denounce judgments upon proud traitors; in verse 5, Jehovah himself thunders out his wrath against oppressors; hearing this, the Chief Musician sings sweetly of the faithfulness of God and his care of his people, in verse 6 and 7; but closes on the old key of lament in verse 8, as he observes the abounding wickedness of his times."
4. Expository idea: "In a world that lives by deception and tyranny, God's Words are the only true words."
5. We will divide the Psalm into three parts for our expository study.

I. THE PSALMIST'S APPEAL TO GOD (VS. 1-2)

A. The Cry in the Appeal (Vs. 1a)

1. "Help, LORD" = David cries out to God for help. This is great two-word prayer to pray. How we need God's help in our lives! David is asking God for His intervention in the situation.
2. "A short, but sweet, suggestive, seasonable, and serviceable prayer; a kind of angel's sword to be turned every way, and to be used on all occasions. God is the all-sufficient Helper." (Spurgeon)

B. The Catalyst for the Appeal (Vs. 1b-2, 8)

Two realities motivate David to call on God for help. The godly were on the decline and the wicked were on the increase. This moved David to prayer. Prayer should be the response of the believer to the depraved state of affairs in the world.

1. The decline of the godly (Vs. 1b) The decline in the number of righteous people is expressed in two ways:
 - a. "the godly man ceaseth" = the word 'ceaseth' means "to come to an end, to fail." The same Hebrew word is translated "come to an end" (Ps. 7:9) If the scarcity of godly people was a problem in David's day,

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how much more is it a problem in these apostate days we are living in as get nearer to the rapture. Verse 8 of the Psalm returns to the lament and points out the reality that wicked men increase when vile men are exalted. If you want to get a sense for the morality of a nation, look at what kind of leaders they have. Look at who they exalt to positions of honour and power.

- b. "the faithful fail from among the children of men" = the word 'faithful' "has the clear idea of being reliable or trustworthy. People who were reliable, who can be trusted in what they say or do, appear to have vanished." We are living in a day when faithful men and women of God are in short supply. Prov. 20:6 "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but **a faithful man who can find?**"
 - c. May God strengthen and help us to be a holy and faithful people in an unholy and unfaithful age. 1 Cor. 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding** in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
2. The discussions of the ungodly (Vs. 2)
- The character of the ungodly is revealed by their words. Their words were:
- a. Empty – "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour". The word 'vanity' means "empty, purposeless, worthless, hollow". What an apt description of the conversations of the unsaved. They are mostly concerned with that which is of no eternal value. The same goes for the majority of chatter online in our technological age. In this context, vanity would also include that which is evil. Psalm 10:7 "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity." Unholy conversations encourage unholy living. Because the world talks so lightly and flippantly of abominable things, it dumbs down the conscience towards sin.
 - b. Deceitful – "with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak".
 - i. The flattery of their lips. The word 'flattery' has the idea of 'smoothness'. They speak smooth sounding words but it is all a deceptive façade for a heart filled with evil motives. Webster's dictionary of 1828 defines flattery as "False praise; commendation bestowed for the purpose of gaining favour and influence, or to accomplish some purpose." (Webster's 1828) Proverbs 29:5 warns, "A man that **flattereth** his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet." Flattery is one of the chief weapons used by the strange woman in her seductions (Prov. 6:34; 7:21).
 - ii. The duplicity of their hearts. The flattery is a cover for a wicked heart. The phrase "double heart" literally means "a heart and a heart". "With one heart they faun and flatter, saying things which might please. With another heart they harbor mischievous thoughts and intents. They have two hearts, one to speak smooth words and the other to imagine mischief." (Flanigan) Allen Ross adds, "What they said sounded flattering; but they were of another heart, intending something totally different, and so their words were deceptive."
 - iii. "He who puffs up another's heart, has nothing better than wind in his own. If a man extols me to my face, he only shows me one

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side of his heart, and the other is black with contempt for me, or foul with intent to cheat me. Flattery is the sign of the tavern where duplicity is the host." (C.H. Spurgeon)

II. THE PSALMIST'S ANSWER FROM GOD (VS. 3-5)

David found the answer to his heart cry was answered in both the character and the revelation of God.

A. David Knew God's Character (Vs. 3-4)

As is the pattern with David's Psalms, he commences with a lament poured out to God but quickly moves to the position and perspective of faith. David knew that God would:

1. Judge the wicked – “cut off flattering lips” (Vs. 3). While there are many who judge the reality of God's judgment, God's Word is crystal clear that God WILL judge the unrepentant. David knew “that God either would or should cut off such who used flattery with their lips, by inflicting some judgment in this life, or everlasting punishment hereafter; by taking them away by death "out of the world"... or by casting them into hell, where all liars and deceitful persons will have their portion.” (See Rev. 21:8)
2. Humble the wicked – “and the tongue that speaketh proud things” (Vs. 3b-4) In verse two, we noted that vanity and flattery were features of the words of the wicked. Now the psalmist adds that they also speak “proud things”. Verse 4 reveals the content of their proud words.
 - a. “With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own” – this is a prideful attitude of autonomy and independence. They believe they are free to use their tongues as they please. Some Christians seem to believe the lie that they are free to say whatever they want! Our tongues need to be yielded and submitted to God's authority.
 - i. 2 Samuel 23:2 “The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.”
 - ii. James 3:2 “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.”
 - b. “who is lord over us?” – Notice the autonomous, anti-authority attitude which is an expression of their pride. In their arrogance they were saying “I can do and say what I want and am accountable to no one.” It was a problem back in David's day and it is problem in our day also! The prevailing attitude of today is one of disrespect and disregard for authority.
 - c. “They will refuse to be subject to divine restraint or moral law. They will do and say as they like. They will not be accountable. “Who is lord over us?” they say. “We may speak as we please”. We have power and liberty to do so and will not be bound or recognize any lordship over us. Such is the attitude of depraved men, but it will not go unjudged.” (Flanigan)
 - d. “They were unwilling to submit to any authority; in fact, they denied that there was anyone who could have authority over them, and so they say boastful things.” (Ross)
 - e. Note: If you have a problem with God-ordained authorities in your life, you may be sure that pride is at the root of it.

B. David Received God's Confirmation (Vs. 5)

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In verse 3 and 4 David is expressing his confidence in God. In this verse, David records God's own word on the matter. Notice the "saith the LORD" in the middle of the verse. God would be moved to intervene in the lives of His people by the following:

1. The sufferings of His people – "for the oppression of the poor". Oppression represents trials that you experience at the hands of others. God's heart of compassion is moved towards those who are oppressed by the wicked.
2. The sighing of His people – "for the sighing of the needy". God hears the heart sighs of the saints! God knows the heart groanings of His children! God's answer would be to provide a place of safety from the enemy – "I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." This word 'safety' is frequently translated 'salvation' in the Old Testament. God provides a salvation place for His people. There is no safer place! Two precious thoughts flow out of this:
 - a. God provides physical protection for His people. God is able to provide safety for His people in this wicked world filled with evil people. This is the primary interpretation as the context is dealing with oppressors.
 - b. God provides spiritual protection for His people. As an application, we think of the safety and security of our salvation from all the attacks of the enemy. Nothing can separate us from God's love. There is no safer place to be than in the salvation place which God provides. There we are safe forever from the devil and the fires of hell.

III. THE PSALMIST'S ASSURANCE IN GOD (VS. 6-7)

These verses provide a blessed contrast to man's vain, deceitful, prideful and sinful words described in the previous verses. In contrast to the empty, unreliable words of sinful man stands the infallible, faithful Word of the Living God. These verses constitute some of the most important statements on the purity and preservation in the Word of God. David believed in:

A. The Purity of the Word of God (Vs. 6)

1. The declaration of the Word's purity (Vs. 6a)
 - a. God's Word claims to be absolutely and totally pure and it is! That means it is completely without error. It is infallible.
 - b. Prov. 30:5 "**Every word of God is pure**: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him."
 - c. John 17:17 "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**"
 - d. If you would know spiritual purity in your heart and life, you need to fill your life with the pure Words of God. The Bible is not only the purest Book in the entire world, it is the purest thing in this world. That's why it is called "The **Holy** Bible". You never know genuine holiness without a life saturated in the Holy Bible!
 - e. Psalm 119:9 "BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man **cleanse** his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word." (See also John 15:3; Eph. 5:26).
 - f. Php. 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
2. The illustration of the Word's purity (Vs. 6b)

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To impress upon the reader the matchless purity of the Scriptures, David uses the illustration of silver that has gone through multiple purifying processes in the furnace. David is not suggesting that like silver, the Word of God had to have corruption removed. He is simply using the purest silver as an illustration of God's Word.

- a. Silver speaks of the preciousness of God's Word. Psalm 19:10 "More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Psalm 119:72 "The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."
- b. Seven speaks of the perfection of God's Word. God's Word is totally without error!

B. The Preservation of the Word of God (Vs. 7)

Question: Do we have the infallible, pure, perfect Word of God today? This next verse answers that question unequivocally. God not only inspired His Word (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), He also preserved it.

1. The Person of the Word's preservation (Vs. 7a)

The Preservation of the Word of God is due to the mighty power of God. Notice that David's faith and focus is in God to keep His own Word.

- a. "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD"
- b. "thou shalt preserve them"
- c. God did not inspire His Word and then leave it to man to corrupt and lose it overtime. God has preserved His inspired Word!
- d. How do we know that we have God's pure Word in our day? Because God keeps His promises!
- e. The Bible has been more viciously attacked than any other book on earth but God has preserved it through the fires of persecution and all of Satan's attacks against it. And yet despite all of that, the Bible is still the world's most printed and bestselling Book in all of world history. The Guinness World Records states "The best-selling book of all time is the Christian Bible. It is impossible to know exactly how many copies have been printed in the roughly 1500 years since its contents were standardized, but research conducted by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2021 suggests that the total number probably lies between 5 and 7 billion copies."¹

2. The Period of the Word's preservation (Vs. 7b)

- a. David had confidence that God's Word would be preserved forever.
- b. Ecc. 3:14 "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, **it shall be for ever**: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him."
- c. Psalm 119:89 LAMED. "**For ever, O LORD**, thy word is settled in heaven."
- d. Matt. 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away.**" (The exact same words are repeated in Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33)

Conclusion: Do you approach the Bible as the most important Book in the universe? How much time do you give to read, study and memorise it?

¹ <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction> Viewed 25/6/23