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The Greatest of Lights in the Darkest of Days; Psalm 12

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The background of Psalm 11 is 1 Sam 17-19. Saul attempts to kill David and some of David's friends counsel him to flee. But it wasn't time for David to flee just yet. The Lord was testing David. He was also testing Saul, and Saul continued to prove that he was morally abdicating his throne.

Now we approach Psalm 12, and it seems to be written during the time of David's flight from Saul, which begins in 1 Sam 20 and continues until the death of Saul in 1 Sam 31. The period of testing David was over now. Jonathan, Saul's own son, secretly confirms Saul's intention is to kill him and it is best to flee. God had a purpose for David to remain for a time, and God had a purpose for David to flee when it came time to do so. In both situations, David was being led by God through his circumstances, not being led by his circumstances alone.

The specific context of Psalm 12 is more than likely the events described in 1 Sam 22. Ahimelech the priest had given provisions to David and his men, and when Saul discovered this, he was not pleased. He ordered Doeg the Edomite to kill all the priests of Nob, and Doeg killed 85 priests and went even further by slaughtering the entire town of Nob. It was a dark, dark day in the land. That is the occasion that wrenches out David's desperate plea in the opening words of this psalm. We first hear the believer's desperate request, then we will hear the Lord's merciful response, and finally, we will hear the believer's confidence in the Lord restored.

I. The Believer's Desperate Request (vv1-4)

A) David is in a dire and desperate situation.

1. It's a desperate situation because the godly are not to be found (v1). They are being slaughtered. They are probably hiding in fear. They are probably being silenced from fear. They are probably being swayed into error from the lies of the wicked. Whatever the case may be, the godly have vanished. They are nowhere to be found.
2. Not only have the godly vanished, but the wicked are triumphant by the spreading of lies and deceit. Their smooth words, their flattering lips, their false portrayal of reality and truth and justice are winning the day. They are convincing in their speech. They sway and control

through deception. And it is all rooted in their double hearts. They are not after the good of the people. They are not upholding God's truth. They are promoting self. They are pushing agenda. And it seems they are winning.

3. We find ourselves in similar situations at times, both culturally and personally. Right is argued and reasoned to be wrong. Wrong is argued and reasoned to be right. Godliness becomes described as wickedness. Wickedness becomes described as godliness. Words, driven by deceit and lies, are a powerful weapon. Strong enough to sway the masses and silence the godly. And this drives David to the only recourse he has, and it is our only recourse as well, it drives David to cry out to God - to pray.

B) David's desperation situation yields a desperate plea.

1. David cries, "Save, O Lord." Simple, yet powerful. To the point, but it is the only point. Desperate, yet effective. It signals the hopelessness and helplessness of the petitioner, and yet is directed to the sure and certain source of hope and help. "Save, O Lord."
2. The word for "save" has a broad meaning. It applies to both the physical and spiritual realm. It is a cry for deliverance, either from temporary defeat or eternal condemnation. Therefore it serves as the best prayer for all occasions. "Save, O Lord."
3. It is the heart and substance of all true praying. Our state apart from the mercy and grace of God is a desperate one. We cannot make it on our own, we cannot save ourselves, we cannot turn the hearts of men, we cannot change situations and outcomes, but there is one who can, and there is only One who can. The Lord God Almighty, full of grace and mercy. It is said that desperate times call for desperate measures. Let it also be said that desperate times call for desperate praying, and desperate praying achieves far more than desperate measures because desperate prayers rely on God and not on self.

C) David's assessment of his desperate situation is that God must move for only God can rectify it (vv3-4).

1. David understands that he is passed the point of debating and arguing and reasoning. His foes are claiming victory now. They see themselves as invincible now. They know they have won the day. God must move to uphold His justice, to save His people, to uphold His purposes, for His name's sake.
2. We must view our lives and our culture and our world in the very same way. Our own devices our own strength and resolve and

solutions will not suffice. For right to win, for truth to prevail, for His kingdom to come and His will be done, God must move.

3. That's not to say we sit idly and passively by. When God moves, He often moves through His people. He causes His people to act. He strengthens His people. But it's Him, it's Him, who gains the victory, settles the score, judges the wicked, and saves His people.
4. Now we see David's desperate request does not fall upon deaf ears.

II. The Lord's Merciful Response (v5)

A) Notice in v5 it is no longer David who is speaking; it is God. God hears the cry of His people. God responds.

B) The Lord says, "I will now arise." - this is the greatest of lights in the darkest of days - note how every single word in the Lord's merciful response is in direct answer to David's plea to be saved.

1. God says, "I". He will act. He will accomplish. When God moves, He moves everything and everyone else. Only God can, and God does.
2. God says, "I will." That means it is certain; it is sure. When He says, "I will," it is already done.
3. God says, "I will now." It's not only a matter of God's will; it's also a matter of God's timing. He seldom moves at the first glimpse of trouble. But it's after the plundering, it's in the groaning, it's when our resources have failed, our strength is gone, when we have given up, He most often moves. In this way, we see Him and ourselves in true light, we being utterly dependent, He being all sufficient.
4. God says, "I will now arise." When He says He is going to arise that means He is going to provide and accomplish what His people so desperately need and cannot achieve but what He and He alone is able and willing to give. In the context of this psalm, it means "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

C) This is the greatest of lights in our darkest days as well.

1. Spurgeon writes, "The darkest hours of the Church's night are those which proceed the break of day. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Jesus will come to deliver just when His needy ones shall sigh, as if all hope had gone forever."
2. Think on His incarnation. The heavens had been silent for 400 years. Israel was under Roman rule. Herod had vowed to not let any king arise in Jerusalem. And just then, the glorious Son of God said, "I will now arise"! And He clothed Himself in humanity and entered in His own creation to inaugurate His kingdom and redeem His people.

3. Think on His resurrection. The Messiah had died as a man cursed of God on a tree. The disciples were distraught and in hiding. It seemed that evil had won, that all was lost. Jesus had been dead and buried for 3 days. But the disciples had not yet understood that the pit of death could not hold the Fountain of Life! It is then that Christ said, "I will now arise!"
4. Think on His return. There is coming a day when the Gospel will have gathered all of His people from every tribe, nation, and tongue. Ungodliness will be on every hand as in the time of Noah. And the King of kings who is now sitting at the Father's right hand will say, "I will now arise." He will judge the living and the dead, usher in the new heavens and the new earth, and His people will reign with Him.
5. This is the God we serve. His merciful response is "I will now arise."

III. The Believer's Confidence Restored (vv6-8)

- A) David responds now to the words of the Lord. He says, "The words of the Lord are pure." That's in direct contrast to the words of the wicked in v2. Pure words are true words certain words. David's confidence, or faith, is restored, not in himself, but in the Lord. Look what he says in v7.
- B) He is now at rest in the Lord, in the middle of his desperate situation. Note very carefully, He's not resting because it is all better. He's resting because God has spoken; He's trusting that God's promise is just as sure as its fulfillment. More times than not, we do not rest in the Lord's promise. We only rest when things get better. Let us stretch our faith to rest in His Word, in His promises, in His character, in His sovereignty, while in the messes of life.
- C) Now we know his circumstances had yet to change because of v8. Now that seems unusual doesn't it? Why would David end this psalm there? Is he saying, "Well no matter what God says, this is the way it really is. I know what God says, but that's not what I see." Is that what David is saying? No, no, no my friend. David is saying the day is still very dark, but a great light is shining. God has spoken.

Conclusion - God grant us faith to rest in You and trust in Your promises in the darkest of days, there will come a time when You say, "I will now arise."