

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 4.28.2024

PSALM 12 - WHERE ARE THE FAITHFUL?

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 12:1-8

To the choirmaster: according to The Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

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 us from this generation forever.

8 On every side the wicked prowl,

as vileness is exalted among the children of man.

II. THE FAITHFUL HAVE VANISHED

- Ps 12 is a psalm of corporate lament.
 - David opens with a cry for help, “Save, O Lord!” He’s asking for God to deliver his people.
 - Now, this psalm is closely connected with ps11.
 - Ps 11:2-3 David writes that the intent of the wicked is to rid themselves of the righteous.
 - Ps 11 closes, “For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.
- At the beginning of Ps 12 we have David lamenting that the righteous seem to have vanished.
 - “The godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished among the children of man.”
 - It feels to David that there is no one left who fears the Lord.
 - Of course, David is exaggerating, but he is asking, “What has happened to the people of God, and what has happened to the promises of God?
 - Micah 7:1 The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind;
 - Hosea 4:1-2 Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; 2 there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
- We may feel like that today.
 - Evil seems to be winning and the righteous have been driven to ground.
- This is the complaint of the church in every generation.
 - This reminds us that what we feel to be unique to our generation is not anything new.
 - Rampant and unchecked wickedness has always shown itself in the manner which David describes.
- David felt that godliness was in decline, the righteous remnant was diminishing, and now he feels very much alone.
 - ex. Elijah (1 Kings 19).
 - That’s what prompts David to cry out, “Save, O Yahweh!”

III. FLATTERING LIPS

- What causes David to conclude that godliness was on the decline? It was the way the people spoke.
 - David heard flattering words, proud words, boasting, lying, oppressive words.
 - All of these David knew displeased the Lord.
 - Look at the words used to describe the wicked situation: lips, tongue, heart.
 - The language coming out of them is revealing their character.
 - David is saying that everyone is speaking to their neighbors with vain and empty words, speaking falsehoods and lies, speaking deceitful things.
- They speak with “a double heart.” Literally, “a heart in a heart.”
 - They think one thing and speak another. They say one thing to one person, and a different thing to another.
 - Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45)

- There is no truth in their heart, only falsehood.
- What is truth? Truth is that which corresponds with reality.
- Truth is objective. Once a society devalues truth, no longer cares about objective truth, that society has already begun its descent into chaos and unrestrained depravity.
- This is first manifestly expressed in the language.
- Because we as a culture no longer care about objective truth, lies masquerading as truth have become the currency of our age.
- The evidence that the foundations have eroded is when lying becomes normative and a way of life.
- Truth is such an essential element to the flourishing of a society that its absence only leads to unrestrained wretchedness and depravity among men.
- Does this trouble you as it did David?
- How about your speech? Do you speak truthfully?
- When you speak, are you communicating what is true or is there deceit and manipulation in your words?"
- Do you have a double heart? Say one thing to one person, and something different to another.
- We are commanded to "speak the truth in love." (Eph 4:15)
- Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
- Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

IV. FAITHFUL WORDS

- David is distressed by how these shameless, self promoters, arrogant boasters, duplicitous liars, think they can talk their way of God's judgment.
- The wicked put trust in their speech as the instrument of their power and they say, "who is master over us?"
- They don't believe that they will be held accountable for their lying, deceit and boasting.
- Matthew 12:36-37 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
- The Lord's prophetic voice comes in response to the growing wickedness and how the poor are being taken advantage of, he hears the sighs and groans of the needy. "I will now arise," says the Lord.
- Though we may feel like the godly remnant is growing smaller and smaller, we can be assured that God sees the wrongs being done by the mouth and hands of the wicked, he hears the sighs of his people, however needy, and he will in time arise to judge and avenge them.
- "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."
- What a comforting and precious promise this is to the saints in every age where it seems like wickedness abounds and the godly have vanished.
- God promises safety, rest, deliverance, and salvation from the taunting foes of the righteous.
- In contrast to the flattering lips, flawed words, faithless speech on the tongues of the wicked, God's words are pure words, faithful words, truthful words.

- V6 is a celebration of God's utterance of promised deliverance. The needy and afflicted are delighted to hear the Lord speak the words.
 - David makes a profound comparison of the purity and truthfulness of God's Word using the image of a silver refined in a furnace, and asserts that God's words are as pure as such silver where all of the impurities have been smelted away, seven times pure.
 - God's words can be trusted. God's Words are pure and free from all error, all deception.
 - Man's words are cheap and temporary. God's words are like pure silver, valuable and lasting.
 - Psalm 19:7-11 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.
 - David loved God's Word. He treasured it above all else and lamented people's disregard for God's Word.
 - Psalm 119:136 My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.
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- V7 You, O Lord, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever.
 - God will keep his covenant promises. He will preserve his remnant, no matter how dark the days get, or how it seems like the wicked are increasing and surrounding the righteous.
 - "You will guard us from this generation forever."
 - The Church of Jesus Christ will never be destroyed.
 - The strength of the Church does not consist in the number of visible members but in the power of the one who is the Head of his Church.
 - No matter how corrupt the days, how depraved the culture, no matter how oppressed the people of God, the saints of God will never be exterminated.
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- As for the wicked, they will face future and final judgment.
 - Revelation 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

V. FUTURE HOPE

- The psalm ends with the state of affairs remaining unchanged.
 - V8 On every side the wicked prowl as vileness is exalted among the children of man.
 - We still live in the world described in psalm 12.
 - But the hope we see in Psalm 12 is the hope we cling to today.
 - God's words are true and pure. He will arise and cut off the flattering lips and the tongue that makes arrogant boasts. He will bring justice to the poor and needy. He will preserve and protect his people.
 - He will do all that he has promised to do.
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- Here's the truth. The purity of God's Word came to us.
 - John 1:14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - And when we look at the life of Jesus, what do we see?

- He always spoke the truth.
 - His words were adorned with grace and truth, no deceit in his speech, no duplicity.
 - There was no lie or malice on his tongue.
 - He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).
 - He called out the hypocritical tongues of the Pharisees and other religious leaders.
 - He defended the poor who were being taken advantage of.
 - We see the evil words of Christ's enemies surrounding him.
 - Those who sought to kill him spoke lies about him, they manipulated others to turn against Jesus.
 - At his sham trial, we see many false witnesses giving false testimonies (Matthew 26).
 - Jesus died surrounded by his enemies, surrounded by their lying tongues, and evil speech.
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- But the Lord is faithful to his promises. Jesus is vindicated as he is raised triumphantly from the grave.
 - And those who trust in him are kept.
 - Everyone who believes in him, in the true words of Jesus, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.
 - Though we may be surrounded by the wicked, though vileness and depravity increases, we are secure in Christ.
 - He will bring us safely into all that he has secured for us through his work of redemption.
 - We can cry out to him, "Save, O Lord!" And he will powerfully respond.
 - In Jesus, we have the safety for which we long.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?