

PSALM 12

INTRODUCTION

The more I observe our world and the more I listen to the views expressed within the world, the more I begin to appreciate the Psalms. I find myself more and more turning to the Psalms when I want to get a Christian perspective on this world. For I find, it is so easy to be sucked into the thinking of this world. I find myself beginning to swallow the lies and deception of this world, so I need to turn to the Psalms for a good dose of realism.

When we looked at Psalm 11 we saw what we should do when the foundations of our society are giving way around us (11:4). In many ways this Psalm is a commentary on that particular verse. One way that the foundations of our society crumble is by the lies, flattery and deception of unbelievers. This Psalm deals with the use of words. Words are powerful things, as we draw closer to a general election, we will see the power of words in action both in speech and in writing.

The Psalm is a cry for help (v 1). The reason for the cry for help is that within David's world godly and faithful people are rare. Men and woman who do good are scarce, and people who are faithful and sincere are rare and becoming rarer. No doubt David felt lonely and isolated, and as he looked around at his world he very much felt like, he was in the minority.

Have you not felt lonely and isolated at times as well? Do we not feel as if we are in the minority at times? That is because we are. Perhaps you have always tried to do the right thing, at home within the family, at work or at school, but it just seems as if you stand out like a sore thumb. As we look around we can say like David, help Lord, for the godly and faithful are scarce (v 1). But what reasons did David have for feeling like this

1. THE SITUATION HE FACED (vs. 2-4 & 8)

As David looks around and observes his world, he finds that

a) People Lie (v 2) - The word that is translated 'lie' here does not mean what we mean by the word lie. When we use the word we mean falsehood or a distortion of the truth. But the Hebrew word is more comprehensive, for it includes the idea of falsehood but it actually means emptiness. It carries the idea of insincerity. It is empty talk. Meaningless talk, talk of no value. This is the sort of thing that goes on in many of our pubs and clubs throughout our land. It is equally true today, if everyone came to church that told me they were coming; we would have to move buildings. But the truth is people lie, rather than face others with the truth.

b) People flatter (v 2) - Flattery not only includes lies but it also goes beyond lies to motives. Flattery occurs when one's motives are corrupt. It is saying the right thing to the right person in order to prosper oneself. This sort of thing goes on within the working world. We have all met people who flatter the right people, but we know that their intentions are to progress their own careers.

c) People deceive (v 2) - The Hebrew text actually says 'they speak with a heart and a heart.' It is the Hebrew way of describing double talk; it is saying one thing but meaning something completely different. There is no better example of this than in some of the moral debates of our world. Have you noticed how the language concerning abortion has changed over the years? Abortion is not murdering a baby any more, it is terminating a pregnancy or the baby is no longer called, 'baby' it is a foetus. It is now talked about as a woman's free choice issue etc.

It is the language of deception, if we have legalised the murder of babies in our country then why not call it that. We don't call it that because that is not acceptable in our country so we deceive people into thinking it is acceptable by calling it different names. Many a young girl has been

deceived into having an abortion by the language that is used and at least some of them have come to regret their decision. Is it no wonder that David cries out 'Help Lord?'

Now all of the above areas are equally true within the pulpit as well as every other area of life. There are people who call themselves Ministers who are lying, flattering their people and are deceiving them. They tell their people exactly what they want to hear; they take the clear teaching of the bible and twist it, in such a way that they deceive people. But this should not surprise us because this is exactly what people want today. People don't want to hear the truth of the Bible, they want lies, they love flattery, and thus they are deceived by people who give them what they want.

This is what Paul said would happen (2 Timothy 4:3-4). People do not want sound doctrine in church they want to be told what they want to hear. It is not any Minister's job to tell the people what they want to hear, it is His task to preach the truth as he finds it in God's Word, whether the congregation want to hear it or not, or whether they like it or not. We like David must cry out 'Lord Help.'

d) People boast (v 4) - Boasting is an outward expression of a proud heart, and here David reports the boasts of those surrounding him by listing three claims. "We will triumph with our tongues," "we own our lips" and "who is our master?" The first claim justifies the means by the end. Winning justifies deceit (ill drug taking in sport). The second claims autonomy, we have the right to say anything we please, often hidden in our day under the guise of free speech. The last boast means we are our own master, we are accountable to no one but ourselves therefore we can say what we like; we do not have to give an account to anyone.

This is the sort of boastfulness we have in our own land. The tabloid papers sell on the basis that the end justifies the means, so as long as they get a good story the means used does not matter, (even if it means deliberately deceiving people). They sell because they say what they like, even though very often it is a pack of lies, or at least it is economy of the truth. They write what they write apparently believing that the only people they answer to are their readers. The amount of people who buy these papers tells us something about what our nation thinks of truthfulness.

e) People honour vileness - Vileness means 'worthless' and 'shameful.' If you don't believe me then ask yourself, who is it in our country that is honoured today? It is not the moral, upright, godly people who are in the news but generally speaking it is the immoral people who make the headlines. What is it that sells books and papers today? It's not the good and wholesome things; it's the vile things. Listen to the morals in some of our pop songs (if you can hear the words) and you will discover that it's the vile that is honoured.

I liked the music of Queen and still do. But listen to the words of the song 'tie your Mother down.' Whatever you think of Cliff Richard, it was a disgrace the way the media tried to stop His 'Millennium prayer' from becoming Number One. Why? Because what is vile; is honoured among men.

Look at our television screens and you will see what is honoured in our day. It is not purity, integrity, honesty and faithfulness. That sort of thing does not make good television today. Why? Because vileness is honoured in our society. We need to cry, 'Lord Help!'

2. THE PROTECTION THAT THE PSALMIST FINDS (vs. 5-7)

Do you not feel insecure and isolated when you look at this world through the eyes of David. I do. What can we do when the godly and the faithful are rare? We can cry out to the Lord for help but there are some other things that we need to do as well.

a) Depend upon the Lord for protection (v 5 & 7) - God is not indifferent to all that goes on in this

world, He comes to protect those who are not proud and boastful, He comes to the needy. The thing for us Christians to do when we observe all that is going on in our world is not to take direct action to change things like the French Farmers but to depend upon the Lord. To recognise our needs to realise we are a desperately needed people, and cry out to him for help. When we do that this verse assures us that God rises up in order to protect His people from those people who malign us.

Isn't this what Jesus prayed for His disciples in the High Priestly prayer of John 17:15. Jesus did not say take them out of the world but He prayed for protection as they lived in this world. God answers this prayer as He keeps us pure within this wicked world. He enables us to remain truthful, honest and humble before Him. We are all greatly influenced far too much by this world, that's why we must cry 'Lord help' and depend upon Him to protect us from the evil influences within our world.

b) Depend Upon The Truthfulness Of His Word. (v 6) - The Psalmist describes the words of the Lord as flawless. He says it's like silver refined in the furnace seven times. Well silver that is refined 7 times is pure silver. So the word of the Lord is flawless. What a contrast with the words of men. Their words are full of lies, flattery deception and boastfulness, but the Lord's words are true, honest and straight. Therefore we who are Christians ought to depend upon His word rather than the words of mere men.

This world opposes the Word of God, because it doesn't like truth, but if we are going to remain godly and faithful we must depend upon His word. This obviously means believing it, when everyone else doubts it. It involves living it out in the midst of a world that loves lies, flattery deceitfulness and boastfulness. Finally it means remaining true to it, no matter what the scientists say, or the critics say. It is no good saying the words of the Lord are flawless unless by our lives we show that we really do believe it, and therefore defend it.

So how do we respond to this world, when it seems that the godly and faithful are rare:

- a) Depend upon the Lord for protection as we live for Him within this world.
- b) Depend totally and absolutely upon the flawless Word of God. What He says is true and all that He says concerning our future is true and reliable.

May God help us to trust Him?

Amen