

Psalm 12

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Preacher: Andrew Barnett

[0 : 00] Andrew, do you want to pray for us and read the passage? I'll hand over to you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Steve. Good evening, everybody. I am going to be reading from the ESV, because that's my own Bible and I brought it here today.

So some of the words may differ from the NIV when I read. But even God will make that known to you still, right?

So we've got a good God. He can speak in all languages, all right? Before I... Well, let me read it first and then I'll pray.

All right, Psalms 12, I'm going to read from the ESV. You'll follow it through in your Bibles. Then I'll pray. It reads, Save, O Lord, or your one says help.

Save, O Lord, for the godly one is gone. For the faithful has vanished from among the children of man. Everyone utters lies to his neighbor with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

[1 : 08] May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boast. Those who say, with our tongue we will prevail. Our lips are with us.

Who is our master or Lord over us? Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise, says the Lord. I will place him in a safety for which he longs.

The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. You, O Lord, will keep them.

You will guard us from this generation forever. On every side the wicked prowls, as vile is exalted among children of man. Amen, I pray.

Lord God, we do thank you for this opportunity to come again. To come and behold you, Lord. To come before your presence. To hear your word.

[2 : 05] I pray for myself. I pray for each and every one here, Lord. I pray that you would help me, Lord. That I would preach and teach your word faithfully according to his context. I pray for each and every one in here, Lord.

You will meet us and speak to us in a way that you connect with us. And help us to connect to you, Lord. To understand this text. To see how it applies to our lives, Lord.

That we would leave here, Lord. With that application. That we would continue to grow in our knowledge of you and in wisdom. So, Lord, we do give this time unto you.

Have your way and meet with us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, yeah. Thank you for this opportunity, Steve. For this time, yeah. You know, Psalms 12 is written by King David.

I know you're all sitting there. Most of you would have heard about King David. One of the popular statements that we know about him already. He said he was a man after God's own heart.

[3 : 03] God said a man after my own heart. You know. Though David was a man just like me. And just like you. He was fallible. We also know some of the wrongs and some of the things that he'd done.

But at the same time, he knew his God. That he knew God is a merciful God. And truly, when we come to him in repentance, he is forgiving. So, you know, David set a good example for us to study his life and know what God is like.

So, when we read this psalm, we do see it, right? You know, I just want to walk through and kind of have a little bit of an observation and try and interpret it to try and understand what life was like, what it looks like.

And then ultimately, hopefully, we can draw an application to see how what we hear, how we apply that to our life and how we can walk in it. That is the key of what Bible study is or, you know, when we come to church.

We want to walk away knowing how does that apply to our life? How do I walk in that? So, we're not just hearers, but we will be doers of God's word, yeah? Okay, so we see the first section there, verse 1 and 2.

[4 : 09] But before that still, right? So, the psalmist, right, he expresses what it is like to live in a society or, say, a community where the foundations seem destroyed, as we read there, you know?

He's talking about lies rule and those who rely on God and remain faithful to his covenant. They seem endangered species, you know? They seem lost at this moment.

It is not an individual lament, right? You know, for there is no I who speaks within this, yeah?

Rather, it's an expression of the sadness of the entire community, you know, for the godly anyway, you know, and the faithful.

Some prophets expressed similar concerns throughout the Old Testament. May quote some along the way. You would have heard prophets, you know, like, quote as well how, like, you know, there was limits in the godly people being about.

And the psalmist concerns about the destructive power of language. It reminds us of the book of James. James 3 talks about that. It warns us, particularly as Christians, you know, about the use of our words.

[5 : 13] It says in James 3, 6, you know, the tongue is also a fire, you know, a word of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the old person and sets on course their life on fire by hell.

So the tongue is something important that we should know as Christians, you know. We speak and we want to use it in a way that we use it to bless people, not curse, you know.

And unfortunately, I'd maybe just think, you know, the situation described in this psalm could seem, could seem at times familiar with some places here in London, you know, at times.

For an example, according to the 2021 census, it states 40.66% of London's population identify themselves as Christians.

This is a decrease from the previous census in 2011. You know, some consider Christianity a minority religion in England and Wales.

[6 : 15] And, you know, some people might consider is this is a reason why we still experience widespread injustice and inequalities. People living in awful conditions, you know, throughout the city, throughout the country, being treated inhumanely, you know, and valuing people based on their social status, even within some churches.

It can seem sometime like God's people have forgotten that they are called to be sought in life in a challenging situation and life right here in London. But, you know, let's look at this psalm with our eyes and fixed on Jesus, lest we too be overwhelmed by the flattery and deceitful words that we can often hear within our society.

So, within this psalm, again, there is a contrast between deceptive, twisted words of humans and the pure words of God, which we will see and we will hear.

So, we see in the first verses where David, you know, he calls out to God and kind of makes the case why he calls out to God. So, you know, whether in your Bible's help or my Bible, it says save, he calls out to God, you know, save, oh Lord, for the ungodly one is gone, you know.

So, the psalmist asks for, you know, the psalmist asks for help by describing the situation as the faithful or low committed people of God's covenant are no longer seen among God's people.

[7 : 43] And, the time of this lemon is not identified. We can't really, well, I can't identify, you know, when this psalm was written, you know, because, again, I know, indeed, David, you know, his monarchy at the time when he ruled and reigned, he sought to demonstrate, we could say, maybe a shadow of Christ, you know.

He kind of demonstrated what it might look like to have a godly kingdom and really honour Yahweh, their God at the time. So, we do know before he was actually placed upon the throne that, you know, King Saul tried to, you know, try to kill him, you know.

God put a spirit on him and he obviously became vexed and he wanted to kill him. And then he was on the run and he was on the run even up to the time when Samuel died. So, you know, maybe was it when Samuel died, he's probably in that place thinking, where are all the godly gone, you know.

Or maybe even again later on when he was on the throne and his son Absalom, you know, wanted to turf him off the throne, you know, and the people had given their heart to his son Absalom.

But that's only speculation. I'm only speculating because we don't know. But, you know, it's, you know, interesting to configure, to think, where was David at this time, you know.

[8 : 58] Where was he when these things were going on still, right, yeah. So, the time seemed distressed for Israel's community as God's covenant people. And we do take it God's covenant people, for him to say, save, oh Lord, the godly one is gone.

So, we take it, you know, Israel was God's people where they should uphold his confidence. So, there is an expectation to see them as a godly people, just like we as the church, you know. We have a confident relationship with Jesus Christ. So, there is an expectation to see us displaying the fruits of abiding in Christ and walking in the light of the gospel.

Again, just want to note that, you know, what we hear David says, it was echoed in 1 Kings 19.10 with Elijah. Remember when he ran away from Ahab and Jezebel, Elijah says that the people of Israel were forsaken your covenant.

He says, I, only I am left. But God obviously had other plans. He had 7,000 prophets stored elsewhere. We see Micah in chapter 7.2 where Micah says, likewise, the godly have perished from the earth and there is no one upright among mankind.

[10 : 14] So, you know, consider his thoughts at that time, what that might have looked like. We do know, again, through the Old Testament, that, you know, Israel and then Judah, you know, that monarchy, there was times when they continually strayed from just serving Yahweh, their God, and seeking to be like the nations.

And I wonder, you know, even some of us sometimes in society right here, you know, even as Christians sometimes, as we really look for that flame of the fire of the gospel to be stirred up amongst us when we look around and we look to see how we can get sharpened and look to see brothers and sisters who are really passionate for the Lord, that, you know, we're not just coming to church, but we're actually living out our Christian walk and our vocation.

And, you know, it is easily, in my mind, to consider sometime, you know, where I may feel zealous for the Lord. You know, I may look around and, you know, my mind may deceive me, but, you know, it might be hard at times in various other places to consider where are those passionate ones for God.

It may seem likewise that they too have vanished. But clearly, David was in a place where, you know, it was utterly, you know, yeah, they say they're devastating.

So, you know, with that, he calls out to the Lord. So we see the problem, what that is, right? That the godly one seems to be vanished. And, you know, possibly, as I said, the people may have broken confidence with God, right?

[11 : 50] And with that, you know, it's easy for godly people who really love the Lord and demonstrate the qualities of what it should look like. It could be easy at that time with so much deception, you know, so much double talk, as we see in verse 2, so much lying and flattering lips going on, that really the godly, you know, could be minimised.

That, you know, where all of these things are going on, they are magnified. That it can sometimes seem really hard to see where are the godly. And if there's somebody in here, you know, whether maybe outside of the Christian church community, maybe in their work environment, or they've not been engaging in fellowship, as we should do, as we're called to engage in regular fellowship, as we often do.

You know, sometimes it can bring you to a place where you obviously sometimes may feel a little bit overwhelmed and figure, you know, what is going on with your personal walk with the Lord?

And, you know, the things that take place in our society today, you know, flattering lips and double hearts, you know, double hearts, they speak with a double heart, meaning somebody would speak to you, but their intention is not what they're presenting to you at that instant and that moment when they speak to you.

They may communicate to you something that seems sincere, it's all for you or there for you, but maybe when they walk away, their intentions are something completely different, so they usually often have an ulterior motive.

[13 : 27] And what might that look like? Possibly, you know, in our secular society, we may well hear politicians. They give many promises, as I can hear, you know.

Often they tell the people that they will do many things, that once again, you know, I'm not trained as a politician, but I can have conversations with friends, and it seems pretty simple that we may figure the solution would be X, Y, Z, you know.

We just implement simple things to support the people or try and put something in place to solve the problems. So it's that kind of picture, you know, speaking things to win people over, complimenting people and saying things what people would like to hear, but their words are very empty and there's nothing in it.

So that's the problem. David calls out, you know, oh Lord, help me, save me, because he cannot see maybe, you know, people that loves the Lord and are standing for the Lord, which I would say possibly would encourage him.

When you're in a place where things seem a bit dull, we really do need someone there who is able to encourage us, to help us to have the right focus, to know that we're on the right trajectory, and the right trajectory is always keeping our eyes on Christ.

[14:46] But sometimes, you know, as believers, you know, if you don't see that amongst you, in the right community, you can also have a perception where, you know, you're the only one.

And it seems like this is what he's been communicating here. So we see in the next section that David goes on to continue to say about the, that may the Lord, you know, is request now, what he requests in verse three and four, right?

He makes a request. So he calls to the Lord, but verse three and four, we see a request now. He says, May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongues that makes great boasts.

Those who say with their tongue, we will prevail, our lips are with us. Who is master or who is Lord over us? So we see these people, they are proud, believing they can talk their way out of God's judgment.

They can say what they want to say. Again, you know, you will have illustrations in Isaiah 59, 13, and those are chapter four, verse one. Likewise, again, people with flattering lips who speaks many things.

[15:57] And remember again, Israel tended, as I said, to stray, but they were God people. But this is a severe time. It really is when we read in the text that, you know, they flatter with their tongue and their lips and they boast.

The Bible tells us, if anybody boasts, we should boast in Christ. We should boast in him alone. I believe it's in Jeremiah. We boast in the Lord because we know God's righteousness.

We know him. We know how God relates to his creation, to his people. So we can boast in that, that we have that relationship with a God who makes himself known to us and we know him and we know his ways.

So it's not a boast where we run about, but we take joy in that. We can boast that he makes himself known and we know him. Boasting outside of that is probably for the self, for the person, probably trying to get themselves some attention or to shed lights on maybe what they've done and trying to get, you know, some publicity or so forth.

So we see these people, you know, their tongue makes great boasts. They say many things. But the devastating thing here is, you know, when they say with their tongues, you know, we will prevail.

[17:13] So they are people that see themselves as masters as their own future. They probably feel that what they profess, what they proclaim, is what things will be.

And this is the case when people walk in darkness and do not know the living God. People do that. That's normal. Proverbs 14, 12 will tell us, there is a way that appears to be right to man or woman, but in the end, it leads to death.

So clearly, you know, without being in Christ Jesus, without knowing God, without knowing a creator who knows us better than ourself, we're left to try and examine and work out for ourselves who we are and what life is about.

And that often calls us to be in a place of pride through self-knowledge and puffed up philosophies that makes us feel that we are masters of our life and we know exactly where we are again.

But relying on his or her judgment, a human being chooses the way that seems best to them. But when faulty human judgment is the basis of a decision, things often end in disaster.

[18:24] And again, for them to claim here, you know, with our own lips, who is master over us, that is a shame because, you know, our prayer as a church is that people will come to a place where they will come to hear the gospel.

They will come to acknowledge that they have not just been coming about through evolution and just through, you know, just through time they've developed and the strongest, the of the strongest have survived.

But hopefully, they will hear the good news of the gospel and they will come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and their Savior. and hopefully, they'll come to a place of humility that they will know that there is a master over all.

So, you know, saying who is master or who is Lord over us, that is blindness. And, you know, as a church, again, we have that responsibility to help people to come to hear and know these truths. But sin and darkness leads people to be prideful and, you know, they often see nothing but what they know and what they imagine to be true.

[19 : 36] So, with these two verses, as I said, David, you know, he states the case, help me Lord or save me Lord. He speaks of the situation of what is going on, gives us a picture and all of that.

Then we see verse three and four, then, he requests from the Lord that the Lord would quiet all flattering tongues and boastful lips and so forth, you know, for the people that brag and self-proclaim all of these things.

But then, we see in verse, in verse five and six, we see by the Holy Spirit, David speaks now because, you know, it says, because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will arise, says the Lord.

I will place him in the safety for which he belongs. And this is something that we've seen already with God, right? Remember, we've seen this in Exodus chapter three, verse 79. God looks down. We know he already proclaimed it to Abraham, you know, what he was going to do to people in slavery. But we saw God look down. He saw when they was crying out, when there was bondage and pain, and he came down and delivered them.

[20 : 41] And likewise this, you know, we're not saying it's an automatic fulfillment because there is people, there's Christians who will still journey in this world, right here in London, on this planet, and they still will go through all of these sufferings around them.

And it is not an automatically given that God is going to take you out and put you in that place for which we long for. But we know ultimately he will honor his word and we will be in the place where we long for at a consummation when Jesus Christ comes back and he takes his church.

We will be with him. He will do that. So the aim is to know God's words, which we'll see shortly, that we remember these words, that as we struggle in life and as things are going on around us and we hear all kind of things that are deception, deceitful, flattery, and so forth, we will remember the truth of God's word.

And as we see here, as the spirits made David speak, you know, God really does have concern for the poor and the needy, the godly and the faithful.

God really watches out for them and he will honor them and those who trust in him. And this is what he will do. We will all be put in that place of safety, which we all long for, but we have to endure until that time comes.

[22 : 02] And verse 6, as we see there now, verse 6, you know, here we have God's confirmation that his word is flawless. His words are pure and undefiled.

They can be relied upon and God's word cannot lie. It's impossible. Metaphorically speaking, the psalmist says, God's word is like silver purified seven times. I believe silver can only be refined 99.99.9, not 100%.

But that is a purist silver anyway that you can do. I think maybe your Bible might say like gold as well, but you know, Peter told you about in the furnace, the fire as well. So you get rid of all the trust that it is flawless, it is pure.

You cannot get any purer. So metaphorically speaking, the psalmist says that his word is like that. So we associate seven with God's perfection or his completion, you know, yeah, so we, we assnuate, um, that seven like that.

Stating God's word is complete and we, and it can be taken as truth. We can rely upon what God has said and trust he will do what he says he will do.

[23 : 04] Man's words have avarial motives and contrast to God's truthful words. Human's mouth and words always find ways to justify themselves while failing to do what is right.

But God's word is true. God's word is not flawed. And as believers, as Christians, that is something which is paramount for us to know and understand.

We need to get to a place through studying, through reading, through fellowship and we understand God speaks to us through the Bible.

Just like the pastor will preach to you, just like I'm speaking to you. God will meet with you personally and speak to you. It's like if I say to you, right, tomorrow I'm going to take you all out for a dinner and you trust me because, you know, I really made it known to you that I really will take you all out for a dinner, right?

Someone who's not in here, right, who didn't hear that and when you go out and you say, listen, tomorrow Andrew's going to take us out for a meal, that person might think that's too good to be true.

[24 : 07] He's going to really take us all out for a meal. You would know that because you heard me say it and you trust me and I've made it known to you that I'm genuine but someone who's not here, they may have a little doubts and wonder is it true or what and that's just like God's word.

We need to spend time with God ourself that we hear him speak and we get that first-hand experience. It's good that it gets preached that I'm saying it but it will really encourage you when we get it first-hand by sitting with God and he impresses that upon our hearts.

So his word cannot fail and that's what God himself has just said in there. Then likewise, verse 8, the words of the Lord are pure. Yeah, we said that.

Then the last two verses now to conclude, you, O Lord, will keep them. You will guard us or you will guard them from this generation forever.

So verse 7 backs up what the Lord has said. His word is pure. His word cannot fail. So likewise, a psalmist concludes and make that known that you, O Lord, will keep them.

[25 : 12] And that's a message for us today, right? What the Lord has promised us, he will keep. He cannot fail. And just to conclude, to have a look at all of this, right, yeah? Jesus often called out the teachers of the law who spoke words of flattery, who spoke deceptions and so forth.

So Jesus, you know, he mirrored this. He actually went through similar things in his days where people were speaking lie, deception, saying things about him. He had a demon. You know, they didn't believe him and everything.

So Luke chapter 20, verse 46 to 47, right? You know, he talks about the law, teachers of the law, the scribes, who loved to greet with respect and devote with those houses while defending the poor. So Jesus always spoke about those who spoke things was not contrary to what God's word had told them to do. But he was always usually defending the poor. Eventually his enemies, his enemies, right, with their evil, deceitful words surrounding him as they did David.

As Matthew 26, 59 to 60 told, the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

[26 : 27] And then John 18, verse 38, you know, Pilate asks him, what is truth? You know, he said to Jesus. With this, he went out and told the Jews. He find no reason to charge Jesus.

But yet still, Jesus was crucified amongst all these lies. Though many people had come forward to say deceitful things against him, none of it was proven that Jesus was still crucified.

When Jesus sold those, right, who, who, who, those who trusted him to protect him, there are no loopholes. There is no fine print when it comes to God's word. It's impossible for God to lie.

So if we trust in the true words of Jesus, every line word spoken against us will never ultimately succeed because God is true and every man's a liar.

And concluding with all of that, as David said all of this, but yet still, it ends on the last verse. He was still witnessing on every side the wicked parole as vileness is exhorted among the children of man.

[27 : 35] This is a situation that continued to live out and play out amongst him. But we see those key verses in the middle that God himself revealed what he would do.

And it's the same today through Jesus Christ as we journey through this world. The living word of God has come down in flesh to dwell among mankind, to give us the hope that we all long for, to acknowledge our brokenness, to acknowledge our flaws, to acknowledge our need for a saviour. We cannot save ourselves. Jesus has took our wrongdoings and our sin upon himself. He has stepped in that place for us that anybody who turns to him, who places their trust in him, shall not be put to shame.

And that is God's word. And finally, Psalms 18, 13 just, you know, backs all of that. It reads, This God, his way is perfect.

The word of the Lord proves true. He is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. So you see, no matter what is going on in our life, he is a shield.

[28 : 48] So we just need to take hold of his word, stand on his word, believe in his promises, even if we're still going through hardship, God is still faithful.

Eventually, he will take us to that safe place which he knows that we all long for. So, let me pray with that. Father God, I thank you for your word, Lord.

I thank you in the midst of all that we experience, Lord, in this life, in this world, in this great city, Lord. I thank you, Lord, that, you know, we have wonderful stories of your goodness and how you protect us, Lord, and how we are here to this very day.

But, Lord, when the trials and the storms of life come, Lord, when we find ourselves in places that we may be overwhelmed, Lord, and our vision may not be as focused as it should be, Lord, I pray that you would open our eyes to your perfect words and your perfect truth and help us that our hearts would know that your words always prove truth, because you cannot lie.

Help us that we will see Jesus, the word of God made flesh, who rescues us from our enemies. So, Lord, be glorified, be magnified, Lord.

[30 : 03] Lord, bless your people and may we be encouraged through what we just heard. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.