

Alone Among Liars

Psalms Series

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Bible Text: Psalm 12

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If you listed out the different difficulties that are particularly heavy to walk through in life, you could probably come up with a lot of different things on the list: financial issues or job issues or things like that. But when trust is broken, there is a particular spiritual heaviness that is associated with that and those of you that have gone through broken relationships, maybe even a broken marriage, know that when trust is broken, when you find that you've been lied to and things have been misrepresented to you, it is a particularly heavy spiritual trial to go through and sometimes you feel like you're standing alone in the midst of it and you wonder if you're not a little bit crazy when everybody around you seems to be enjoying their deceit and dishonesty and all of that. Psalm 12 helps us with that. Psalm 12 is a Psalm about being alone among liars, being in the midst of a deceitful world and discouraged by the hypocrisy that is all around and not having the ability or capacity to do anything about it. I think that by the time we're done, Psalm 12 is going to be a great encouragement to us. So much of what we see in the news even in the past day or two is about broken trust without assigning right or wrong to whoever is involved in the situations. There's an obvious lack of trust that people are lying to one another and we find ourselves as Christians in the midst of that hostile environment. Psalm 12 helps us with that immensely.

Now, I want to give you a little sense of the structure of Psalm 12 because it's really going to help you see the message overall. Psalm 12 is like a master painting in a frame. The point of the frame is that it simply sets the context in which the painting is displayed. That's the nature of Psalm 12 here. The frame sets the context but the painting is the center of attention. What I mean by that, is verses 1 and 8 say similar things and even use similar language and they set the context in which the Psalm is to be understood. Look at verse 1 with me where it says, "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men." Notice that phrase there at the end of the first verse, "the sons of men." Keep that in your mind as you go to the end of verse eight and you see that, "The wicked strut about on every side When vileness is exalted among the sons of men." So there is this deceit and this vileness that we'll talk about more in just a moment but that is the frame of the Psalm. That is what holds it together but just like you don't go into a museum to look at the frame of a Rembrandt, so the main focus of this Psalm is not to be on the vileness and the deceitfulness of men but rather it's found in what's in the center. Look at verse 5 where the Lord speaks and says, "'Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,' says the LORD; 'I will set him in the safety for which he longs.'" The certainty of God's word in the midst of this framing idea of the deception of the world is what we're supposed to

be looking at. This is what is supposed to draw our attention. As you go through the Psalm, that center verse jumps out at you when you see the Lord declaring his truth in the midst of the deceit that David is complaining about in this Psalm.

So deception by men frames the Psalm but the word of God, the Scripture, the truthfulness and reliability of God is the center, it is the theme. It is the take-away to Psalm 12 and so with that in mind, let's take a closer look at the text. We're going to break it down in three major points here this evening. The appeal, first of all in verses 1-4. The answer in verse 5. Then the assurance in verses 6-8. The appeal, the answer and the assurance. That's going to be our outline for this evening. So once again, we come to a Psalm where David is disturbed. David is observing the world around him and he calls out to the Lord for assistance. Look at verse 1 with me as we consider the appeal. David opens with a short but powerful cry for God's assistance. He says,

1 Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.

I love the brevity of his prayer and I love the urgency of this prayer. It is so simple. It is so direct. You can see how much his heart is engaged in what he says simply with the crying out, "Help, Lord." It's just a short, brief prayer and it shows us something important about our walk with God in that just in the simplicity and the brevity of that prayer. We don't have to consider that only when we have extended prayer times as those things which actually count in prayer with God and, you know, you have a half hour of devotion time in the morning or whenever. Scripture teaches us, Scripture shows us, Scripture illustrates for us that there are appropriate times to simply cry out in the briefest of prayers, "Help, Lord," in the midst of a difficult conversation, in the midst of striking circumstances where you don't have time to get down on your knees. It is an appropriate and well received cry on the heart to simply say, "Lord, help right here. I've got to get right back to it." We're not always able to devote an extended period of attention but that brief cry for help is one that knocks on heaven's door and God comes to answer. That's what David is doing here. So don't despise short prayers as you go through your day. If you suddenly find yourself in the midst of conflict, "Help, Lord," is a nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence. And don't be afraid to pray that way. There is an intimacy to that. There's an acquaintance with the ways of God. There is a familiarity that we have, that we can rely on and go to him in that way.

Well, that's a pretty simple prayer and now we're going to see in verse 1 why it is that David is crying out for help in this place and in this Psalm. You see that he's discouraged. Verse 1, "Help, LORD." Why? "For the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men." The godly man is someone who is steadfastly loyal to God's word, steadfastly loyal to the person of God. In the New Testament era as we are in today, someone who is faithful to Christ. David says, "Lord, help me because as I look out on the world around me, these kinds of men, these faithful men are fading into oblivion. I'm finding that there is no one that I share a common spirit with. There is no one that is of a common mind, of a common heart, that loves your truth and wants to be faithful and obedient. Instead, what's happening is, there is a rising swelling tide of

ungodliness that is starting to dominate the course and determine the direction of the world as I now see it. God, help me. This is uncomfortable. This pinches me. This is contrary to what my heart desires. Deceitful men and sin are now flourishing. They are having their way with the world and there is no one to stop them and their character is on display and their character is appalling."

Look at verse 2. David describes what he sees around him and the men who are coming into influence. What are these men like? Well, he might as well of been writing in 2014 for as precise as he speaks to the culture today and you see once again in a writing that was given 3,000 years ago, you see the timeless applicability of God's word that it describes today even though it was written 3,000 years ago. That's a mark that we're looking at the very word of God. Scripture is timeless. Scripture is ready to be applied at any time and its speaks to us with relevance today. Look at verse 2, he says,

2 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

David as a discerning, discriminating, thoughtful, spiritual man observes the nature of human language, of human relationships, of the character of men and he does not like what he sees. He sees people who have mastered the art of smooth speech. They smile in public but when they get into private, they draw out the knives. There is the smile on their face that is a mask that hides the wickedness of their heart and the evil intentions that they have as they interact with one another. David says, "I can't trust anyone around me because I see what they're like, Lord. Help! Help, this is such a miserable environment in which to live. These deceitful hypocritical people are making life miserable for me." The language that he uses here, he says, "They speak falsehood with one another." It's just so empty what they say. With flattering lips and it says here in our English translation "and with a double heart they speak." It's very interesting in the original language. That phrase reads "with a heart and a heart they speak." It has the idea that they have two hearts inside them. They speak out of one heart but they've got another heart that is also operating here that is contradicting what they say when they speak kind words and they flatter for the sake of advantage. There are two different things going on inside them and it's evident. They say one thing and they mean another. Our turn of phrase would be "they speak out of both sides of their mouth." That's the idea that David is expressing here. They are double-hearted. They are double-minded. You can't believe what they say because they have other things going on. They have, you could say, a hidden agenda. David is crying out and saying, "Lord, I live among people who can't be believed in what they say. They have a hidden agenda. They say one thing. They flatter me but they have evil motives when they are about it." David is crying out against it all. He hates this environment and he asks the Lord to intervene.

Look at what he says in verse 3,

3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; 4 Who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

Don't miss, I mean this in a construction way, I have to be careful how I express myself here, don't miss in verse 3 the spiritually violent nature of David's prayer. When I say spiritually violent, I mean that it is aggressive. It is deeply profoundly moving what he says. David here when he says, "May the Lord cut off all flattering lips," he is taking a stand of opposition against the prevailing environment in which he lives. He is making a godly statement that, "I reject the very world in which I live. Lord, cut it all off. Cut their lips off. Put an end to the hypocrisy, the dishonesty, the double agendas because, Lord, I don't want it to be this way. I don't like it this way. I am a lover of truth. I desire truth in my innermost being and I am surrounded by men who speak empty words of vanity, who are flatterers and you can't believe what they say. O God, help and intervene and cut their lips off."

One day still future to us, it's my delight and privilege as a teacher of the word of God to tell you, David's prayer is going to be fully and completely answered. Look at the book of Revelation 21. David's prayer still waits its final consummation but God will answer this prayer with utter finality for all of eternity. Revelation 21:8 says, "For the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Wow. There is so much for us to think about and recognize in terms of what's going on. 3,000 years ago, a man of God was assaulted by the evil environment in which he lived and in the integrity of his heart and his commitment to the truth of God, he says, "Lord, put an end to this." While Psalm 12 here gives us a sense of God's answer and then ultimate assurance that we're still going to see, we find that God will answer that prayer and here we are 3,000 years later and that prayer has still not been completely answered. In fact, evil flattering lips are still abounding in our day which I hardly need to tell you but we see in the progress of revelation that God fully intends to answer this prayer. God will put liars to an end. One day, beloved, and what a sweet day it's going to be for those of us that love truth. What a great day it's going to be with those of us who despite our sinfulness aspire after a life of integrity and love God's word and love God's truth. One day, one day, one sweet day, all of those corrupting voices are going to be silenced and all that's going to be left for us as the people of God is the sweet enjoyment of our God, of our Christ in an environment of glory and in truth where all of this lying nonsense is going to be put to an end. God will be faithful to answer David's prayer of integrity from 3,000 years ago today. His prayer is still going to be fulfilled. David here when he says, "Lord, cut off all of their flattering lips," David is showing that he is praying in perfect, consistent harmony with the intentions of God for the direction of human history and God will one day still answer his prayer and those of us that love Christ and know him are going to be on the rejoicing side of the triumph, the final victory of truth over lies. That's going to be a great day.

But it's still awaits its ultimate fulfillment. David here has seen the hypocrisy of society and he asks God to end it. One commentator says that this prayer in verse 3 is quote, "The burning of a righteous indignation uttering itself in a fervent prayer for the uprooting of the whole kingdom of lies." David is saying, "Lord, there is this huge, massive repulsive weed that has taken over the garden. Take it and pull it up by its root

and cast it aside so that it will shrivel up and die." That's how deep, that's how passionate David's love of truth was and when he prays this way, beloved, when we see this pattern laid out for us in this beautiful Psalm 12, what we need to see is that David who is writing this Psalm under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was simply a mouthpiece for the heart of God himself and God will one day put an end to the things that we find around us so repulsive. And yet, here in the today of this life for us just as it was for David, David saw men of high rank and position who were arrogant and who were defiant toward God in ways that for the humble believing heart are hard to comprehend. We almost want to put our hands over our ears so that we don't hear this kind of blasphemy and this arrogance and this boastfulness.

But this is what David sees and he describes it in verse 4. This is what he's praying for God to cut off and he says, "Lord, stop these tongues who boast of great things," and then he expands on it. He describes what they say, "Who have said," these are the ones that David wants to be silenced, "Who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?'" Wow! You just want to step back before the lightning strikes these people. Are you kidding me? Who is Lord over your lips? They are speaking as if they are not accountable to anyone and therefore they have the freedom to say and lie whatever way they want to. No one earthly is stopping them. There is no restraint and obviously these are men of influence because they look around and they say, "Who can stop me? Who is lord over me? Who can hinder me?" And it's obvious also that these are clever, intelligent, powerful men whom David is describing. These are men who alternate between flattery and bullying. They alternate between boasting and lying. They use whatever verbal means are necessary to achieve their goals of power, influence or riches. Whatever they want, they use their tongue to advance it.

It's too obvious of a joke, I guess, to say it sounds like some attorneys we've known in the past, right? You know, or politicians, not that all politicians are bad or that all attorneys are bad. I have a certain sense of trying to protect that a little bit from my past but this is the way to think about it or media consultants or the spin doctors. People who use and we see this all the time especially in election cycles, people who are using their tongues to just spin facts in whatever way benefits them and trying to influence people without regard to what's really true, what's really righteous, what would really show integrity. As long as their interest of power is advanced, they'll say whatever is necessary to accomplish it. It's that spirit of accomplished, polished men that David is praying against. They are confident that in their cleverness they can say as they please without consequence.

That was David's world. That's our world. There are a couple of questions I want to ask you to kind of lead into the next point. First of all, let's be candid with each other. The reality, the nature of this world and those of you who have experienced this personally in close relationships understand that we're not simply talking about a social, political, national phenomenon. You've been burned by people that you trusted, by people that you loved. You've been burned by people just like this in the course of your life. The trajectory of all of your hopes and aspirations has been broken by people just like this. You say, "Lord, how long? Lord, stop. Help me in this." And it just seems like at times

that maybe the heavens are made of brass because your voice bounces back to you and nothing changes and it's discouraging and your heart is heavy and it's hard to trudge on another step, let alone to make it through another day. You know what that's like. Find here in Psalm 12 the fact that the inspired Psalmist, the sweet harpist of Israel is right there with you. David, the man after God's own heart, has walked in your shoes. David has expressed the longings and the frustrations and the hurt of your heart right here in Psalm 12. A godly man went before you. A godly man who himself also was isolated and alone and burdened by what was around him. And 3,000 years later, the pulse of his heart is still beating to encourage us and to help us see and to point us toward the answer that we're going to see in just a moment. So you take heart if I just described you. You're in good shoes. You're in good company. You may be alone in this life right now but you're in company with the man of God who God saw fit to include this Psalm in the 66 books of the Bible.

But let me ask another question by way of transition here. A little more broadly applicable perhaps. Just as you see this environment in which we live that we've been describing tonight: do you find yourself just kind of increasingly uncomfortable in the world in which you live? When you see the manipulation in the media? When you see deceitful people? When you see your neighbors cheating on their spouses? Maybe you see it in your workplace. You see the rise of immorality and no one even cares. You say, "That's wrong," but you're powerless to do anything about it. Look, that tension that you feel, that revulsion that you have in an environment that you can't control is the mark of something really, really good. It means that what is pulsating in your spiritual veins is the lifeblood of truth. The reality of salvation is motivated and finds expression in the desires of your heart and the tensions that you feel against this are simply an indication that you as a believer in Christ are walking in the midst of an environment to which you do not belong. That is a ground of great encouragement to realize that the reason that you are at tension with your environment, the reason that this is not a comfortable place, the reason that we feel like pilgrims here, is because praise be to God for his deliverance of us from our sins and the Lord Jesus Christ, he has translated us out of that world environment and put in us a desire and a love for truth which means we no longer fit with the environment in which we find ourselves living. That tension, that sense of being squeezed, that sense of isolation that everyone around, no one shares my passion for truth. That sense of isolation is just the light of God, the truth of God emanating out of your heart and shining a light on the darkness around you and the fact that you feel tension in that is an indication of, "Yeah, you don't belong to this world. Praise God. This is an indication that you belong to the God of truth." Otherwise the lies wouldn't matter. Those of you who were converted in your adult life, weren't you part of the problem? Weren't you one of the liars? Weren't you one of the hypocrites? But we've been translated out of that. We've been saved out of that. We've been changed. We've been made new. The old things have passed away. Behold all things have become new. Beloved, all I'm trying to do is to help encourage you in the midst of that tension to realize that while the tension makes us uncomfortable in this life, the tension is a sign that something else much more important and of eternal consequence and value is real and active in your heart. If you feel tension in this world of deceit, take heart, it's because you don't belong to this world.

And so as we join with David in crying out and appealing to God to help as we see these things progressing, we realize that we have a friend in the Scriptures to identify with us and to encourage us to go yet another day. Now, David has expressed his appeal in verses 1-4. Let's look at the answer in verse 5. He's cried out, "Help, God. Help, Lord," right in verse 1. "Lord, help!" Verse 5, God in his faithfulness answers him. In verse 5, God is answering with a promise of ultimate safety, of ultimate help. Look at what he says in verse 5. Our God who is a friend to the lowly and the brokenhearted. Our God who is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. That God is the one who is answering here in verse 5. That God of truth. That God who hates all liars. That God who loves the humble, brokenhearted, simple believer in him, in Christ, that God is the one who is speaking and answering here now. Look at the way that he takes the side of the afflicted. He takes the side of the one who is in need. Verse 5, he says, this is God speaking now, notice the quotation marks,

5 "Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise," says the LORD; "I will set him in the safety for which he longs."

Finally there is a spotlight, a bright shining spotlight of hope in the midst of the darkness that has consumed David's thinking. Finally after silence, after allowing this situation to grow and flourish, God says, "The time will come when I will arise and I will act. What you see in this deceitful world is temporary. This is not the permanent eternal state of affairs. I will not allow it to go on forever. I will not allow," God says in his holiness, "my righteousness will not permit me to allow their triumph to go unchecked forever. I have my eye on that hurting soul and I will act to help him. I will place him one day in a place of safety." You will not, suffering Christian, you will not, discouraged believer, you will not, brokenhearted friend on the receiving end of an abusive trust, you will not be left in that said broken state permanently because God hears the groaning of the needy. He hears the cry of the afflicted. He promises you. He whose word cannot be broken, he who is truth incarnate says, "I will set him in the safety for which he longs." In the midst of the tension, in the midst of the betrayal, brother or sister in Christ, in the midst of that, comes the shining promise of God that he sees that affliction, he cares about the discouragement that it provokes and he promises you based on his own character for he can swear by no one higher than himself, he says, "I will set you in safety."

We look at that verse and we see that our groans, our deep-throated "ugh" is heard in the halls of heaven. God considers the weights on our hearts and cares and responds. While we're oppressed by a world that is bigger and stronger than us now, we find in God our help and our refuge that gives us the strength and the hope and the motivation to persevere. This verse, as I said earlier, is the focus of the Psalm. Here's what I want you to see at least at this point in the message as if everything else I didn't really care if you saw that or not. That's not what I'm saying. Here is what I want you to see: David in these first four verses has been under a sense of oppression by the words of the wicked. What you have in verse 5 now is a powerful, sharp contrast that sets in opposition over against the deceit of society, over against the deception that has been practiced on you, over against all of that is set the sure, true, perfect word of God and the deception of the world

simply becomes that which points our attention to that which is perfectly true. While men are liars, God is not. He is a God of truth and he speaks by the power of his own righteousness and declares, "I will triumph over all of this and I will protect you in the process." You have the words of the wicked that we see and hear with our physical senses. We have in the word of God, the ultimate answer to all of that deception. They are diametrically opposed to one another and our refuge against the deception is found in the truth of God's word.

It is so different. Scripture is so different from the word of man. Men flatter us to gain an advantage, God's word doesn't flatter us, it convicts us in our sins. It confronts us with our unrighteousness. Men lie to us and break their promises as a matter of routine. God's word does not lie to us. His word is truth. Eternal and unchanging truth. A rock of Gibraltar which the sea of men's deception cannot wash away. Men change and display different colors at different times to us. God's word does not change but it endures forever. Brothers and sisters, I say it to you once again. It seems like it always comes down to this, doesn't it? To realize that the Bible that you hold on your lap is the answer to everything that is wrong in this world should cause you to love this word, to treasure it, to read it, to want to know it even more and more and to, as it were, hold it close to your heart because this alone is the answer to the deceptive environment in which we live. What a contrast. What a difference. It even pierces your own deceptive heart. Living and active and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, and dividing bones and marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. What a great, powerful, wonderful truth we have in God's word and that is the focus here in verse 5. God has spoken and all of a sudden everything else that is around in our environment fades into insignificance by comparison. That is the point, the treasure of this answer. God is saying, "I hear. I see. And the lies will not last and those who trust me will find ultimate safety."

Do you think that there is any possibility that we're going to question whether God fully delivered on that promise when we are around the throne of Christ in heaven forever? No. No. We have here in verse 5, we have the seed of the ultimate promise, the full fruit of which we're still going to see future to us today. We're going to find in heaven the safety, the perfection, that God hints at here in verse 5. And the point is this in the context of Psalm 12: the promise of God is to draw our heart like a magnet away from our fear and discouragement over the environment around us and lift us up to a trust and confidence as we look to the future, as we hope and anticipate and wait for that promised safety that God will most certainly one day give to us because his word cannot fail. He can't lie to us. Titus 1:2, God who cannot lie.

So God's promise steps into the dark environment and changes the whole perspective on things. Now look, these are no empty words. What we're talking about here, what's in front of us in the lines of Psalm 12 is that which totally transforms life. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, you don't have to spend your 70 years on this planet living in fear of who's lying, of what politicians are doing behind closed doors, what kind of silly conspiracies are going on that you don't know about. You don't have to be agitated at the latest screaming headlines on the Internet or on the Fox News Channel. That was

never meant to be; none of those things were ever intended to be that which was the controlling viewpoint of the disposition of the Christian toward life in this world. Look, look: what God says here in verse 5 is true and we are to build our lives on it. We are to frame everything and filter everything through this kind of promise from the word of God. He has promised us he hears our groanings. He has promised us that he sees the devastation of the afflicted. He has promised us that there is ultimate safety for us. While people flout their sin and mock the church, the true church, and attack the Scriptures, we don't have to get swept up in the emotion of that. We are meant to be those who take God simply at his word, who trust him for that and our heart is rested in that, rested in this promise of safety, this promise of his control, the promise that he sees and to be satisfied with that. That's how you and I are supposed to live. We're not to be tossed about by new waves of doctrine in the church. We're not to be tossed around by screaming headlines on television. We're meant to see through that, to transcend it and to have a settled disposition of confidence and trust because we know the word of God, we know the God of the word and we say, "I'm going to rest in his promise and not be swept up by the hysteria and the deception and the hypocrisy which marks the environment in which I live." That's it.

Some of us are hearing things like this for the first time really in our lives, this settled confidence in the sovereignty of God and we need the information to grow toward it. But some of us know it but still get agitated. Here's your opportunity to grow. Look at verse 5 with me. Look at it on the pages of your Bible. Put your finger on it once more. "Now I will arise," the Lord will act. "I will set him in the safety for which he longs." The spirit of that verse is where, and the assurance that it promises is where, your controlling attitude toward life is to be found. We as Christians have to stop being afraid. We have to stop being so worked up over politics and violence around us. We have to let this promise of our Lord set the tone for how we live. He didn't save us primarily for this life and what this life for us is supposed to be is a manifestation of trusting his promise, believing his word and not getting distracted by the stuff that is around us. Do you know what? That would be really cool if we lived that way. Wouldn't it be great to not be so worried about everything that is around us and just simply take God at his word and say, "I'm under his hand. It's going to be safe in the end and therefore I am content. I'm not worried. I'm not upset about all this other stuff." Why wouldn't we want to live that way? Well, that's what we're supposed to do. We're not meant to be social agitators and we're not meant to be agitated by social things. We're supposed to simply look at our Lord and take him at his word and say, "Lord, that's enough. What you have promised satisfies my heart completely."

So here's the opportunity for us to grow in our dark society. Point 3: the assurance. The assurance, as we're going to move into the final three verses here. Here's the outworking in the text of what I was just describing in that bit just now. David trusts God's promise while wicked men still surround him. Note that. The wicked men haven't left but David having heard the answer from God, having heard the declaration of his word, now his whole perspective has changed. Verse 6, he now speaks with assurance not praying with fear and agitation and he builds on, he affirms what God just said in verse 5. In verse 6 he says,

6 The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. 7 You, O LORD, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever.

This is a statement of absolute confidence. First of all, confidence in God's word and secondly, confidence in God's ultimate deliverance. David having heard the word of God, now in verse 6, as it were, says amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. God has spoken and he says in verse 6, what God has said is utterly pure. It's like silver that has been put through the fire seven times in order to burn off all of the dross and what is left is absolute purity. No admixture of error. No admixture of dirt. It's all burned away. In contrast to the empty words of sinful men, God's words are as pure as fully refined silver. His truth is precise. It is trustworthy. David says, "God has just spoken and his word is true." And so he's adding his amen to what was said in verse 5 and here's the way that we're to think about it, beloved, here's how confident and how informed and how much this controls our perspective on life. This is the way that you and I are supposed to think: God's truth is absolutely undiminished even though we are surrounded by profanity and pride. What God has promised, he will perform. God can be trusted even when men cannot. When we're resting in God's word, we step back and we look at what's around us and we look at the environment and the boasts of men no longer impress us. Their threats do not intimidate us. We discern, we see through their flattery and manipulation. We're trusting not in what men say or what men can do and we're not agitated by those who report on it. We're anchored. We're strong because of this book. And in sweet love and submission, we kiss this book again and again because we realize what a treasure it is to us. It changes everything. When you trust God's word, you're free from the fear of man and one other thing. If I had five minutes to speak to the totality of the Christian world, this is what I would say: God's word frees us and compels us so that we don't play the victim because we're not treated right by the world's system. Christians should never be playing the victim card because we have in our hand the Victor card. So we don't waste our time seeing ourselves as the present or future victim of hostile forces. That is not the mindset of the child of God. If we believe God's word, we have confidence even when liars make life difficult.

Look at verse 7. David is affirming his confidence in what God just said. "You, O LORD, will keep them." You will keep your words. You will keep your promises. Every time you're tempted to fear, every time that you're agitated over what you see going on around the world, you should fight that, you should resist it with this thought, "O God, you will keep your word. O God, you will keep your promise. You will preserve us from this wicked generation forever. I walk through in the midst of the valley of death. I walk through a hostile environment but, O God, I walk in the midst of your hand." Christ said, "No one will pluck them out of my hand." "God, I'm in your hand. Why am I afraid? God, I repent of my fear and I'm just going to stake my whole life on your promise and I'm going to live in confidence because I'm just going to take you at your word." No more fear, beloved, even though the environment hasn't changed.

Look at verse 8. David has come full circle now. In verse 8 he's not contradicting this sense of confidence. He simply recognizing the reality in which he still lives. He has received these promises. He has affirmed them. He is assured but there is still going to be this environment to walk through until we reach glory. Verse 8,

8 The wicked strut about on every side
When vileness is exalted among
the sons of men.

He comes back to the sons of men. Sinful men. They express their vileness in their cheap talk, their shameful excess and their proud display of their sin. You can't help but think about Hollywood's self-congratulating award ceremonies. You can't help but think about gay pride parades in the light of things like this. Because they have completely misinterpreted the forbearance and patience of God, they strut about in their displays of sin as if there will be no accountability. David sees through all of that here at the end of this Psalm. He has the certainty of God's promise. He knows the ultimate outcome and he can speak honestly about it now without fear. He sees wicked men strutting and displaying their sin, boasting in their hypocrisy and their deception. But beloved, here's what he's doing and here's how we're meant to live: he looks out on all of that with a mature serenity that is based on God's word. David accepts the tension between his holy desires and the temporary remnant of this life in the midst of a hostile world. We're not going to eliminate that tension but here's what we do with it: the tension rather than making us aggravated, agitated and aggressive, the tension rather points us back to the source of our hope. We bounce off of that and come back to the truth of God's word and say, "Oh yeah, my life is rooted in truth. I can accept their temporary prosperity because God is going to have the final word and he's got me in his hand and I am in a place of safety even in the midst of this."

Beloved, I want you to prosper spiritually in this wicked world. I do. I want you to be courageous. I want you to be strong. God's word calls us to serenity and Psalm 12 teaches us how to live in the midst of a lying world. We don't collapse in discouragement. The deceivers simply become the catalyst for us to go back to Scripture and remember our hope. Beloved, I'm almost done here. On Tuesday nights, you know, one night you're going to show up and I'm going to preach two sermons back-to-back because on Tuesday nights man, I'm ready to go two hours. I'll give you advance warning if I ever do that. But beloved, here's the thing: we should accept and embrace the fact that as true believers in Christ, we are going to be in the minority in this world in which we live. We are not going to always be people of influence that the world looks to. Most often we will not. That's what Jesus said. He said, "The way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it." We don't find our confidence and our hope and our motivation in the fact that the world congratulates us and we fit in here. Our motivation and our encouragement is found in the exact opposite. We find our motivation to persevere in the fact that we don't fit in here. We don't belong in this environment. We don't fit. There is a reason why we feel like pilgrims. It's because our citizenship is in heaven and when we get to heaven, then we're going to be at home and then we're going to be in the majority. For now, we wait and we trust God's promise and we when we feel the assault, we pray to him, "O

Lord, help," and the tension, the pressure, simply brings us back to our home on earth, the pages of God's word.

Bow with me in prayer.

Father, help us to look beyond this world to the absolute. Help us as we study your word to trust your promises. We believe you when you say that you will destroy the wicked. Father, they will fall from the heights of their arrogance when you step up to act. Lord, when you do, you will not lose track of the fateful. Lord, we know this outcome is certain. We've said it so many times here on Tuesday nights. We know that this outcome cannot be any different than what has been described because your word says in Psalm 1:6 that "the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish." Lord, help us to be numbered among the righteous, those who have put their faith in Christ for salvation from sin, those who seek to be faithful to you as a result. Those of us that are in that camp, Lord, we thank you that you know and see our way in every detail and that your hand is upon us to protect us and to deliver us to the glory that you appointed for us before the foundation of the world. Praise God. Thank you for that.

Father, give us the patience, the discernment and the trust that as we see wickedness flourish around us not to be discouraged by that but to just rest in the fact that the way of the wicked will perish. You will one day act. You will one day cut off all flattering lying lips and truth will prevail and we will be found on the side of God those of us who know Christ. O God, for each man, woman and child in this room and within the sound of this voice in subsequent days, free us from our fascination and our fear of this world that we might live in the realm of this assurance, this confidence, that banks everything exclusively on your pure word and your trustworthy promises because, Father, as we live that way, we're going to be weaned from our love for this world and our affections will be set on you and on heaven and we'll be lights in the world and the salt of the earth as we do. Enrich our hearts. Ennoble our hearts. Help us, Father, in our thoughts and words to manifest that we take you at your word and therefore we are at peace even in the midst of the tension of walking in this fallen world. Help us to that and we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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