

## “The Righteous Few”

### Psalm 12

(Preached at Trinity, December 6, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The word “help” can carry a wide range of meanings. For example, if someone says to you, “Would you help me dry the dishes” it would carry one meaning. But if someone cried out to you from the third floor window of a burning building, “Help me!!” It would carry an entirely different meaning. One carries a minor request for assistance, the other is a matter of enormous need. The ESV translates it, “Save, LORD!”
2. Such is the situation in **Psalm 12**. David is crying out for help. He is surrounded by treachery and deceit. What shall the righteous do when they are surrounded by such wickedness?
3. In addition, we find that the focus of the plea is definite.
  - A. Over 40 years ago the Beatles recorded a song entitled, “Help”  
*“Help, I need somebody, help, not just anybody, help, you know I need someone.”*  
To this day no one is exactly clear what John Lennon meant by these words. One thing is clear.  
There isn’t a clear indication who this “somebody” or “someone” is.
  - B. This isn’t true with David’s words. He cries out loud and clear:  
“Help, LORD” – David knows the source from which his help will come.
4. This Psalm begins with the superscription: "To the Chief Musician upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David,"
  - A. This title is similar with that of the sixth Psalm. The meaning isn’t clear. Some believe it refers to a stringed instrument as reflected in the NAS.
  - B. We can be certain about the author.
5. What has led David to such desperation? The answer is clear.  
“for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”
  - A. He sees himself as a great minority in this sinful world. It would seem that the godly were almost non-existent, greatly outnumbered by the wicked.
  - B. This has always been the consistent condition upon this earth. The wicked have always outnumbered the righteous.
    1. It was true when righteous Noah preached for 120 years as he built the ark. Wickedness was great upon the earth.  
**Genesis 6:5** – “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
    2. It was true when Abraham was set apart as the head of God’s covenant promise.
    3. It was true when Joseph refused to compromise his righteousness.  
When tempted by Potiphar’s wicked wife Joseph cried out:  
**Genesis 39:9** – “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
    4. It was true when Moses led stiffnecked Israel through the wilderness.
    5. It was true as the prophets of God withstood the evil of their generation.

6. Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise their integrity to the prevailing wickedness around them.
  7. Jesus said the path of righteousness is a narrow road and few are on it.
- C. God has always had a faithful remnant
1. Paul describes Elijah's cry for help  
**Romans 11:3-4** – "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. <sup>4</sup> But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal.*"
  2. David feels alone yet in the end he will once again find peace in God.  
**Psalm 12:7** – "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."
6. This Psalm divides neatly into three parts:  
 David's Predicament – **Verses 2-4**  
 David's Protection – **Verses 5-6**  
 David's Peace – **Verses 7-8**
- I. David's Predicament – **Verses 2-4**
- A. David was surrounded by wicked men who demonstrated their wicked hearts through their tongues.  
**Psalm 12:2** – "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with* flattering lips *and* with a double heart do they speak."
1. Our tongues reveal our heart  
**Matthew 12:34-37** – "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. <sup>35</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. <sup>36</sup> But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
  2. Paul described the nature of the lost man in relationship to his tongue:  
**Romans 3:13-14** – "Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: <sup>14</sup> Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:"
  3. James described the great danger our tongues present:  
**James 3:6** – "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."
- B. David says they speak "vanity"
1. Most translations translate it as falsehood or lies. The word doesn't exactly mean lies in the sense that we the word lie normally means to us.
    - a. This word means emptiness. The KJV and NKJV translate it best. KJV: "The speak vanity" NKJV: "They speak idly"
    - b. James Montgomery Boice: "This is the essence of most cocktail-party conversations."

2. Most people use their tongues to speak foolishness, empty words void of any edifying value
- C. They deceive – “*and with a double heart do they speak.*”
1. David isn’t describing open lies, although the wicked do this as well
  2. This is describing using words cleverly saying one thing but meaning another – murder by abortion is called a “choice” – it is no longer seen as killing a child but the removal of a fetus.  
Sodomy is called “gay” or an “alternative lifestyle” – to oppose this sin is called hate.
- D. David said the wicked continually use flattery to their own advantage.
1. All commendation is not flattery. Flattery is that which is spoken deceptively with the agenda of personal gain
  2. This is a sin of deception - Flattery is dishonest
  3. Flattery exposes a low view of our fellow man
    - a. The flatterer is just using people for his own personal gain
    - b. Often it exposes his own personal insecurity
    - c. While using sweet flattering words, he is actually demonstrating contempt for the person because he is not truly looking out for their good.  
**Proverbs 26:28** – “A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.
  4. David is describing it in the context of great wickedness
- E. Sinful pride was at the heart of their wickedness  
**Psalms 12:3-4** – “The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips *are* our own: who *is* lord over us?”
1. Pride characterizes the lost man  
**1 John 2:16** – “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”  
**Psalms 10:4** – “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: *God is* not in all his thoughts.”  
**Mark 7:21-23** – “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, **pride**, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”
  2. Listen to the heart of the lost man: V.4 – “our lips are our own: who is lord over us.”  
They profess no accountability – “Who is our master?”
- F. This is what David was surrounded with
1. It also surrounds us. We are a great minority.
  2. Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority was truly a misnomer.  
His organization failed because it presumed that there was a moral majority in our land. Our morality is a borrowed morality that is always subject to change. Only morality from a changed heart shaped by the Word of God is true morality. True morality is a great minority.

## II. David's Protection – Verses 5-6

A. After considering the vain, empty, sinful words of men David considers God's Word

“for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD”

1. David was reminded that God would deal with all wickedness in this world. He comes to the defense of the oppressed

**Psalm 12:5** – “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD”

2. Wickedness is indeed upon us but woe to those who oppress God's people  
**Matthew 18:6-7** – “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. <sup>7</sup> Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”

3. Though we are greatly outnumbered we are surrounded by a might and power that is unsurpassed. The God of glory watches over us.

**Psalm 12:5** – “I will set *him* in safety *from him that* puffeth at him.”

C. How do we know?

1. How can we be certain God is with us? Because He has promised us.

**Hebrews 13:5** – “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

**Romans 8:31** – “What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

**1 John 4:4** – “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

2. God hath spoken. His Word is infallible

**Psalm 12:6** – “The words of the LORD *are* pure words”

a. God's words are flawless like pure refined gold – seven is the number of perfection – absolutely flawless, no imperfection

b. What a contrast to the failing words of men

## III. David's Peace – Verses 7-8

A. As we come to the end of the psalm we find no change in circumstances

**Psalm 12:8** – “The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”

1. The wicked are still present. They are still using their tongues to speak perversions, they are still arrogantly defying God.

2. But David has remembered the source of his peace

B. God promises that He will preserve us

“Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them”

1. This is the blessing promised to every one of God's people

**Isaiah 54:17** – “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.”

This is our inheritance. It is promised to us. It is ours to rest upon.

2. David began this psalm crying, "Help LORD." Now he remembers that his help has already been promised.  
Regardless of what the wicked do God will always be the Rock upon whom we stand – "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD"
- C. Wickedness will continue as long as earth endures.  
**Psalm 12:8** – "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."
  1. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares pictures the righteous and wicked dwelling side by side until the end.
  2. The wicked are all around us. Their wicked deeds are exalted.
  3. But God will preserve us and will execute His perfect judgment

Conclusion:

1. So how should the righteous live in this wicked world?
  - A. We must continue to remain separate from the wickedness in this world.  
**2 Corinthians 6:17** – "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*"
  - B. We must continue to rest in the perfect peace of God's power to preserve His own. We must trust God's pure Word. When the Bible speaks it is God speaking.
2. We must continue to look to Christ  
**Hebrews 12:1-2** – "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."