

Ps 15:1,2,3
Hy 1A
Ps 12:1,2,3,4,5
Ps 141:2,3
Ps 34:5,6
Proverbs 6:12-19
Titus 1
Lord's Day 43

Yarrow, December 5, 2010

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Words of Ps 12 obviously written long ago, re different time/culture than ours. But ring so accurate re Canada. Cf stanza 1, 3rd line..., 4th. We'd pray 5th stanza for selves/children....

- But almighty God puts us in today's Canada, in culture of deceit, and not on island or environment of regenerated people. More, in such a context gives us 9th commandment. Obviously, we're to be counter-cultural. Why??
 - That question important because it tempting to adopt local culture, to take up habits of times, ie, stretch truth, deceive, flatter.... Phone in sick when not actually sick...; say we left the homework at home when in fact it not done.... To be honest and truthful as salesman may not be best way to get a sale.... Counter-cultural is hard....
 - So: why Lord give us 9th? Or are we to say that this commandment actually for Israel, regenerated society, ie, works for church and home but not really as we mix with Canadian society??

This command for each of us, every day. Lord puts us in Canada, in this society, for reason. Here to be truthful....

GOD PUTS TRUTHFUL PEOPLE IN A DECEITFUL SOCIETY FOR SOCIETY'S GOOD.

1. Why God forbids lying,
2. How God influences society,
3. When God crowns obedience.

1. Why God forbids lying.

Where lying from?? Clear lying not present in beginning, cf Genesis 1:26ff. God not lie, so Adam/Eve didn't. See Genesis 1:31.

- Origin: John 8:44. Devil's first recorded lie: Genesis 3:4f.
 - Result: human race moved to devil's side, image what devil is like. ∴ Genesis 6:5. This the environment that prompts David to pen Ps 12, especially vs 1 & 2.
 - David turns to Lord for help (vs 1) because He alone able to overcome deceit and its bitter fruit – due to Lord's identity.
- Who He? God of truth, no deceit with Him. Eg, Genesis 3:15ff: this exactly how life is. No fibbing on God's part.... See Numbers 23:19. Cf promise to Abram and Exodus from Egypt.... Ps 89:34f.
 - This God establish covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai, ie, close bond between Self and this people. They to image what He like, ∴ 9th commandment.
 - 9th commandment has setting in court, but its principle counts for all life.
 - Leviticus 19:11: not lie (blatant, crass), nor deceive (trickery, subterfuge) – why?? Note vs 10c: "I am the LORD your God" → covenant link!
 - Note God's response to deceit, cf Deuteronomy 19:16ff. Obvious why: Israel holy nation, ie, to reflect what God like, not what Satan like.
 - ∴ David so categorical in Ps 15, cf vs 1: sanctuary, holy hill = Jerusalem, where God dwells in tabernacle/temple. Note references to 9th commandment in vss 2f.
 - Solomon echoes in Prov 6:16f: detest a strong word! Note 17b, 18a, 19a. Even 19b: division occurs through (eg) slander ∴ distrust between brothers.
 - Result: see vss 12ff. Note: the deceit may not be obvious to hearers, but is to God. ∴ vs 15.... Pt: not just what one says important, but why one says it. Lord knows heart..., and judges transgression against 9th commandment perhaps before lies out in open.... Or maybe after, and that's more painful...
- Point of it all: LORD, as God of truth, does not tolerate lying and deceit. Precisely because of covenant of love He established between Self and His people, these people to speak only truth, no twisting of truth... – image God!
 - Great example is Jesus Christ. See John 8:45. Pt: He speaks from God. See John 7:16ff; 12:48ff. Ie, imaged God perfectly through His words. ∴ John 14:6

- Reward for Jesus?? Cross! Ie, our sins against 9th commandment placed on Him, so that He receive penalty of Prov 6:15.
- ∴ we receive Holy Spirit, ie, Spirit of truth, cf John 16:13.
 - ∴ command of Ephesians 4:25,29
 - Note: point isn't just to speak true facts, but what is edifying, what builds other up. Cf vs 29. So some things not to be mentioned.... Especially not if it sets brother against brother....
 - ∴ Lord's Day 43

Still leaves this tough question: does Lord really expect this sort of honesty of His people in our crooked society?? Isn't this the ideal for church/home, but too risky for daily life??

2. How God influences society

Here ask attention for Titus 1.

- Apostle mentions nature of Cretans, cf vs 12,13a. Same conduct as Ps 12:1f.
- Yet Lord not avoid this people. Rather, on this island God has His elect and so Christ Jesus is gathering His church. What church need in context of deceit and lies? See vs 5: elders!!
 - What criteria?? 6ff, but note references to 9th commandment, cf honesty in 7b, hold firmly to trustworthy message as taught in 9a.
 - Ie, no twisting of message, embrace as revealed. Ie, it from heaven, don't tamper!
 - Why elders? See vs 10f: deceivers to be silenced. They twist truth for dishonest gain. Ie, doing what Cretans by nature do.
 - Tolerable to Paul? No way – even if deceivers among the 'circumcision group', ie, Jews.
 - Note: answer of Paul to deceit of island is elders! Ie, elders defend church from lies, train believers in how to react to culture of lying.
 - See especially 13b: lying needs rebuke!
- But why?? Why engage culture of lying head on??
 - See vs 1f: Paul deliberately mentions "the truth" and "God who does not lie". These terms appear because of context/issues Paul needs to address in letter.
 - Pt: identity of God allows for no place for deceit; all island/world His, so church may not permit/tolerate deceit even in public life. Begins with how Christians speak in daily conversations, ie, no deception, no slippery language meant to lead another up garden path, no lies. Image God 24/7!
 - Here task of elders: in context of deceit, train and motivate congregation to speak truth as plainly as Lord God does. So:
 - 2:1: Titus to teach "what is in accord with sound doctrine". Why reference to 'sound'?
 - No room for any twist in doctrine to accommodate circumstances.
 - 2:3: allow no slander
 - 2:8: exemplify "soundness of speech"
 - 3:10: person can divide even by speaking facts. Yet this not edify, ie, is not love ∴ warn, rebuke. Setting brother against brother is precisely what devil wants to do.... Echo of Prov 6:19, 12ff
 - Recognize 9th commandment in much of what Paul says.
 - Purpose?? 2:10: make gospel attractive – also by upright talk
 - Recall: upright talk, keeping 9th commandment not about cold facts but about relationships. See again Ephesians 4:29, Lord's Day 43b.

3. When God crowns obedience

This not mean that immediately Christians have plain sailing in society.

- Fact is: Satan remains 'god of this age' – 2 Corinthians 4:4, and world of deceit will not stomach those who resist lying. ∴ prayer of Ps 12 remains valid today....
- But child of God confident: lies not triumph in Canada. Lord has defeated Satan, and public evidence today of His victory lies in renewed attitudes/words/lives of God's people.
 - In upright and honest talk of God's children (be it in work or relaxation), fellow Canadians get sense of defeat of devil and foretaste of atmosphere of New Jerusalem.
 - This taste is something Canada needs so much – and Lord gives it through His people/church. What privilege!!
- Remember: Jesus Christ obeyed this command perfectly. Ps 15:1 true of Him. We covered by His sacrifice, ride into Mt Zion on His coattails. Glorious gospel for sinners – who are not as counter-cultural as ought.
 - So, in strength of Holy Spirit, make it your business to speak uprightly and honestly in everything you say. Being counter-cultural, imaging God well is best thing you can do for your nation/community!