

# Psalm 12

“Words Matter”

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## 1. Intro

- a. This morning, we are going to dig right into our Scripture passage, so go ahead and turn to Psalm 12
- b. Psalm 12:1-8
  - i. *To the choirmaster: according to The Sheminith. A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup>Save, O LORD, for the godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man. <sup>2</sup>Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. <sup>3</sup>May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, <sup>4</sup>those who say, “With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?” <sup>5</sup>“Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the LORD; “I will place him in the safety for which he longs.” <sup>6</sup>The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. <sup>7</sup>You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever. <sup>8</sup>On every side the wicked prowls, as vileness is exalted among the children of man.*
- c. To understand what David is saying in this Psalm, we need to go back to the story that most commentators believe led to him writing this hymn
  - i. This story is found in 1 Samuel 21-22
  - ii. It is in these chapters that we first find David on the run from King Saul
    1. After being warned by Saul’s son, Jonathan, that the King was going to try to take his life, David fled to a place called Nob
      - a. At Nob, David encountered the priest of that town, whose name was Ahimelech
        - i. Ahimelech believed that David was on a mission from the King, so he supplied David and his men with the holy bread that he had there with him
        - ii. Not only that, but Ahimelech also had the sword of Goliath stashed away there as well
          1. How’s that for God’s providential timing and placement!!
      - b. Unfortunately, there was another man lurking there in Nob, a man named Doeg (doe-ayg)
        - i. We find out in 1 Samuel 21:7 that Doeg was the chief of Saul’s herdsmen
          1. So Doeg sees David come to Nob, and he sees all that Ahimelech does for him
    2. When we turn to 1 Samuel 22, we find that David fled to the land of Moab, and then eventually made his way back to the land of Judah
      - a. We also see that Saul is furious that no one is giving him any info on where David has escaped to – as well as the fact that it was his very own son who betrayed him to David
        - i. No one is on the king’s side in that moment
          1. So Doeg decides to step up and be the hero
      - b. In verses 9-10 Doeg says,
        - i. *<sup>9</sup>“I saw the son of Jesse [that’s David] coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, <sup>10</sup>and he inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”*
      - c. Poor Ahimelech is summoned before Saul, and he tries to tell the King that he had no idea David had supposedly turned against him, but Saul would not listen
        - i. And King Saul, in his fury, ordered his men to not only kill Ahimelech, but all the priests that were there with him
        - ii. Saul’s guards wisely refused his order, so he turned to his new friend Doeg and told him to do it instead
      - d. And on that day, Doeg not only killed Ahimelech, but he also slaughtered 84 other priests



3. Supposed CHRISTIANS, men and women claiming to have the Spirit of God dwelling within them, saying that the Bible cannot be literally true, and that much of it should be read the same way we read a good fiction novel
- iv. My friends, THIS is what it means to take the Lord's name in vain... THIS is what it means to utter lying words
  1. To claim that the God of all Creation has regenerated your heart, given you new life, and forgiven you from all your sin because of the sacrifice of His Son upon the cross
    - a. And then you look at His Word and scoff at it and mock its reliability and sufficiency?!?
      - i. These are lying words of the most heinous kinds – and they are happening at an alarming rate, IN THE CHURCH
  - v. We must beware of the LYING words of the wicked
- b. Second, the words of the wicked are HYPOCRITICAL words
  - i. Look at the second part of verse 2, where David writes,
    1. "... with flattering lips and a double heart they speak."
      - a. It's interesting when you look at this verse in the original Hebrew, for David literally says, "... with flattering lips and with a heart and a heart they speak."
    2. With a heart and a heart...
      - a. The imagery David is conveying here is plain for us to see
        - i. Where we would say today that someone is "two-faced," David would say that they are "two-hearted"
          1. They are HYPOCRITICAL in their words
  - ii. The clear biblical example for this type of behavior are the Pharisees, right?
    1. The Pharisees get a bad rap in the church today, because we know the other side of the story – we can read in our Bibles what was truly in their hearts
      - a. But, for the Jewish people of those days, the Pharisees were EXEMPLARY models of obedience
        - i. They were the ones who seemed to care THE MOST about the holiness of God
        - ii. They were the ones who seemed to care THE MOST about keeping the laws of the Lord
        - iii. They were held in great honor and respect by many within the Jewish people
  - iii. But, if we turn to Matthew 23, we find that these men spoke "with a heart and a heart"
    1. We don't have time to unpack this whole chapter, but in it, Jesus unleashes upon the Pharisees and the scribes 7 "woes" for their behavior
      - a. In six of these woes, Jesus begins by saying "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"
      - b. And in the other, he says, "Woe to you, blind guides!"
        - i. Why did Jesus speak so harshly to these leaders who were so respected in the community?
    2. We see in verses 2-5,
      - a. *<sup>2</sup>"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, <sup>3</sup>so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup>They do all their deeds to be seen by others.*
        - i. In verse 13, Jesus accuses them of shutting the kingdom of heaven in people's faces
        - ii. In verse 15, Jesus says that the converts these Pharisees make are twice as much "children of hell" as they are
        - iii. And in verses 27 and 28, Jesus calls them "whitewashed tombs... full of hypocrisy and lawlessness"

3. The scribes and the Pharisees spoke with one heart, but they acted with another
  - a. They were hypocrites, and Jesus did not hesitate to call them what they were
- iv. My friends, we must also beware of the hypocritical, double-hearted words of the wicked in our day as well
  1. These are the words of the antichrists we spoke of a couple of weeks ago
    - a. Men and women who speak words that seem to be true and seem to be grounded in the Scriptures, but their lives do not match the words that they proclaim
      - i. Instead of honoring God with their hearts, they honor wealth and greed and luxury
      - ii. Instead of pursuing Christ with their hearts, they pursue fame and popularity and followers on Instagram
      - iii. Instead of holding the Word of God up as the ultimate truth by which we are to live our lives, they instead hold up their witty sermon illustrations, and clever gimmicks to get people in the door
    2. The words of the hypocritical religious leaders of our day today are exceedingly dangerous
      - a. For these religious leaders are claiming converts by the tens of thousands
        - i. And if Jesus says that the converts of the scribes and Pharisees were twice as much children of hell as they were, what will he say about the converts of the false teachers of today?
    3. Beware of those who speak with a heart and a heart
      - a. Beware of the hypocritical words of the wicked
  - c. And third, the words of the wicked are BOASTFUL words
    - i. In verses 3 and 4, David writes,
      1. *<sup>3</sup>May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, <sup>4</sup>those who say, "With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?"*
    - ii. It has been said that the day in which we live today could easily be labeled as "the Age of Narcissism"
      1. Everything is about ME...
        - a. I want what I want
        - b. Don't tread on MY rights
        - c. I am the most important person in the room
      2. Unfortunately, this attitude has also found its way into the church, hasn't it?
        - a. We see this at the congregational level, when we see Christians hop around from church to church – not because of solid, biblical reasoning, but instead because this church no longer meets MY needs
      3. But where this pride and narcissism causes the most damage is when it finds its way into the leadership of the church
        - a. When it is no longer the Word of God that drives the direction of the church, but it is instead the vision and the innovation of the pastor that steers and guides every agenda...
        - b. When it is no longer the Holy Spirit that changes and transforms hearts, but it is instead the winning personality and charisma of the pastor that ultimately saves people...
        - c. When it is no longer the authority of Christ through his holy Scriptures that provides the foundation for the church, but it is instead the authority of the pastor who dictates all decisions that are made, and those who do not comply are immediately cast as troublemakers...
      4. This kind of boastful narcissism is permeating the church today, as men who have been entrusted with the care of the flocks of Jesus, instead say, "With MY tongue we will prevail... who is master over ME?"
    - iii. In Psalm 52, we read in the title of this Psalm that it is a Song of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, 'David has come to the house of Abimelech'
      1. David writes in verses 1-4,



*hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?*

<sup>25</sup>*But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

- ii. Do you see the pattern?
    - 1. Paul is talking about the sufferings of this present time, as we Christians are the poor and the afflicted and the needy
      - a. And how do we respond to these afflictions?
        - i. With groanings!
      - b. WHY do we groan?
        - i. Well, Paul says that we groan because we have HOPE!
          - 1. We groan because we know that God ALWAYS hears the groanings of His children
          - 2. God ALWAYS arises on their behalf
          - 3. And God ALWAYS saves!
  - d. In the face of all the wicked words that threaten to engulf us, we don't retaliate with our words
    - i. We don't shout out words of frustration or confusion
    - ii. We don't reply with words of anger or hatred or bitterness
      - 1. We GROAN before our Father
        - a. For our hope is in the fact that we are waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, and for the redemption of our bodies
        - b. And it is in this hope that we were saved
          - i. So we take our groanings, we take our longings, and we lay them before the throne of our great God
            - 1. And He will hear... He will arise... and He will save
            - 2. How can we be SO sure of these things?
4. As we look at our final point, the words of the Lord, we see this unshakeable truth:
  - a. The words of the Lord are PURE words
    - i. David writes in Psalm 12:6-7
      - 1. *<sup>6</sup>The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. <sup>7</sup>You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever.*
  - b. Why do words matter, as the title of this sermon says?
    - i. Because we know without a shadow of a doubt that the Lord WILL keep His word. Period.
      - 1. Look at the certainty of David's words in these verses
        - a. The words of the Lord are PURE words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times
          - i. If you've ever seen silver or gold being purified over a fire, you know that the dross, or the impurities, always rise to the top of the container
            - 1. The metalsmith then has to take a ladle, and carefully scoop out all of those impurities
            - 2. Each time the silver is reheated, there are less and less impurities within it, until you finally are left with a pure product
        - b. David says that the words of the Lord are pure, like silver refined in a furnace seven times
          - i. The picture is one of absolute perfection
            - 1. When we look at the words of the Lord, we will not find any error
              - a. We will not find any contradictions
              - b. We will not find any inconsistencies
  - ii. And in the context of what David is writing about in Psalm 12, we will not find ANY unkept promises
    - 1. In contrast to the lying words of the wicked, the words of the Lord are TRUE
    - 2. In contrast to the hypocritical words of the wicked, the words of the Lord PROVEN
    - 3. And in contrast to the boastful words of the wicked, the words of the Lord... are boastful?
      - a. Yes, they are boastful

- b. But they are boastful in the most excellent of ways, for there is nothing more worthy of boasting in than God Himself!!
        - i. And if our God promises to arise on behalf of His children, He will keep that word
        - ii. And He will guard us from this generation FOREVER
- c. My friends, just as David wrote in this Psalm in verse 8,
  - i. On every side of us the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man
    - 1. Doeg was exalted by King Saul, because Doeg was a lying, hypocritical, and boastful man
      - a. And that was just the kind of man Saul needed to carry out his evil plans
      - b. But guess what?
        - i. Aside from the mention of Doeg in the title of Psalm 52, we never hear of this vile man again
        - ii. He disappeared from the picture, as God arose, God heard, and God saved
  - ii. We live in a day of truly wicked words, don't we?
    - 1. But, as followers of Christ, we are not called to fight back with our words
    - 2. We are called to lay our groanings at HIS feet
      - a. And his promises are true, as pure as silver refined in the furnace seven times
        - i. God will keep His word
          - 1. God WILL hear
          - 2. God WILL arise
          - 3. And God WILL save
  - iii. Therefore, as we heard in the Scripture reading at the beginning of the service,
    - 1. Let the words of OUR mouths and the meditations of OUR hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer
      - a. Brothers and sisters, our words matter, for our words are an overflow of what is truly in our heart
        - i. Will we speak the words of the wicked?
        - ii. Or will we speak the pure words of the Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer?
      - b. May OUR words be found TRUE
      - c. May OUR words be found GENUINE
      - d. May OUR words be found HUMBLE, as we are a people who boast in NOTHING except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!