

The Righteous Have Vanished

Psalms 12:1-8

For the director of music. According to sheminith. A psalm of David.

¹ *Help, Lord, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.*

² *Everyone lies to their neighbor;
they flatter with their lips
but harbor deception in their hearts.*

³ *May the Lord silence all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue—*

⁴ *those who say,
“By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”*

⁵ *“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the Lord.*

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶ *And the words of the Lord are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold refined seven times.*

⁷ *You, Lord, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,*

⁸ *who freely strut about
when what is vile is honored by the human race.*

Introduction

This is a Lament of a faithful person who is surrounded by wicked people who used words to achieve their selfish and evil ambitions.

Content

1. Where have all the good people gone?

¹ *Help, Lord, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.*

- The psalmist calls out to Yahweh for help. He is surrounded by wicked people who pursue their selfish interest. Hence, the psalmist is alone and isolated because it is getting harder to find godly people among his peers.
- The wicked are growing in strength and numbers and the righteous are not seen. He cries out to God in distress because of the growing influence of the wicked.

2. Lies, flattery and deceitful hearts

² *Everyone lies to their neighbour;
they flatter with their lips
but harbour deception in their hearts.*

A. The Psalmist is surrounded by people he cannot trust. This is because of the way they use language. Their words are used to:

- Propagate lies
- Flatter others to conceal their wicked intent

B. He is alone among corrupted people who use words to propagate their corruption. They use words as means to twist others to do their bidding. Their words have the power to destroy and hurt others. 'Their neighbour', the one who resides next to them is not safe. They would shamelessly use flattery as a means to conceal their hypocrisy and selfish goals.

- Think of the times you had a conversation with people who false talk, smooth talk and double talk to get their way. How did you feel?
- What has happened to language in today's society?
- How has social media changed the way we think and speak?

3. The power of the wicked (with their words...)

- a. Lie
- b. Flatter
- c. Double talk
- d. Boastful tongue (vs. 3)
- e. Pride over the power, their words possess "by our tongues we will prevail".
- f. Arrogant of their independence and ability to determine their own destiny: "our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?"
- g. Plunder and hurt the poor and needy (vs. 5)
- h. Malign the poor and needy (vs. 5)

Poor, needy, often as a class of persons with physical needs, of low status and little political power, with an associative meaning of oppression and misery:– needy (CWSB Dictionary)
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4. Lord, silence them.

³ *May the Lord silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue—
those who say, “By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”*

- i. The words of the wicked reveal their character. They are deceitful, wicked and arrogant. They believe that nothing can stop them from having their way. With such confidence they boast with arrogance that ‘they have the power to do as they please.’
- ii. The psalmist has no power to stop them. On his own, he cannot silence them. He calls out to Yahweh to silence them. He wants the Lord to show Himself and put them in their place.
- iii. There are times we wished the Lord would display His power in a way that will shut the mouths of the wicked and the arrogant. The Lord has done this throughout history, but he chooses the time and place to intervene according to His purpose. Such displays did at times keep things in check but because of the nature of wickedness, in spite of God’s great works, people still refuse to repent and believe. The miracles God did in Egypt to deliver Israel was not enough to move the harden hearts of the people to trust Him. They wanted a god who would submit to their will. In the same way, the Pharisees would not be moved by the miracles Jesus performed. They did not care much about others, and they wanted a Messiah that would conform to their expectations.
- iv. There will come a time when every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. That time has not come. How do we face the growing influence of the wicked in our world?

5. The Lord Speaks

⁵ *“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the Lord.*

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶ *And the words of the Lord are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold refined seven times.*

1. The psalmist encounters the Lord, and the Lord gives him a word.
2. The Lord tells him that He will protect the poor and the needy.
3. The word from the Lord brings hope and healing to the psalmist.
4. The lament is now a song of confidence.
5. The word of the Lord is pure and flawless, not like the word of the wicked.
6. He compares the word of God to purified silver and gold. This is again a comparison with the words of the wicked which is full of deceit and worthless. In contrast, God’s word can be trusted because He is faithful and true, and His intentions are pure. The word of the Lord is far more valuable than anything this world offers.

⁷ *You, Lord, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked,*

⁸ *who freely strut about when what is vile is honored by the human race.*

1. The psalmist now proclaims with confidence that even though the righteous have vanished and he is surrounded by evil, the Lord will protect him. The Lord will uphold justice and safeguard the poor and needy.
2. The righteous are few because many live according to the ways of the world. The world honours that which is evil. People would rather pursue the honour that comes from the world than the grace that comes from the Lord. They would rather stand by popular opinions, seeking the approval of their peers, than to stand out by speaking the truth.
3. The safety he longs for, the psalmist now finds in the Lord. The word of God revealed to him lifts him from despondency. The reliability and worth of the word of God keeps him on solid ground.

Reflection:

1. What can you do when you find yourself surrounded with people who only care about themselves?
2. How do you use words?
3. How has social media or scrolling through news (headlines) affected you?
4. Are your beliefs and actions shaped by popular opinion/peer pressure or the word of God?
5. Are you giving enough time for meditating on the word of God and prayer?

Prayer Items

1. Deliverance and help when we find ourselves in a place which is hostile to God.
2. Strength to stand firm for the Lord.
3. Wisdom and discernment when we listen to others and when we use words.
4. Willing to wait in the presence of God to hear His word for us.

Church

- An intimate desire to be in His presence in prayer and worship.
- God will continue to shape our lives through His word.
- God will help us touch lives for His glory in the place we are
- God will unite our hearts as a Church to care and stand together, with our resources and abilities to help the people around.
- Ministries: Life Explorers, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline Youth, Worship Team, Cell Groups, Pulpit Ministry & Church Leadership.
 - God will help us do His work during this season.
 - God will help us raise leaders to be God's voice during this season.
 - God will open doors for us to reach others

Covid-19

- Economy & peoples livelihood.
- Vaccines, it will fairly manged and people will recover.
- Wisdom and good governance.
- Mental health, stress, domestic violence.

Healing

- Sis. Rachel (Surgery & Recovery)

Malaysia

- God will guide the leaders of our nation.
- Healing that brings unity to the church to embrace her call in becoming instruments of reconciliation.
- God will restore Justice and Compassion. The leaders will look into the needs of the poor and vulnerable.