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Psalm 12

Introduction – The psalm-singer laments over the state of his contemporary culture and civic realm. The kinds of words spoken by men have deteriorated so that vileness is the normal speech, lying is expected, and flattery is required to get you a place at the table of influence. However, God is the Word, speaking all that is into existence and redeeming a people to Himself. Men's words employed by deceitful men are a perversion of words as given to us by God for communication, worship, dominion, service, persuasion, enlightenment and revelation. This is why the psalm-singer's chorus is that God would cut out the lips and tongues of such violators. This is why the psalm-singer's refrain is that God would rise up and see His Word vindicated in this generation.

The Godly Cease (v1, v8) – Where has the influence of the godly gone? Where are the godly? It doesn't appear that they have gone apostate or been killed. The faithful have vanished as though swallowed up into the sons of men. The godly, in essence are still there, but they have lost their ability to have influence over the culture. They have lost their saltiness (Matt 5:13). This psalm sings for the saltiness of God's Word in the mouths of the godly to return.

Wicked Words – The conversations of a culture and what we expect of those conversations, tells us much of the state of that culture. Has the church lost her saltiness due to her words?

Idle Words/Lies (v2) – First, the culture carries on in empty talk, lies and gossip (accusations with no opportunity for defense). The things we whisper to one another will be judged by God (Matt 12:36f, 1 Tim 6:20).

Flattering Words (v2) – Second, the culture engages in flattery in order to gain the approval of others in power. God hates such grasping for acceptance and such perversion of true honor (Rom 16:18).

Double-Talk (v2) – Third, the culture is known as being a people who speak out of both sides of their mouth. You speak well of someone when they are around and then wickedly of them when they are gone. Or you speak well of them when others are around, but you speak wickedly to them when no one else is around. In either case, you are double-minded, and the Lord despises such a tongue (James 3:6-12).

Boasting (v4) – The proud say, "Our lips, our words, our belief-systems in the important areas of life, are our own." They demand neutrality from any other god other than themselves and their own enlightened thinking.

Attack on the Weak (v5) – Once in their place of power, this kind of culture condemns all other views and exploits the weak and poor for their own ends. Because they have done so by their lips and tongues, the psalm-singer laments for their lips and tongues to be violently cut out – to the glory of God. Some may cringe at such unbiblical, unloving language (except that it comes from the Bible out of the mouth of God who is love). Is this evidence that we, the contemporary church, have lost our saltiness and our sting?

God's Words (v5-6) – In contrast, God's Word is set, firm, secure, unchanging, and pure. Refined seven times, God's words can be believed and trusted. He has determined the choicest words to use, He never lies, He never flatters, and He never speaks with duplicity. How flipped around we have this, trusting the experts in their fields over the words of God. The scientists tell us that the universe must be billions of years old. The psychologists tell us that sexual preferences are a natural fabric of an individual. The well-lettered theologians tell us that God never intended to be called "He," to the exclusion of "She." They all tell us that God's Word is not very clear on these things. But God's Word tells us that His words are like silver refined seven times. The problem of purity and clarity is not in the Word.

God's Promises (vv5-7) – God has promised that He will arise and deliver the oppressed from their own generation (v5). The psalm-singer then remembers the nature of God's Word and promises (v6) and concludes that of course God will deliver (v7, 1 Pet 1:5). Considering the corporate nature of this prayer, we are singing about a cultural reformation.

Help, LORD! – How will this reformation and deliverance occur? The psalm-singer begins with the answer. God is our Savior and our only Savior. The government is not our savior. Education is not our savior. Democracy is not our savior. A strong economy or a mighty military are not our saviors. Pluralism is not our savior. The cry is to YHWH, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who now is given all authority in every realm of creation.

Honor, not Flattery – The Church must avoid flattery as she speaks prophetically to the world. We are to render honor to those in authority, but we must not compromise (Acts 4:12, 18-20).

Saltiness Lost – When we ask the authorities for permission to voice our opinions on issues, we lose our saltiness. The Father

commands the church to sing, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry" to the unbelieving nations (Psalm 2).

Repentance, not Prominence – In order to gain a legitimate reputation, the church today has caved into a number of vile compromises, and so verse 8 defines our generation. Our nation's slogan, "God bless America," ought to be answered with this: Why should God bless America when America refuses to bless God (the Triune God of Scripture)?

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! We are praying to be delivered from this generation.

Dave Hatcher – August 19th, 2007