

SHORT PSALMS

Psalm 12 – Do Not Cease Laboring

I. INTRODUCTION

This is another in the short Psalm series. We are studying the Psalms that are primarily 7 verses or less. However we may “waive” that rule from time to time as the Lord moves upon our heart to study other Psalms. We would be right in doing so, being it is the Lord's leading and it is God's World we are preaching.

It is interesting to note that this Psalm is next after Psalm 11 when the wicked are pursuing the godly. Now we see the attack from the inside from other believers who have for any number of reason ceased working for the Lord and now attack their fellow believers with the tongue, which can be the most deadly of attacks from the inside.

II. EXEGESIS – GOD LABORS CEASING AND THEIR DECLINE, PRESERVATION OF THE GODLY, AND GOD’S WORDS ARE PURE.

A. THE POLLUTED WORDS OF THE GODLY ON THE WRONG PATH: Verses 1-2

VERSE 1: *“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth*

The word “ceaseth” here carries the meaning of “coming to an end”. The fellow believer can be a great source of encouragement. However at one time or another the fellow believer can have to stop and rest for the time being physically fatigued. They cease their labor to rest. Often times this can happen at the most undesired moments and as a result the fellow believer is not able to help. This even happened to the disciples of Jesus as they did not intentionally give up but simply became fatigued due to physical fatigue.

Matthew 26:40-43 (40) And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (42) He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (43) And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

“...for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

The word “fail” carries the meaning of “disappear or cease”. Sometimes even the believer, who is normally faithful in his work, can stop laboring for the Lord due to numerous reasons (discouragement, bitterness, etc.) and even seem to disappear out of sight. When one stops

laboring for the Lord you will often notice their absence from fellow believers as well.

VERSE 2: “*They speak vanity every one with his neighbour:*”

We see the next step in the downward progression of the godly when they go down the wrong path by ceasing their labor for the Lord. Notice what it starts with: the tongue.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word “vanity” has two meanings: (1) excessive pride in or admiration of one's own appearance or achievements. (2) the quality of being worthless or futile. The word “vanity” carries the meaning in the original language of “uselessness”. The speech of the godly, when they have ceased working for God will often be useless or without substance.

“... with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.”

We see another downward progression of the wayward believer who has ceased laboring for the Lord. The word “flattering” carries the meaning of “smoothness”, and the words “double heart” carries the meaning of “a heart and a heart”. The original language also carries the meaning of the word “heart” to mean the mind and soul. The believer at this point will seem to have smooth speech but it will be confusing and almost appear as if it were two different people speaking out of the same mouth.

B. THE PRESERVATION OF THE GODLY BY GOD: Verses 3-5

**VERSE 3: “*The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips,
and the tongue that speaketh proud things:*”**

Notice here The words “cut off” carries the meaning of to destroy or consume. The words “proud things” carries the meaning of “great or swelling words”. Their speech may be very smooth and carry great or lofty meanings but the Lord will destroy it because it is not edifying to their fellow believers but instead is confusing by appearing to be from two people at the same time.

**VERSE 4: “*Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail;
our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*”**

We now see the final downward progression of the wayward believer who has ceased laboring for the Lord. They have gone so far to think with their oratory, even though it is confusing to others around them, that they can prevail over anyone and that no one is in authority over them. Some may have gone so far that they may think that they do not even have to obey God anymore. This is a very frightening state to be for the believer to ever come through and to think it started by ceasing labor for God.

VERSE 5: “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD;”

Now we see the response of God to the attitude of this wayward believer. The word “poor” carries the meaning of “depressed”. The word “sighing” carries the meaning of “crying out or groaning”. God will take notice when wayward believer who with his words winds up discouraging or even being harmful to a fellow believer.

“...I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”

The word “puffeth” carries the meaning of “blowing with a breath of air”. God will protect fellow believers from the wayward speech of wayward believers.

God, being the perfect heavenly Father will discipline his wayward children. Hebrews 12 describes this chastisement from God upon wayward children

Hebrews 12:6-11 (6) For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (7) If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (9) Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (10) For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. (11) Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

The Psalm addresses the first step of this. God will protect the brother and sister of the wayward one first before chastising the wayward believer.

C. THE PURE WORDS OF GOD: Verses 6-8

VERSE 6: “The words of the LORD are pure words:”

Now let us look at the exact opposite characteristics of God. Unlike the words of the wayward believer or even the one who is not a child of God, by accepting Christ as Saviour, the words are pure. The word “pure” according to the Oxford Dictionary means , “Not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material.” The words of God are without any sin, including deceit.

“...as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

The word “tried” carries the meaning of “refining” A furnace of earth performed the same function in ancient times as a metal forge used today to manufacturer metal alloys, which are composed of several metals. They can also be used to refine metals and retrieve an original element that had impurities in it. For example, a forge can manufacture steel, which is made primary from iron and carbon and today has other elements fused with it make what is called an alloy. However that same forge can be setup to melt down metals, such as silver and when melted the impurities can be strained out of it. A metal that is melted and strained seven times is considered to be pure as it can be possibly made pure. Also remember the number seven represent completion or perfection in the scripture and represents God. What a great picture of the words of God. His words are similar but even better than silver that has been purified as much as it can be purified on earth by man.

VERSE 7: “Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,”

The word “keep” carries the meaning of putting a hedge about or guarding. God will keep his children from harm by building barriers around them from attack and guarding them as well.

“...thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

The word “generation” carries the meaning of age or a period of time. God will protect the believer from everything that tries to destroy them not only for now but for all eternity. Now we will see what God is protecting them from in the next verse.

VERSE 8: “The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”

We see what God preserves his believers from in this verse. The words “on every side” carries the meaning of a circle or around. In other words, the wicked have them completely surrounded. The word “vilest” carries the meaning of shaking or even a tempest. A tempest is a violent and windy storm. When the loudest and most violent of the wicked are in the crowd, they will motivate that crowd to surround believers in siege.

III. CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

- **Christians sometimes get fatigued. It is natural and you need proper periods of rest to continue to work**
- **However, Christians sometimes stop laboring for the Lord, when they should keep going.**
- **When labor ceases, the Christian will often disappear out of sight.**
- **Then that Christians speech can become wayward, even though it may be very smooth or pleasant sounding.**
- **The final downward progression will be noticed when they think with their speech they can prevail over everyone even God.**
- **On the contrary, God will chastise that believer until they repent or they will be taken home early.**
- **Unlike the words of a wayward believer, God's words are without contamination and always pure.**
- **God will keep his words in every generation and will keep his saints even from the wicked who when encouraged by a stormy individual will surround him on all sides.**
- **Have you ceased laboring for the Lord? If so, get back to work.**
- **If you are laboring, do not quit. Rest properly but do not give up.**