

Surrounded by Lies, Safe in God's Promises

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[0:00] Thank you very much. What a joy it is to be with you this morning.! Let's start with a thought.

When was the last time you thought how much we just trust each other? How much we trust others to get by through an ordinary day? How much do we actually trust others each day to get by? Maybe you've just been thinking that thought last week. Maybe it's today, thanks to, well, me. Well, we're looking at that today. We're looking at trusting God and His Word, even though we might be surrounded by lies.

Now, let's say a friend agrees to give you a lift. Maybe they agree to meet you up for coffee. The waiter tells you, yeah, no nuts in this dish.

Or you take your two tablets per day, as advised by your doctor. I just want you to imagine that we do trust all of these people and we rely on them. But what happens when we just can't trust them anymore?

[1:28] That we start to doubt? What would our world look like? Well, in this psalm, David lives in this reality. He doesn't know who to trust.

He turns right and he turns left and he's surrounded by lies. All he can say is, help, Lord. Over the next couple of minutes, I'd like you to join me as we walk through this song together.

We'll try to sympathize with David's cry so at the end we can rejoice as he rejoices. Because David learns that even when we're surrounded by lies, we are safe in the promises of God.

That even though we're surrounded by lies, we are safe in the promises of God. So, let's look at verse 1 again in Psalm 12.

David cries out, help, Lord, for no one is faithful anymore. Those who are loyal have vanished from the human race. This doesn't sound like the intro to a groovy song, does it?

[2:35] It's quite bleak. It's depressing. It's David looking out at society and he just sees liars. He just sees everyone being lied to. There's not a single person he can trust.

I don't know about you, but every so often I look at the news headlines and I see an interesting thing here and then. This was one that caught my eye. I think a month ago.

Trust in news hits a new low. Surprise, surprise. According to the article, public trust worldwide is at 37%.

In the UK, it's fallen to 30%. Apparently, 10 years ago, it was 50%. Now, how does that make you feel? Does that surprise you or are you thinking, can you really trust that?

You see, the problem David is facing then is the same problem we are facing today. Do you ever feel like that?

[3:37] I do. It's like we're living in a world where it's becoming harder and harder to trust people. It's becoming harder and harder to trust people.

Here's a picture of me and my daughter at Disney World. This was during the summer. You see, she really enjoyed meeting, I think, Rapunzel.

But you see, the thing is, I've never been to Disney World. And I don't have a daughter. Yeah, well, and I never wait in line to meet a fake princess dressed as another princess.

There are kids in the audience, so. But you see, that picture would probably fool many who don't know me well. You see, these kind of AI-generated images and videos are everywhere.

I saw one on YouTube. I thought, even then, we used to laugh at them earlier on, didn't we? They seemed so fake. But nowadays, they're looking realer and realer.

[4:43] And that's a modest use of AI. I mean, we hear stories, I don't know about you, but there are stories out there where people have been scammed by AI-generated videos and audio of their relatives asking them to send money.

But imagine this, what if the person on the other end of that scam call wasn't a stranger? What if it was someone you knew personally?

Who is your own friend? It's one thing being fooled by a complete stranger online. It's quite another being lied to by someone you know in person.

Now, that's the reason for why David is crying out in the Psalms. Yes, he's surrounded by lies. But these lies are personal. And these lies are proud.

These lies are personal. And they are proud. Let's look at verses 2 to 4. Again, page 548. Talks about everyone lies to their neighbor.

[5 : 42] They flatter with their lips. They harbor deception in their hearts. 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? Did you notice in the first line of verse 2, it says, everyone lies to their neighbor. Not to just someone.

Not to a stranger. Their neighbor. Closest to them. And that word, it's interesting. That word in the parts of the Old Testament, the first half of the Bible, also means friend.

That same word, neighbor. It means friend. The lies that surround David, they come from those close to him. These lies are personal. They seem genuine, but they're not.

A form of such lies is flattery, isn't it? I mean, David mentions it twice. In London, flattery is used quite a lot if you walk through their busy streets. You have a beautiful smile there.

[6 : 45] You have a moment? That's some cool shoes. I love you here. There's something thereafter. I mean, it's nice receiving those compliments, but you know there's something thereafter.

Those words aren't just said because you really do have cool shoes. Those people are trying to stop you by using flattery. It doesn't bother you as much because you don't know them, and they don't know you.

You'll probably not see them anytime soon. But again, what if you did know that person? What if you knew them personally? Maybe it's a close friend who always said nice things about you.

Turns out they were a fake. They used your friendship to get what they wanted. It was convenient.

Or you hear so-and-so from your family, what they really think about you from others.

And it's completely different from the kind of things, nice things they would say to you, to your face.

How would that make us feel? Would you rather be lied countless of times by someone you don't know, or would you rather be lied to by someone you do know even once?

[7 : 51] The lies David is surrounded by, they hurt because they are constant. They're everywhere, and they're personal. They're from those who he knows. But these lies, they're also proud.

They're filled with pride. In verses 3 and 4, we hear these people, those who speak these lies, boasting. By our tongues, we will prevail. Our own lips will defend us.

Who is Lord over us? What they're basically saying is, we can say whatever we want. Even if it hurts people, no one can stop us.

Not even God. And that's why it stings. That's why it hurts. Because these liars don't care about what's right and what's wrong.

They don't see that. They think, they decide what's good and bad. They are their own gods. And so they lie to those who trust them most. They lie to those who are vulnerable, the poor, the needy.

[8 : 51] As it talks about in verse 5. They use lies that are personal and lies that are proud to hurt, to cause grief. To cause David to cry out, help Lord, help.

So who can we trust? Whose words are trustworthy, David? So far the picture you've painted, it's bleak. I don't want to believe in that. There seems to be no hope.

Well, remember the thought we began with right at the start. Just how much of our day-to-day lives depend on trusting what others say. The fact is we have to trust someone.

We have to trust things, even if they might let us down. It's just how it works. We won't function if we don't trust someone. And I wonder, what would make us trust someone more?

What is that thing they must do to make us trust them more? Now I think this exercise next will help us see it a bit more clearly. All right? I know a lot of us Brits love this.

[9 : 54] For a good old Sunday morning cathartic session. A chance to vent out our frustrations about something I'm sure all of us have very strong opinions on.

Ready? All right. It's this. This feat of engineering. The Southwestern Railway, the SWR.

First word that comes to your mind? Hold it. Please don't say it aloud. Anyone who's been there often enough can relate to the frustrations. If you've ever had to count on them showing up on time or just showing up at all after a long, hard day of work, you know. Good luck. But, hey, at least we know that any time you see something strange, you should see it, say it.

You should see it, say it. Yeah. And I don't think many of us in the room can comfortably say that the SWR can sort their own trains.

[11:00] But why is that? I mean, why don't we trust them? I wonder if it's because they aren't reliable. I wonder if it's because they can't keep the promise we hear in their announcements.

They can't keep their promise at whatever cost. Wouldn't you be safer trusting someone who proves to you time and time again that they can be relied on? Wouldn't you be safer trusting someone who's ready to keep their promise no matter what, no matter the cost?

If so, friends, we have a great reason to be safe with God. We can be safe in God's promises because His promises are always reliable.

And He'll keep His promises no matter the cost. His promises have no delays, no cancellations. He always sees it, He always says it, and He will sort it.

His promises are always reliable. Let's look at verse 5 again. Because the poor are being plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise, says the Lord.

[12:06] I will protect them from those who malign them. First, God sees. He sees how the crowd and the personal lie.

He sees how these lies are hurting His people. They're being deceived. They're crying out to Him. And this moves Him. He sees that. And then God speaks.

He says. He says He's going to protect them from those who lie to them, from those who try to hurt them. He says that He's going to keep them safe. And so, God sorts it.

Actions speak louder than words. We hear that a lot. And just think back to the trains. What if every train you took showed up on time? You never had to claim delay compensation.

You'd really believe their announcements. You would be safe in the knowledge that they would turn up. They would always get you there on time. Well, you can be safer than ever in the knowledge that God is more reliable than anyone and anything.

[13:08] He's the definition of reliable. David says so in verse 6. He says, In the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.

In the ancient world, precious metal was heated again and again to remove impurity, remove what was bad. Each round of refining left it purer than before.

And so, David is saying here that God's words are like that precious metal at the end of the process. They're as pure as it gets. There isn't a single lie mixed in God's promises.

Whether or not God keeps his promises doesn't depend on the day like the trains. He always keeps his word. If you read the first half of the Bible, the Old Testament, we see that time and time again, God seeing, God saying, and God sorting it.

And as David, with the people, look back to those times while singing this song, they end the song by singing loudly and boldly, You, Lord, will keep the needy safe.

[14:15] You, Lord, will protect us forever from the wicked. Now, here's the best news so far, friends, for us today. We have one more reason to be safer in the promises of God.

And it's more amazing than what David and the people could have ever imagined. Because we can be saved today in God's promises because they're rooted in Jesus.

We can be safer than David ever was in God's promises because they're rooted in Jesus. Think about it. When do we really know that someone means what they say?

It's when their word actually costs them something, doesn't it? It's easy to make a promise that's free. It costs you nothing. But when someone keeps their word even at an enormous cost to themselves, now you know I can trust that person.

Now God kept his promise even when it cost him the most. Even when it cost him his own son. Are we building our lives solely on the words of others?

[15:27] Maybe it's a promise of a promotion if you work hard enough. Maybe it's a promise of contentment if you earn enough. Promises of a wonderful life if you get certain things sorted.

Are we willing to put our whole lives on the line for those words? And as Tim Keller puts it, have they died for us? Have they died for us?

Well, at the cross, friends, Jesus died for us to prove to us that when God promises, he keeps his word. God's promises are rooted in Jesus and that's why we can be safer than ever.

I love this translation of verse 5. I will place him in the safety for which he longs.

You see, friends, God places us in the safety for which we long deep in our hearts. We long for this safety. It's indescribable. But we long for it.

[16:27] God saw us. He'd said he'd do something for us. That he'd sort things out. And he did. You see, he saw how sin, what we did wrong before God.

He saw how that affected the world, those around us. How much these words hurt when they're used to deceive, to lie. He sees that we sometimes cry out like David.

Help, Lord. Help. He's moved by it. He is moved by it because he sees. And he says to us, he said to us that he will save us.

How much words used to deceive and hurt us. But God's word speaking to us says he will save us. And then he sorted it by sending his son to us.

To take the punishment we deserved so that we could be forever with him, wrapped in his safe arms, never to be let go. Never.

[17:28] He loves us more than you could ever imagine. Because he didn't just tell us. He loves us. He showed us. He loves us. He showed us what it cost him to keep his word.

And we're safe in God's promises because his promises are rooted in Jesus. And what Jesus did at the cross, that fact of history, it can't be changed, friends.

It can't be changed and neither can his promises. Now, some of us may have had someone we looked up to let us down. Sure.

Maybe it was someone we supported who forgot their promises as soon as they came into office.

Maybe it's someone we admired who had been living a life full of lies, it turns out.

Some of us may know this bit more personally, what it's like to be lied about or lied to by those closest to us. By those we thought we could trust.

[18:26] We may still be carrying the pain of it. Friends, Jesus knows the feeling of it. His whole life, people spoke lies about him. At the hour of his greatest suffering, when he was about to die, his own friends deserted him.

They betrayed him. One of his closest friends, Peter, even denied knowing him. Jesus knows what it's like to be surrounded by lies. Remember David's cry in verse 1.

Help, Lord. No one's faithful anymore. There's no one loyal anywhere. Yet when everyone else proves disloyal, God is faithful.

When everyone is faithless, he still remains faithful. We're not trusting someone who doesn't understand suffering or pain.

We're trusting someone who went through it. But not just that, he overcame it. And he proved at the cross just how far he will go to keep his promises.

[19:30] So when Jesus makes a promise to us, to me, to you, we can be safe knowing, yes, he means it. Look at the cross. Look at the cross.

When he says he'll always be there for us, that he loves us with an everlasting love. That he'll look after us every day. Look at the cross. He proved it.

He'll keep his word. God is reliable. His promises are rooted in Jesus. And we can be safe in those words, even when it feels like we can't trust anyone.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you that you are a promise-keeping God.

You love us so much that in our cry, you rescue us. Even when we don't know who to trust, we can fall safely to your loving arms.

[20:29] Even, Lord, when at times we find ourselves lying to ourselves, that everything's fine, that we are doing great. Even when we're not, we know that, Lord, we can rest in the promise that you have us.

We can fall into your safe, safe, loving arms. We can cling to your promises because you are more reliable than anything and anyone. And you proved it.

Oh, Jesus, you proved it at the cross for dying for us. We can trust you with our lives because you gave your life to us, for us. Thank you, Lord.

We pray for all this in your son's name. Amen. Amen. Let's now, in a short moment, remind ourselves that God is faithful to his word, even when there seems no way.

Isn't that just amazing? Let's sing with joyful hearts like David did. God is faithful to his word, even when there seems to be no way. Amen.