THE POISON OF THE PRAISE OF MEN

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Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi
Coordinator

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God bless you!

Topic:
THE POISON OF THE PRAISE OF MEN
Text: Acts 12:20-23

Prayer
Almighty God I appreciate you thank you Lord,as we are about to learn at your feet this evening, speak to us, encounter our life's, make us the hearer and doer of your word. I pray the eye of our understanding will be enlightened, strengthen the speaker and speak through him to us in Jesus name I pray. (Amen)

Introduction
Tonight, I feel like weeping because the direction the world is going towards is so disheartening and the Lord is groaning and heartbroken because of the evil that keeps waxing stronger and stronger daily in the world and most especially in the church of God. Things has seriously changed and order has turned to disorderliness, yet the voice of the Spirit is screaming to the lost in the market square of life to return to the Saviour but the ears of many are shut to His sobering cry.

The judge of the earth is near who is going to bring every work into judgement. Should we not become sober and humble ourselves more before Him? trembling before this terrible God as we read His word in total fear and reverence for Him. Let's go to our teaching now.

Bible Text:; Acts 12:20-23
Acts.12.20 - And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country.

Acts.12.21 - And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

Acts.12.22 - And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

Acts.12.23 - And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Study

Before the verses of Scripture, we read of how Herod Agrippa I killed James, the son of Zebedee. It was recorded that the Jews were pleased with what he did. James became the second Christian martyr and the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred, being executed with the sword. While Stephen was the first Christian martyr, it appeared that the church kept silent in prayers before Peter was then captured to be martyred by Herod, which made them raise their voices to the Lord in prayers for him. God sent His angel to set Peter free so that he was not killed like Stephen and James.

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." — **Acts 12:7–9, KJV.** When Herod searched for Peter and could not find him, he examined the keepers and commanded that they should be put to death. God was watching Herod all this while and remained quiet.

"And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode." **— Acts 12:19, KJV.** Now, in this paragraph, we begin to read something interesting and saddening about King Herod Agrippa I. Here is a man who did not fear God. He was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and these people knew about it, although the reason for the anger was not mentioned. And because these cities depended on Herod's country for food, they sought every way they could to make peace with him.

So, they sought the support of Blastus, Herod's assistant, and they got an appointment with him. These men were afraid of dying of hunger, so they thought about the best way to save their lives, and to them, it was to make peace with God's enemy. They never thought of making peace with God and trusting in Him, not knowing that the king's heart is even in the hands of the Lord.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." — **Proverbs 21:1, KJV**

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." — **Proverbs 29:25, KJV**

Then, on a set day, the day appointed for them by Herod, he put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to them.

"And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them." — **Acts 12:21, KJV**

The people started saying different things to exalt Herod, and in his heart it appeared that he accepted the exaltations. He was raised above his status and placed in the position of God.

"And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." — **Acts 12:22, KJV**

This was the voice of a god, the people shouted, and it was at this point that the angel of the Lord struck him because he accepted the worship of the people.

"And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." — **Acts 12:23, KJV**

This was a man who was not killed because he killed James, and he was not also killed because he had arrested Peter and wanted to kill him, but was at this point killed. This is because the Lord had said that He would not share His glory with anyone, and Herod did so.

"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." — **Isaiah 42:8, KJV**

He fell for the praises of men. To those men, it was not harmful to do so. They did it basically to earn Herod's favour. But the tragedy then fell on Herod, and not on the people. This is a big lesson to learn as children of God, especially men of God.

Beware of people's praise.

King Saul also fell into the trap of loving the praise of men. The praises the women sang for David exposed the pride and insecurity in Saul's heart. Instead of rejoicing in God's victory, Saul became consumed with jealousy, and from that day onward, he began making decisions that led to his downfall.

"And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward." — **1 Samuel 18:7–9, KJV**

From that moment:
1. Saul became jealous of David.
2. He repeatedly attempted to kill him.
3. He disobeyed God more deeply.
4. He consulted a medium at Endor.
5. He eventually died on Mount Gilboa.

David was not moved by what the women sang because his heart was right with God. But it moved Saul because he did not have a right heart with God.

What happens when you do not beware of the praise of men?
1. Just like Herod, you can lose your life and eventually your soul.

2. You will not be able to tell the truth because you will not want

to offend man. And by so doing, you will offend God.

3. You will listen to the voice of the people and not the voice of God.

4. You may get your heart lifted up above God and begin to accept the praises of men.

5. You would begin to be more conscious of living up to people's expectations in terms of what God only can do. By this, you may begin to trust in your own power and strength.

6. You might begin to seek for the praises of men when they are not given and then become jealous. And this will lead to more wickedness.

We must check our hearts as servants and ministers of God if we do not abhor any secret desire for men's praise. When the voices of the people begin to matter to us more than the voice of God, then there comes a big problem. When we begin to hear people's voices louder than the voice of God then we are entering a snare. Some have watered down God's truth because they want to please men and they want to be accepted by men. The end of such people will be pitiful. The day you start serving God with the heart of never minding what anyone would say, that is when you will begin to serve God truly. We must be God-pleasers and not men's.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." — **Galatians 1:10, KJV.** Paul makes it clear that a servant of God should not seek to please men but God. When a man of God begins to please men, he would begin to displease God. Any gospel that would have meaning in the ears of men and transform them from carnality to spirituality must come from God. That is the message that has life and Spirit. But when such messages are adjusted to please those who hear them, it leaves them the way they are. The reason some might get offended because of the pure message is because it touches an aspect of their carnal nature that needs the transformation of the Spirit of God, which they are not willing to give up. If messages that are supposed to transform these men are then watered down to

please them, they remain untransformed and unprepared for God's kingdom. And seeking men's praise makes one yield to the compromise of God's truth. King Saul fell into the trap when he yielded to the voice of the people against God's voice. He desired public honour and was concerned about how he appeared before others. Saul's actions also showed that he was concerned about maintaining the people's approval. After confessing, he pleaded with Samuel.

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." — **1 Samuel 15:24, KJV**

"Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God." — **1 Samuel 15:30, KJV**

If God gives you an instruction and sends you on an errand, what people say should not be your concern. Those who leave or antagonize you should not bother you. The only person that must not leave you is God. Inasmuch as He remains with you, as you continue to fear and do His will, you are good to go. People can push you to act against God's will. If you are not careful, like King Herod, you can get killed because you accepted the praises of the people and did not give glory to God. As innocent as these praises were, they became deadly. It is better to stay in the midst of those who criticise you justly, so you can improve, than to dwell in the midst of those who will clap you into destruction.

Those who sang Herod's praise did so because:
1. They needed his favour.
2. They wanted peace.

3. They wanted to show him that they were pleased with him.
4. They wanted to prove their love for him.
5. They feared for their lives.

It is possible that they did not even mean the words they were saying, but were saying them because they needed help. But Herod lost his life because of this. You must always beware of men's praise and seek to return all glory to God at all times because everything we do and have, He gave us the opportunity to do and have them.

The Word of God says: "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." **— Luke 16:15, KJV.** These matters are the matters of the heart, which we must look into well. We must keep checking our hearts to see if there are secretly lurking desires for men's praise and attention in them because they can become disastrous.

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, BECAUSE HE KNEW ALL MEN, And needed not that any should testify of man: for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN." — **John 2:24–25, KJV.** Worms ate Herod Agrippa alive, he became the first and the last in the scriptures to face such a death penalty. Those who always sing your praise may only be doing so because they need your favour and what they can get from you, and not even because they mean it.

Be careful.

This does not mean that all those who appreciate what you are doing have a wrong motive. It is simply saying: always guard

your heart from seeking the praises of men like this, and do not fall into the condemnation of Herod.

Invitation

If you know that you are still living in sin and you are ready to repent and begin to live your life in strict obedience to God so that you can overcome every sin in your life to make heaven, please place your right hand on your chest and say this prayer with your mouth.

Say,

"Lord Jesus, I accept You as my personal Lord and Savior. I believe that You died for me and took away my sins so that I will not face the penalty of them. I surrender my life to You today, and I make a decision to obey and follow You. Come into my life now and accept me as Your child. Thank You for saving me, in Jesus Christ's name I pray, Amen."

Congratulations, now you are saved. If you prayed this short prayer, please WhatsApp **+2347067511039** and let me know that you have just been saved. I want to have a word with you. God bless you!

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