

12-2-18

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

In December 2003 I wrote the Scripture Chorus that we sang this morning, taken from Psalm 90. I entitled the Scripture Chorus "Our Numbered Days" That was 15 years ago. The Psalm says,

Psalms 90:9: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

A Psalm Of Moses. As we approach the last month of the year, this is a classic passage and Psalm that should speak to each of us about the brevity of life. Our lives are short and the Psalmist, who was Moses, tells us how we should live our lives in light of the short time we have here.

This morning we are going to read through this psalm and seek to learn how to number our days and make the most of our time in this life!

Moses wrote this Psalm when he and the children of Israel were wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years. Limited by God because of their sins and rebellion.

In many respects we are like the children of Israel. Were passing thorough the wilderness of this sin infested world awaiting better things. This Psalm explains how to stay close to God through our wilderness journey!

I. Note the intro to the Psalm.

1. Psalm 90:1 Note: It says it is a prayer of Moses. Moses wrote music and was a musician. Like many of God's prophets were.

Psalms 90:1 {A Prayer of Moses the man of God.} LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Note: One of the most important things to God's people should be to be close to God. Being in His will is the most important place to dwell. It matters little where you are physically!

Psalms 84:10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Rather, dwell in small place humble place in the presence of God, than to dwell with the lost in their large tents, of booty and luxury.

Any place we are is a good place as long as we are in His will.

Jonah was a great example of the misery a child of God experiences when he flees from the presence of God.

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah soon repented.

Do people really think there is someplace they can hide from God?
Do we really think that changing places will make things better?

II. MOSES WRITES ABOUT WHO GOD IS. WE SHOULD MEDITATE ON THIS:

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Our Biggest problem is we do not know God.
Everyone makes a God after their imagination instead of according to revelation of Bible.

We imagine what God would like, but do we really know?
If we did know, would we give our Lord what pleases Him?

This is the essence of Idolatry.

It is just as much idolatry to conjure up in our imaginations what we think pleases God as to engrave an image or icon and fall down and worship it. Instead of worshipping a physical object we are worshipping an invisible idea.

The God we worship is clearly revealed in Scripture.

III. BECAUSE MEN TURN FROM GOD, GOD TURNS FROM THEM AND LETS THEM GO THE WAY OF DESTRUCTION.

Psalms 90:3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

Children left to themselves will get hurt.
Play with the stove and get burnt.
Eat something and get sick.
Spiritually we are children who are turned to destruction.

IV. WHY DO WE NOT LEARN FROM THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US. WHO KNOWS MORE THAN GOD HIMSELF?

Psalms 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Psalms 90:5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

Psalms 90:6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

Some men long ago have lived near 1000 years. Methuselah lived to be 969. Adam lived to be 930 years old.

1000 years to God is like one day.

Consider the genealogies of Christ. We read about them in Luke 3:23-3:38.

1. the son of Joseph,
2. the son of Heli,
3. the son of Matthat,
4. the son of Levi,
5. the son of Melchi,
6. the son of Janna,
7. the son of Joseph,
8. the son of Mattathias,
9. the son of Amos,
10. the son of Naum,
11. the son of Esli,
12. the son of Nagge,
13. the son of Maath,
14. the son of Mattathias,
15. the son of Semei,
16. the son of Joseph,
17. the son of Juda,
18. the son of Joanna,
19. the son of Rhesa,
20. the son of Zorobabel,
21. the son of Salathiel,
22. the son of Neri,
23. the son of Melchi,
24. the son of Addi,
25. the son of Cosam,
26. the son of Elmodam,
27. the son of Er,
28. the son of Jose,
29. the son of Eliezer,
30. the son of Jorim,
31. the son of Matthat,
32. the son of Levi,
33. the son of Simeon,
34. the son of Juda,
35. the son of Joseph,
36. the son of Jonan,
37. the son of Eliakim,
38. the son of Melea,
39. the son of Menan,
40. the son of Mattatha,
41. the son of Nathan,
42. the son of David, Luke 3:31
43. the son of Jesse,
44. the son of Obed,

45. the son of Booz,
46. the son of Salmon,
48. the son of Naasson,
49. the son of Aminadab,
50. the son of Aram,
51. the son of Esrom,
52. the son of Phares,
52. the son of Juda,
53. the son of Jacob,
54. the son of Isaac,
55. the son of Abraham, Luke 3:34
56. the son of Thara,
57. the son of Nachor,
58. the son of Saruch,
59. the son of Ragau,
60. the son of Phalec,
61. the son of Heber, Luke 3:35
62. the son of Sala,
63. the son of Cainan, 3:36
64. the son of Arphaxad,
65. the son of Sem, (Shem)
66. the son of Noe, (Noah) 3:36
67. the son of Lamech,
68. the son of Mathusala, 3:37 (Oldest Man) 969 yrs
69. the son of Enoch, (RAPTURED UP)
70. the son of Jared,
71. the son of Maleleel,
72. the son of Cainan,
73. the son of Enos, 3:38
74. the son of Seth,
75. the son of Adam, The son of God.. Luke 3:38

Thousands of years.

But a few days in Gods sight. Not only that but He keeps perfect records.
How many of us could even go back in our genealogy 4-5 generations? The Bible gives 75 generations all the way back to David - Abraham - Noah - Adam!

And His soon return is but a breath away to God.

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We read of 75 generations like you would just leaf through a book and flip through the pages quickly. Our lives come and go just that quickly!

We are like the grass the psalm says.

V. ALL OF THIS LIFE IS FILLED WITH TROUBLE BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.

Psalms 90:7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

Psalms 90:8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

Psalms 90:9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

One thing we can expect in this life and that is trials.

Murphy's law, if it can it will go wrong.

The people of Israel complained and tempted God 10 times in the wilderness. The final straw was their griping and complaining at Kadesh Barnea when the 12 spies were sent out and 10 come back with an evil report. God said,

Numbers 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

Numbers 14:28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

Numbers 14:29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

Numbers 14:30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Numbers 14:31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

Numbers 14:33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

Numbers 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Numbers 14:35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

Yes God was angry with these people and they limited what God could do for them. Even Moses was forbidden to go into the promised land because of his error of getting angry and disobeying God by striking the Rock instead of speaking to it.

I often wonder, how many things we have done to offend God causing afflictions and chastening in our lives. If Moses was guilty, could we be too?

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VI. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THIS LIFE?

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Psalms 90:11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

Psalms 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Teach us to number our days. Threescore and ten or four score. Where are we on the chart?

0 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

One writer trying to explain why it is that time seems to go quicker as you get older writes:

Each new minute represents a smaller fraction of our lives. One day as a 10 year old represents about .027 percent of the kid's life. A day for a 60 year old? .0045 percent. The kid's life is just bigger.

Also, our ability to remember things declines as we get older and if we can't remember what happened it did not happen.

How many times did you go in to do something in your house and forget why you went there, or put something down and forgot where you put it? Why does that seem to happen more as you get older?

Time in essence is compressed as we get older.

But greatest of all, a realization that there is less time in front of us than what has happened behind us gives us the perspective that our lives are indeed a vapor. Actually in this, as we get older we are seeing more clearly. Yet a minute for a 70 year old is the same minute for a 10 year old. A minute does not change, just our perspective!

VII. MOSES PLEADS FOR GOD'S MERCY AND SO SHOULD WE.

Psalms 90:13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

Psalms 90:14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Lord have Mercy on your people. We need your help.

Certainly we do not deserve the Lord's Mercy.

Sad how people cannot recognize what they deserve.

How can people have such a high regard for themselves as if they deserve so much, yet they do not.

VIII. MOSES NOW PLEADS FOR GOD'S BLESSINGS.

Psalms 90:15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Psalms 90:16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

Psalms 90:17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

We all want Mercy.

But ultimately what we want is God's blessing in our lives.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Hebrews 12:9 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?

Hebrews 12:10 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.

Hebrews 12:11 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.

Psalms 90:15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Psalms 90:16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

Psalms 90:17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Make us glad after we have been afflicted. Now we need to be made glad.

Establish the work of our hands.

IX. ULTIMATELY, WHAT WOULD WE DESIRE OF THE LORD?

Psalms 90:17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

That God would be with us and bless our endeavors.

If God is for us who can be against us?

If God is against us who can be for us?

When God is not blessing, all we do turns to ashes.

When God is with us, all we do God blesses and establishes it.

THIS IS WHAT WE NEED TO SEE:

Job 1:10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Even Satan recognized God's blessing on the life of Job. This is what we need. When our ways please the Lord, when we live for God, we could expect that God would bless us.

Moses wrote this Psalm as the people of God were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years because of their sins. God was chastening them for their griping and complaining. Yet in the midst of this chastening comes this beautiful Psalm. Is not our pilgrimage somewhat short and filled with evil and trials and difficulties. Are we not pilgrims and strangers in this world?

Everything Moses writes about in this Psalm we should relate to and understand completely. Is there not one of us that have made mistakes in this life that we suffer for?

Imagine God told the children of Israel they were all going to die in the wilderness and not make it to the promises land. Yet Moses cried out for God's blessings right where they were. And God did bless them in spite of their sins and rebellions against Him.

If we yield to God's chastening, we will be blessed even in the wilderness experiences. Trust in the Lord, lean on Him.

Application:

We need to cry out to God, LORD TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS AND APPLY OUR HEARTS TO WISDOM.

Teach us how to accept your will for our lives.
Teach us to accept where You have placed us.
Teach us to humble ourselves and trust in You.

Remember Moses wrote this with the knowledge that they were going to all die in the wilderness because of their sins. Yet he says,

Psalms 90:1 {A Prayer of Moses the man of God.} LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

If God be with us even the wilderness can be a place of blessing, with the right attitude and spirit!