"THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE"
Psalm 90
11/24/91

INTRODUCTION:

***Three truths to remember about time from Psalm 90 -**

I. God is not bound by time (v. 1-6)

II. Man's life is short, and sin makes it sorrowful (v. 7-11)

III. We need God to give us wisdom to make the most of our lives (v. 12-17)

CONCLUSION: Words of Wisdom regarding our time:

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INTRODUCTION:

This psalm, written through Moses who lived to be 120 years old, unveils a theme that Moses saw vividly portrayed before his eyes, as 1.2 million of his people perished in a brief 40 years: namely, the brevity of life.

Psalm 90 is the oldest of all Psalms. Interestingly enough, the age of this psalm corresponds to the theme of it - namely, the shortness of life on earth.

Every day 130,000 people die somewhere in the world. Every hour 5,417 people go to meet their Maker.

That's 90 per minute. That's nearly 2 people every second.

***Three truths to remember about time from Psalm 90 -**

I. God is not bound by time (v. 1-6)

V. 1

"Dwelling place" - God is pictured as a house that has never gotten old, decrepit or ruined. As Paul said to the philosophers at Mars Hill, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

V. 2

"Were brought forth" - the picture is of the mountains being "born."

Mountains are always viewed as that part of creation which is majestic, strong (powerful), and old.

"From everlasting (in the past) to everlasting (in the future), God remains the same. He is immutable. He never changes.

V. 3

"Thou turnest man to destruction - It is God who takes life, who decides when we breathe our last (Heb. 9:27).

"Return, ye children of men" - meaning, to return to the dust from which we came

(Gen. 3:19).

V. 4

II Pet. 3:8 - "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

When a thousand years have expired, they are like "yesterday" to God. His perfect remembrance of them makes them such.

As far as God is concerned, it was only two days ago that Christ died.

God describes time (1,000 years) using four analogies:

1) A "watch" - the brief hours of the night when a guard would stand duty over a city to protect it

2) A "flood" - as the flood waters quickly carry along debris, etc. (as it moves past), so this is the perspective God has for history. he sees the successive ages (and the details of them) just quickly passing by down the currents of time.

3) A "sleep" - as quickly as it seems for many to fall asleep and wake up, so is time to God

4) The "grass" - in the morning, it is vibrant, moist, and growing, and by evening (after the desert winds have passed by), it is dry, scorched, and withered (James 1:10-11 - "But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

II. Man's life is short, and sin makes it sorrowful (v. 7-11)

V. 7-9

Moses, who saw the unbelieving Israelites (from 20 years old and upward) die int hew wilderness, was reminded of the price ("wages") of sin.

V. 9

Our life is like a "tale that is told"

From introduction through the chapters, and to the conclusion, man's life is short.

SEE: "Painting of a Man at the Three Stages of Life" - Georgi Vins - Prisoner Bulletin, p. 31

V. 10

The average life span is 70 years, which is only 840 months, 3,640 weeks, or 25,200 days.

It's not much when viewed against the backdrop of eternity.

Life is short, but it is not always sweet. "Labor and sorrow" - the results of sin and the curse.

"It is soon cut off, and we fly away" - SEE: Eccles. 12:1-7

V. 11

Not many people consider God's wrath against sin. And that sin is the reason for misery and judgment.

III. We need God to give us wisdom to make the most of our lives (v. 12-17)

V. 12

"So" - in light of what was previously said (v. 1-11)

"Teach us" - only God can place within man an accurate value of each minute of time.

"To number" - to truly consider that life's days are few.

God likens the swiftness of our lives unto:

1) A weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6)
2) A breath of air (Job 7:6)
3) A runner (Job 9:25)
4) Swift ships (Job 9:26)
5) A flower (Job 14:1)
6) A shadow (Job 14:2)
7) As evaporating water (Job 14:11-12)
8) A shepherd's tent (Is. 38:12)
9) A vapor (Ja. 4:14)

The reason given for numbering our days is <u>not</u> so that we can miserably lament the brevity of life, but so that we will both learn and experience the art of <u>skillful living</u>.

"Wisdom" - is truth put into life. it is applied knowledge. Our heart (the core of our being) needs to <u>know</u> God's truth, then <u>live</u> it in order to make the most of our lives.

Sawyer's paraphrase: "So teach us to understand the shortness of life, so that we may live for what really matters."

How to make the most of your life:

1) Live in light of the Lord's <u>return</u> (v. 13)

   "Return" (cp. Ps. 6:4, 80:14) - has the idea of "come to my rescue and deliver my life from futility and misery." The Messiah's return is no about implied.

2) Experience the Lord's merciful salvation (v. 14)

3) Let God bring joy and fulfillment into your life, rather than spending your life trying to find it

4) Trust God to work in and through your life (v. 16-17)

Life is vain without God doing it through you (Jn. 15:5)

CONCLUSION: Words of Wisdom regarding our time:

1. Wake up out of your spiritual lethargy (Rom. 13:11-14)

2. Prioritize your life

   a. Our # 1 love (Mk. 12:28-31)

   b. Our # 1 goal (Mt. 6:33)

   c. Our # 1 job (I Tim. 2:1)

3. Make your plans by seeking God's will (Ja. 4:13-15)

4. Seek to make every moment count for God (Eph. 5:16)

   a. Invest your life in the eternal, not the temporal

   b. Take advantage of every opportunity to be a blessing

   c. Schedule your time and discipline your life

   d. Live each day as if it were your last