

Pastor Ben Libby  
 Sermon  
 8/5/2019

To Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, be glory forever Amen. The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from Psalm 90:

**Psalm 90, A prayer of Moses, the man of God.**

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity you are God. 3 You grind people to dust, and you say, "Return, children of Adam." 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day, like yesterday that has gone by, or like a watch in the night. 5 You sweep them away like a flood. They are like sleep in the morning, like grass which changes quickly. 6 In the morning it sprouts and grows. By evening it is cut down, and it withers. 7 Surely, we are consumed by your anger, and by your wrath we are terrified. 8 You have laid out our guilty deeds in front of you. Our hidden sins are revealed in the light of your face. 9 For all our days pass away under your fury. We finish our years like a sigh. 10 The days of our lives add up to seventy years, or eighty years if we are strong. Yet the best of them are trouble and sorrow, for they disappear quickly, and we fly away. 11 Who can understand the power of your anger? But your fury is consistent with the fear that is owed to you. 12 Teach us to number our days in such a way, that we bring a heart of wisdom.

This is the Word of God. Congregation may be seated.

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

It is the first week of August. Boy, where has the summer gone? It seems like it was only last week when I was preparing to get ready for Pastor's Conference in Eau Claire. That was in the beginning of June. It seems like only yesterday that we were getting ready to celebrate Independence Day. That was a month ago already! What is it about the summer months that really makes time go by so fast!

But, of course, that's not really true. Time does not go by any faster in summer than it does in the dead of winter. It only seems like it does. Maybe it is because there is so much going on in the summer, we keep ourselves so busy, and because we

do all these different things, time seems to be going faster. But, time marches on like it always does.

They say that times flies when you're having fun. I think that is true. But I have found that to be the case even when fun is not involved. To me, it seems like times flies when you're busy. When you have many things that you are trying to get done, this when time seems to speed up.

And I think that is partly why we come to church. To slow down. We speed ourselves up with our busy lives and the break-neck pace of our activities and careers. Church is when we put all those things on pause. When we come back and

center ourselves on what really matters in life, our LORD and Savior. It is here where we force ourselves to listen to what He says, namely, **“Be still, and know that I am God”**.

Our text this morning really does that, it really puts things in perspective for us. This Psalm, this prayer, brings up the point that is driven home in other sections of scripture, like in Peter’s epistle when he quotes from Isaiah: **“All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.”** [1 Peter 1:24-25] One of the things that we know from God’s Word (and also from life experience) is that our lives do not last long. Even a life that we might consider to be long is a drop in the bucket compared to our God. He is eternal, we are transient. While the fact that God has no beginning and no end might boggle our minds, ultimately it is a very comforting. Why? Because that eternal and everlasting God is our refuge, our dwelling place, a very present help in trouble. Even though our lives do run out, His mercy and grace never do!

**MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER, AMEN.**

**2 Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity you are God.**

“How old are you?” This is of course an impolite question to ask someone, a lesson that we learn early in life. “You don’t go around asking people how old they are, it’s rude.” This doesn’t make sense to us when we are children. But as we get older, we understand more and more. Age becomes something that we get ashamed of somewhere along the line. It reminds us that we are not as young as we once were, or as young as we might think we are.

For me, personally, August is a month when I am forced to look at certain ages. My son just had

his third birthday this Thursday, and boy did those years fly by. It is also a month in which my wife and I got married, almost 6 years ago. It is also the month when my sister was born, and it is the month that comes right before my birthday month. August really makes me look in the mirror.

So, you may not ask someone “How old are you?” But we are curious people. What if you asked that question to something that could not answer? Not due to the lack of the knowledge, but rather due to the fact that it is inanimate.

Take, for instance, Mt. Rainer. It dominates the landscape here, and it always has. But, not exactly. There was a time when Mt. Rainer did not extend its shadow over our landscape. It was just a really long time ago.

But how long ago? How old is it? When it comes to geology, trying to determine how long a natural structure has existed, it is hard to find the truth. This is because this field is dominated by the false view of Evolution. When I typed that question into Google, I got this answer: *The volcano was built up above the surrounding country by repeated eruptions and successive flows of lava. It is a relatively young volcano, only about 500,000 years old.* I am not a scientist, but even I know that is not true. They claim that the mountain is relatively young, but their estimated date of birth is about 83 times older than the earth itself!

While evolutionist shout about how old the earth is, we believe from what we can understand about the Word of God that the earth is young in comparison. Can we prove it? We can’t go back in time and see the mountain being formed. Presumably, it was born out of the flood waters, which happened (we believe) about 4 ½ thousands of years ago. We can look at the evidence and science, but even that relies on mankind’s faulty reasoning. We were not there. All we can do is believe what God says.

He was there. He was there when, as our text says, **Before the mountains were born** when God

**gave birth to the earth and the world.** He is eternal. He had no beginning; He truly has no end. This is hard for us to understand. Our lives are marked by birthdays, anniversaries, and sadly days upon which we die. We have set beginnings and definite ends. God does not. He always WAS, always IS... It is like how John starts his Gospel: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**

Not only does His eternal nature puzzle us, so does His creative nature. God made everything in 6 days. He did so by speaking it into existence. All things were made through HIM!!!

And this is where evolution comes in. It attacks God's creative work and replaces it with time and chance. If the world and life slowly evolved over time, then there is no one responsible for our lives and we have no one to answer to. Sadly, this is a theory and a movement that is so widely accepted, swallowed, and taught that it is present almost everywhere we go. Even some so-called Christians have gotten on board with it. These people claim that God co-operated with evolution to make the world we see today. They even use passages like one from our text to back up the theory. They say, **"For a thousand years in your sight are like a day"** means that when Genesis refers to "day" in creation, it means thousands and thousands of years.

But, that verse has context. **4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day, like yesterday that has gone by, or like a watch in the night.**

A watch in the night is a period of about 3 to 4 hours in Israelite terms. The point of comparison is not "1 day equals 1,000 years to GOD", rather that our view and grasp of time is very different than our eternal LORD. The way that we reckon days or even hours is like how God can look at a thousand years. 1,000 years are as brief to God as a day is to us, or even a period in the night that we slept through. The

point is this; what we consider to be long or old, is not very long or old to the eternal and all-powerful God!

**9 For all our days pass away under your fury. We finish our years like a sigh. 10 The days of our lives add up to seventy years, or eighty years if we are strong. Yet the best of them are trouble and sorrow, for they disappear quickly, and we fly away.**

Speaking of age, this Psalm itself provides for an interesting subject case. In its heading, this Psalm is attributed to Moses, "a man of God". We don't know all of the authors of the book of Psalms, except that they all wrote under the authority of the Holy Spirit. The majority of them are attributed to King David, about half of them. The rest of the Psalms are credited to others like King Solomon, or the liturgical group known as the Sons of Korah. But, many of them are anonymous, they don't list the author.

This Psalm is the only one credited to Moses. We don't know all the authors, but this is presumably the OLDEST of all the Psalms. Even though the time of Moses was much different than the time of David, and certainly much different than our day and age, his inspired words still ring true. God has been there for His people since the beginning. He has been, **our dwelling place throughout all generations.**

Here, Moses says that our lives add up to about 70 years, perhaps 80 if we are strong. That is actually similar to us in this country. The study of "life expectancy" is an interesting one. Today, a baby born in our country can typically expect to live to the age of 78. But it has actually been declining over the past 3 years. In fact, the life expectancy in this country hasn't gone down this much since the period of 1915-1918, a period which saw the outbreak of WWI and the Spanish flu. But we live in one of the wealthiest nations in the world, with advanced healthcare. So, why the decrease? It's hard to say for

sure, but there are theories. The life expectancy going down is attributed to the rise in drug and opioid use and overdose, the rise in increased liver failure, and the rise of suicide rates. Basically, it has gone down due to sinful human activity, one way or another.

In Moses' time, there was a hard cap on life expectancy as well. The reason was essentially the same; sinful human activity. But this one was very specific. Under Moses' leadership, the people exodus-ed from Egypt and made the hard sojourn to the promised land. But when they got there, it was already occupied. Moses sent spies to scout out this land that God had promised them. After 40 days, the spies returned and gave their report. It was indeed a good land, flowing with milk and honey. But the people who lived there were mighty and powerful. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, urged the people to rise up and take it, for the LORD was with them. The rest said it was useless, the people were just too powerful. The people reacted to this news with fear and horror. They grumbled against Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. They were ready to stone them and find a new leader who would take them back to Egypt.

The result of this grumbling and rebellion was the LORD'S wrath! You can see it reflected in the words of this Psalm. There is an overtone of God's displeasure with His people throughout these verses:

**3 You grind people to dust, and you say, "Return, children of Adam."**

**7 Surely, we are consumed by your anger, and by your wrath we are terrified.**

**11 Who can understand the power of your anger? But your fury is consistent with the fear that is owed to you.**

God was so displeased by the Israelites attitude that He said He would strike them down with pestilence and make a people out of Moses instead. Moses pleaded with the LORD, and He relented from the judgement that the people deserved. But, as a consequence, none of those

people would receive entrance into the promised land. **"The men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test ...shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers."** [Numbers 14] No one who was 20 or older, except for Caleb and Joshua, would be able to enter. The Israelites would spend the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness, until that generation of people had died.

The fact of the matter is that lives are all cut short due to sin. This was true for Moses' time and its true today. Yet, it was not meant to be this way! Our Old Testament text this morning hinted at the reason why. Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Ever since then, people have been dying. Life expectancy wasn't even supposed to be a thing, it was just supposed to be life! Now life is short, like Moses said, 70 to 80 years if we are not cut down sooner. But even after we fell into sin, man lived much longer! Genesis chapter 5 lists the generations from Adam to his son Seth, down to Noah. The shortest life span of all these people was Enoch, who didn't die, but was taken by God when He was 365. Besides him, the shortest life span of those men was Noah's father Lamech, who died at the ripe old age of 777. The longest to live was Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, who lived to be 969 years old! That is 12 of our average life-times! God had to cut those life spans down, because man had gotten so sinful. Just think, if someone was a murder who murdered his whole life, and his life was 800 years old, how much of a scourge upon society that person would be!

It got so bad, that God was grieved in His heart that He had made man, and He had to send a worldwide flood to cleanse the land of it's wide-spread sin. **5 You sweep them away like a flood. They are like sleep in the morning, like grass which changes quickly. 6 In the morning it sprouts and grows. By evening it is cut down, and it withers.**

But what about today? Well, it's not much better. It's been about 4 ½ thousand years since the flood, and the world is just as sinful as ever. I wonder how our society compares to that of Noah, when **the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** [Gen 6.5]? Or how do we stack up to the Israelites who were ready to tuck tale and run back to Egypt, despite the LORD freeing them from slavery and guaranteeing that they would possess the land of Canaan? The world is still very much an evil and inhospitable place for those who would listen to what God has to say.

But it is not just our environment that is the problem. **WE ARE THE PROBLEM!** We are just as sinful as everyone else in this world. We know what God says, but we shelve that Word when we want to. We are just as rebellious as Adam and Eve, or the people at the time of the flood, or the Israelites who grumbled and died in the wilderness. Even Moses, this "MAN OF GOD", was also sinful. As a result of his sinful pride, it would Joshua, not Moses, who would lead the people into the land. All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God!!!

We talked a bit early about some of His qualities, how He is eternal and everlasting, and how He created the world simply by saying, "Let there be." We also know that He is Holy, and that He hates sin and cannot tolerate it. And yet, at the same time, He also has other attributes. He is merciful. He is loving and He is kind. He is slow and anger and abounding in mercy and grace. He has every right to give what we deserve, death and destruction. But He doesn't. Instead, He gives us life, He gives us hope, He gives us Jesus!

**Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.**

Our days are short. God's Mercy is long. Our days are marked by dates and time, but it is also marked by the multitude of times we have disobeyed and rebelled against our God. And yet, we are not cut down instantly. His reign is marked by Mercy

and Grace. He gives us a time a grace, and not only us, but everyone on earth! He gives all people what they need to live. And He gives all people what they need to live eternally. He gave His most prized possession, His Son Jesus Christ, so that we could have a chance to be saved. This world is still like it was before the flood, **only evil continually.** But, despite the world's wickedness, including yours, God loved that World and Jesus gave His life so that we would not perish, but have everlasting life.

**12 Teach us to number our days in such a way, that we bring a heart of wisdom.**

This prayer of Moses is not the most upbeat of prayers. It does go on past our text, and it implores the LORD to guard us with His steadfast love.

But, even so, these verses do bring up an excellent point, and it is one that I think people not only forget but actively try to forget. Nothing in this world lasts! Why is it rude to ask someone how old they are? Because, the older you are the closer you are to death? We all know that is not necessarily the case. And even if it is, from a Christian perspective, who cares? As Paul said, **Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

I think one of the reasons we are uncomfortable talking about death is that it has power over all of us. It's going to get us all. Old age and death tend to go together. Thus, we think that getting old is something to be ashamed of, because it means we are closer to death, closer to "losing".

But, the Christian never loses to death. Christ defeated death for us once and for all on the cross at Calvary. It now holds no sway over us.

Moses here prays that the LORD would teach us to number our days. What does that mean? It means that we don't take our time of grace from God for granted. It means that we don't live our lives thinking that they are never going to end, they will. But it also means that we should be thankful of the time that God has given to us. He gives us time to live in His eternal grace and mercy. He gives us time

to spread His mighty Word to others. Don't be ashamed of your age, rather be incredibly thankful! God has given me these X amount of years and I know that He will continue to be with me!

Those who came before Moses died. Those who came before us died. But the whole time, OUR LORD was there! He has been the dwelling place we continue to go back to time and time again. Because of the great things He does for you, you can be described like Moses was in the title, "A Man or Woman of GOD!!!" Nothing lasts in this world, and this world will not last. He is coming quickly. But because of Jesus, we don't need to be afraid. Our sins have been forgiven and we will go home to the LORD forever. We all have received entrance into the promised land, entrance granted by Jesus. Nothing lasts in this world, except His Mercy and Grace, He is our eternal refuge! AMEN!!!