

Psalm 90 "Death and Wisdom"

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 August 2024

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

And let's bow our heads in prayer as we prepare to think about God's Word. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would continue to move in each one of us, that you would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us with gentle but deep power, and that your Holy Spirit would bring your Word home to our heart.

Father, we desperately need your wisdom to live well in this life. And so, Father, help us be always mindful of Jesus and what He's done for us on the cross. Help us to be prepared to confess Him as our Savior and as our Lord. And Father, may your Word truly form us. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

Some of you might know that Morris' mom passed away a couple of weeks ago. If you don't now, you do know that his mom passed away a couple of weeks ago. And when I got back, she died just before I got back from holidays. And after I called them, and then when I got back from my holidays, we had a bit of a chat. And, you know, one of the things that we talked about is there's increasing number of people in our culture who don't want to have a funeral when they die. And that's sort of fair enough. But the problem I said to Morris is that funerals, well, first of all, funerals play a very important social role. It's in a sense a culturally designed means to help people connect with the bereaved. In other words, you know, somebody, your neighbor, your friend, or whatever, they've had a death in the family. It's very profound. And it's sort of a bit awkward. How do you talk to them? Like, when do you talk to them? Like, it's just a bit awkward. And funerals are just a very wonderful opportunity, amongst other things, for people to come and meet those who are left behind and offer their condolences and maybe give them a hug or cry with them or share with them. And then it's easier the next time you see them, because in a sense, you've broken the ice with it.

[3 : 29] There are many Anglicans in Canada who believe that a funeral service is about praying for the dead, but that's not the historic Anglican position. It's, in fact, not the position of the Book of Common Prayer. And so an Anglican understanding of a funeral, actually, is that it really has three purposes. It's to, I mean, apart from what I've just said, a social way to meet those who are grieving and be able to, in a sense, break the ice with them and express your love and support for them. But it's really a time to remember Jesus, what he's accomplished for us on the cross.

It's a time to remember the deceased, and it's a time to pray for those who mourn. That's fundamentally what a funeral is about. Now, I've been a minister a long time, and over the years, I've seen all sorts of talks and eulogies. I don't know if anybody here was at this funeral that happened. I probably did it about 15 years ago. The fellow who got to preach or speak at the eulogy, he was both, during the service, he was another minister, actually. And it was quite a scandalous thing that he did, because he took 20 minutes, 25 minutes, to completely and utterly tear down his dad in front of a packed room about how completely horrible, miserable, terrible man he was.

It was really quite shocking. But I think the only person here connected to our church who was at that was at our eight o'clock service. And as soon as I began to say there was a story with a very scandalous talk, I could see her nodding, because it was so out of place to see such a talk like that at a funeral.

Generally, at funerals, the opposite problem is there. People talk about the deceased in such a way that if the person who's died is a guy, you'd think that Jesus had an identical twin brother, because this person was so unbelievably perfect. Or if not, if it's a woman who's died, that it's his twin, Jesus' twin sister, that they're so completely perfect. But it's, you know, it should be neither of those types of things. The old Anglican way of talking about it, you remember the deceased, but mainly you talk about Jesus. That's a great wisdom. But one of the big differences that's happened over the years is, well, what you'd actually talk about during a funeral. Now, when I say over the years, I mean, you know, predating me. It's, I'm old, but I'm not that old that it would have been appropriate when I was ordained to have a sermon on God's last judgment, for instance, during a funeral service. I think if I was to do a service like that, there'd be lots of people complaining, including people from my own congregation, that that's just not the appropriate time to talk about something like that.

But for older Christians, the sermon and the service, part of the purpose of it was to actually think about death. Like to think about what death is and its significance, and to consider your own mortality. It's very interesting. I was watching something on Apple TV this week, and in the show that I was watching, a fellow committed suicide, and then later on the show, they showed part of the funeral service, and he was Jewish. And I'm listening, and I realized that the 20 seconds or so of the service that they showed in the fictional show was quoting Psalm 90, which is what we're about to look at.

[7 : 06] I was really shocked, actually. For ancient Christians, Psalm 90 would have been a psalm that you would have looked at. And as you'll see why, it's because it's a meditation upon the meaning of death and how it should change our lives to think about death. Now, these are considered to be very not the type of topics that you don't talk about in Canada anymore. Canadians don't like thinking about death or talking about death.

And probably if you were, they wouldn't even know where to begin. And part of that is because I think for many people outside of the Christian faith, well, there's no real hope when they talk about death. I don't think anybody really has hope that they'll go to a better place when they die, or have hope that they're in the wind and the stars or that they're looking down on people. We say that. People say that at funerals, but I don't think they really believe it. And it's not something that really gives hope. So how does Psalm 90 guide us and challenge us to meditate and think upon death? Well, let's look. If you have your Bibles, it's Psalm 90. And it's good to bring your own Bibles to church if you can. It's good to be able to, some people like to make notes in them and everything like that. But it's also really helpful because I'd like you to check over what I'm saying. I'd like you to see whether I'm quoting something out of context or forgetting something important or hiding something. That's a good thing if you can check that because I want to be faithful to what God's Word says. And here's, in fact, actually what we're going to see is actually the

Psalm begins a meditation upon death in a really quite astounding way. Let's look what it does. First, it begins by a prayer of Moses, the man of God. There's no reason not to believe that that's an accurate description. And so if this is the case, this Psalm was written some 3,400, 3,500 years ago.

It's the only Psalm in the book of Psalms written by Moses. And here's how it begins. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you were God.

Now, it's very interesting that the Psalm 90 begins its meditation upon death by a doxology. Now, doxology is a fancy word that just means a short hymn of praise. It doesn't begin with science. It doesn't begin with any type of shocking things. He's going to lead us in trying to think about what death is and what it means and signifies. But it's very, very significant, I think, that he begins with praise.

[9 : 53] It's, in fact, very wise and very beautiful that he begins with something like this. Not the fact of human death and planetary death and the second law of thermodynamics or the first law of thermodynamics and what it means for the universe. He begins with God. He begins with God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place, verse 1, in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you were God.

Now, the word dwelling place, if you are looking at different Bible translations, you'll see lots of different words that might be used there. And it really means everything that we in our heart of hearts think that home should be. I know many of us have had homes which weren't places of peace. I know many people can't wait to leave their homes. And many, and some of us, that might be the case. You just could not wait to get out of the house and be away from your parent or your parents or your guardians or the foster home or wherever it is that you were. But we all have this same basic idea of what a home should be. That a home should be where you're safe. It should be where you're secure. It's where you can, in a sense, let your hair down. It's where you are fed and where you can flourish.

And all of those ideas are captured in the original word, which is translated here in the psalm as dwelling place. Lord, you have been our dwelling place, our home, our refuge, our sanctuary in all generations. And it's very interesting that it says in all generations. That means it's including us.

That even though this psalm was written 34, 3500 years ago, in a sense, prophetically, Moses is looking down the corridors of time. And it's not that he literally sees a small group of Christians in the city of Ottawa in the year 2024 gathered. But he's saying, listen, this has been from the generations before me. It's my generation. It's the generations to come. In all generations, from generation to generation to generation, human beings have only one true home, one true dwelling place, one true place of safety and refuge. And that is in God. And then it's very interesting. Some of us, I mean, there's a guy who comes to the congregation, and I think he thinks and dreams in numbers. He has a master's degree in math, and he loves abstractions. And some of us are like that. And that's great.

[12 : 25] If you have that type of mind that you just think in numbers and abstractions and praise God, and I hope you're in computer science or in engineering or something like that, where you can really flourish.

We want people to do that. So the planes work and bridges work and computers work and all that stuff. But for many of us, you know, I could say that God's omnipresent and omnipotent. And for many people, that's just like right over the head. It doesn't mean anything whatsoever. It's completely and utterly lost.

But notice how the psalm talks about it. It brings really home something about the ancientness and the majesty and the solidity and the strength of God. And look what it says in verse 2. Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you had formed the earth or the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Not this time I was in Vancouver. The last time I was in Vancouver, it rained the whole time. The time before that I was there for some meetings and it had been rainy throughout the day. And I walked down this street because the meetings were over at like four o'clock in the afternoon or something, 4 30.

And as I walked down the street, I turn right because I have to start to go north to get home. And as I turn the corner, the Rockies are there. And if you've never been to Vancouver, you just can't appreciate it.

[13 : 54] They're just there. It was sunny. The sun is on them. They just look huge and beautiful and majestic and solid. And you understand why so much of the imagery in the Bible talks about mountains.

And that's how the Bible here talks about it. Rather than just saying God's always existed, it said, Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. I am not everlasting, but my true home is in the everlasting God.

And now, with that as the beginning, he begins to have us think about death. What is death and what does it mean? And he's going to talk about that in verses 3 to 10. And well, here's how it goes. Let's read it, and then we'll circle back, and I'll comment about it. Verse 3, You return man, man and woman, obviously, it's a collective phrase there. You return man to dust and say, Return, O children of man, literally, return, O children of Adam. For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. You sweep them, that's human beings, away as with a flood. They are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and is renewed, in the evening it fades and withers. For we are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath we are dismayed.

You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath. We bring our years to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are 70 or even by reason of strength 80, yet their span is but toil and trouble. They are soon gone and we fly away.

The image there is if you're at a campfire and you see the sparks that go up into the sky and they just fly away. That's the imagery. They just fly away. They vanish.

[16 : 32] Verse 11, and that's how it ends at verse 10. So like there's a couple of things about this. Remember, this is after the psalmist has had a time of praise. And the basic message, as you can see, is that human beings are frail. We are mortal, which means we will die. And that we are touched in every aspect of our lives by evil. Now, first of all, every single thing that he says in verses 3 to 10 are scientifically and historically true.

Like these are uncomfortable things and Canadians don't like to hear about it, but there's nothing in there that's not scientifically true. Every human being does die. Every human being does age.

Even the strongest, the richest person can be felled by microscopic viruses. Even the strongest will get old and lose their strength, lose their mind. There's nothing in here which isn't scientifically and historically true. I think I talked about it last week.

Human beings aren't naturally good. If you give one stuffed animal to two kids, they'll fight over it. And you won't be surprised that they fight over it. Because we know that's what kids do.

They have to be taught to show to share. It's not just something that they naturally get. So everything in it is on one level scientifically true, but it's actually not using scientific language.

[18 : 13] And that's where we have hope. It's not just something that we have hope. You see, if you look at verse 5, for instance, you sweep them away as with a flood. They are like a dream.

If you just say you die, where do you go with that? You have no hope. But if rather than saying you die, you say, God sweeps us away like a flood and a dream.

Now there's hope. I can't do anything about the first or second law of thermodynamics. Nothing.

But if the first and second law of thermodynamics are not the only truth, and there is a God, I can call out to him.

There is hope. There is hope. Now, some of you are puzzled over this language. I want to spend a few minutes on it.

[19 : 14] You return man to dust or Adam to dust and say, return, O children of Adam. Like, what's going on here? And what's really going on here is that you, he, the psalmist Moses is opening the door.

And of course, when Moses wrote this, he didn't know the next parts of God's big story. He only knew the first three parts of God's big story. But he's telling us God's big story.

And all the way through this, by the way, I'm interpreting this as a Christian, as a follower of Jesus, not as a rabbi. Not that there's anything wrong with rabbis. But I'm not a rabbi. I don't have to just end with Malachi chapter 4. I can end with Revelation chapter 22. I can go right from Genesis 1 to Revelation chapter 22, because God is the God of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

But Moses here is telling us God's big story. And God's big story is that the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God, he, God, created all things out of nothing.

Out of nothing. And when he created all things out of nothing, he created it. And it says in the text, you go back and read Genesis chapter 1, it's good. It's very good. It's good. God made everything good. And right from the very beginning, God made human beings to be mortal. He made us to be creatures. He didn't make us that we would have infinite minds, that we would be omniscient, that we would be omnipotent. We were always going to be creators. We had to be created by God. In a sense, we were always going to be mortal. But, or finite.

[20 : 46] But he didn't create death. You see, to say that I'm finite, it means that I'm going to come to an end. But if the infinite holds me forever, the finite George can live forever.

If in fact I'm dwelling in the triune God, even though I have a beginning and in principle I have an end, if the everlasting God in whom I dwell holds me, I will have no end.

Like that's such a wise thought. And so where did evil and death come? And here's where, here's where Christianity and the Bible is so, I mean this whole big story, and by the way, I, we believe, I believe that this is not just a story. It's the true story of the universe. It's the true story of reality. And why do I believe that? Amongst other things, of course, it's wise, it's insightful, it's beautiful, it's powerful, and all of that. But most importantly, it's because Jesus believed it, he taught it, he's the key, the cornerstone of the whole picture, and by his death and resurrection, he vindicated it. Listen, if he rose from the dead, what he says is true. End of the story.

It might make me uncomfortable sometimes, but it's literally the end of the story. He rose from the dead. He said all these things. He rose from the dead. We should believe him. It vindicates him. And so this great big story is this, that God makes everything good. He creates Adam and Eve. In a sense, this entire universe, all of the galaxies, it's to be our home. If we're going to be in the everlasting God, that means there's a, there's lots of time to explore every aspect of the entire universe. We, you know, build machines and travel and do all of those types of things and figure them all out. There's endless time for us to use our creativity and our imagination and all of that type of stuff, all in harmony with God. But human beings decide they want to rebel against God, and they want to be like God. And we all know that I want to be like God. It ultimately means I don't want to just be like God. I want to have God under me. And so Adam and Eve rebel against God, and then God, and that's what's called sin. And then God, well, God judges it. But he judges it, though, in a way that's also a type of severe mercy. And he judges it in a way that it will be a clue for human beings that if they think about death, they might call out to God for mercy and for help.

And he says, you know, you think you can be God? You forget that you're dust.

[23 : 49] Like, what an irony, eh? Human beings thinking that we are God, yet really we are dust. If we're buried without any type of embalming things, eventually all of our mortal remains just mix with the earth, fertilizer, eventually. And so God says you've only, it's only by being held by me that you live, and you've cut yourself off from me. You will return to dust. But even as he does that, if you go back and you read Genesis 3, even as that, in a sense, sentence is pronounced upon God, and by the way, isn't it profoundly true? Don't we have a sense that there's something about death that feels like a judgment? And if it's only a scientific statement, then that's just something that doesn't even, what makes no sense there would be like a judgment. Like, why would we feel something wrong about something which is so, in a sense, natural and part of the evolutionary process, if that's all there is to the story. But God promises that there will be a deliverer, that death will not be the final word. And so, in a sense, how's God's big story? God's big story is he makes all things good.

Human beings bring death into the world by their sin and rebellion. And then there's this long period that begins with Genesis 3 and goes until Matthew 1-1, and it's a period of promise that God is going to send a deliverer. And then the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, that's the fourth chapter of the story. It's all about God keeping his promise. And then chapters after the death and resurrection of Jesus, I'll talk about that in a moment, as Ascension and Pentecost, we're now living in that period, which is the already not yet. The fact that if you put your faith and trust in Jesus, you can be reconciled to God. And in a sense, eternal life is now in you, but we still are waiting for the consummation of all things. And so, we live in this in-between time, this already not yet. And then the end will come when Jesus returns, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And we will dwell there with resurrected bodies at peace with God. And it will literally, by our own affections and emotions and body and in sight and in mind and in every way, we will know that our dwelling place and refuge is in the everlasting God. But, you see, in the Christian story, the true story, the story of the true reality, death, is a symptom.

For secular people, it's the great evil, of course, because secular, ultimately, when you die, that's it, you're completely over it. It's the great evil. And it's one of the reasons why it's not something you want to talk about in polite company. But for Christians, it's a symptom.

And so, we would say that even if you could use, you know, all sorts of scientific techniques, and you could extend life and extend life and extend life, and if you want to ignore the wisdom of earlier ages that see that if you have all this endless period of time, you become crazy like the gods and goddesses of paganism, which is just filled with chaos and pillaging and incest and murder and jealousy, or the older myths of Frankenstein and not Frankenstein, of the vampires and zombies and all of these creatures that don't die, none of them are things that you'd actually want to actually do.

But somehow or another, if we forget about all of that wisdom and just think that we can extend and extend and extend and extend life, but even then, that is completely and utterly doomed. It can never work for a while, but all you're doing, it's like if a person has serious cancer and you just keep giving them ibuprofen to deal with the pain. You're not actually dealing with the cause. The cancer has to be healed. And that's our sin. And that's, you see, the power of the gospel. That in the gospel, you have the perfect man. You have, in a sense, the second Adam. You have Jesus who comes into our life, into the human race. And he lives a life that we should live, but never could. And he never sins.

[27 : 50] And he's in unbroken communion with God. And he does all of those things that human beings were eventually meant to do. And he does this not for himself, but for us. And in his death upon the cross, I talked about it last week in terms of the image of the cup, but just a very, very simple substitution and exchange. He offers to trade places with me so that what I deserve will come on him and what he deserves given to me and what I deserve is. And he dies on the cross. He deals with the justice that should properly come to me. And he takes all of that into himself. And he dies that death, experiences that for me. And then he rises from the dead out of God's mercy and love and compassion.

And so we see in Jesus on the cross that not only is death defeated, but that which causes death has been dealt with, with justice and mercy.

And that's what he's pointing to throughout this whole psalm. So after there's this meditation, this is what life is like, folks. He said, that's why you meet, it makes this connection between, you know, you, God's anger and our death. It's, it's all connected to this whole big story that, that we have done all of these wrong things. Death comes into our, into, into reality because we have done wrong things. Now, Moses, of course, the first thing that he's going to do is that he's going to do, that he's going to do. And he's going to do that. And he says, that there will be one who will kill the serpent, that God will send a deliverer, that he will send a prophet greater than him.

He doesn't know how that's going to work out. He just knows that that's what God has promised. In the meantime, he understands that death is a symptom. And that might say that scientifically all men die, but that leads you nowhere. But if you say that God sweeps us away, then there is a God that we call out to for mercy.

So how's that going to look? Well, the whole psalm changes in verses 11 and 12. Look what it says. Now, 11 is complicated to translate from the original language into Hebrew.

[30 : 03] I'll, I'll read it, 11 and 12, and I'll just tell you basically what it means. Verse 11. And, and by the way, if you go back later on, you look at lots of different Bible translations, you'll see that they're, the English is trying to capture something which is hard to translate from the original language into English. But it goes like this, who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you? So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Well, verse 11, that's, verse 11 and 12, it's, it's the hinge of the whole, the whole psalm. And, uh, but basically that means is if we were actually to see God face to face, mountains give us a bit of an image of the majesty of God, the solidity of God, the power of God, the beauty of God. And if we were to actually see him face to face, we would realize the seriousness of our condition and we would know the depth of the reverence which he deserves. That's basically what it's communicating. And then verse 12 is this beginning of the request. Verse 12 again. So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Now teach us to number our days doesn't just mean, um, I think on my birthday, uh, my birthday's in

August, early August. My, my, some of my grandkids asked me thinking they were witty, how, how many days old are you, Papa? I think I actually figured it out. I said, just, just give me a, give me 15 minutes and a pad and I'll figure it out. And I told them and they go, whoa, are you ever old? You know, um, just the other day I was in Costco and there was a, uh, a, a, a dad walking along pushing two twins and his t-shirt said, I'm, uh, my age is, my age is. And underneath it he had 1600 square, um, the square root of 1600. I thought he's probably an engineer. Square root of 1600. If you don't know, that's 40.

But rather than just saying I'm 40, the square root of 160. That's sort of, that's sort of a neat t-shirt, I thought. So it's not just telling us to number our days that what's the idea behind this is, um, teach us to, to think about our days, to plan our days, to consider what we do, to consider what we do each day and order each day properly, and to think about each day in light of the days that are to come and to have in a sense a proper sense of how to organize your life. That's what it's telling us to do. It's say, God, help us in light of all of these things, the doxology, then the meditation upon what it means to, to, to be mortal and frail and, and, and have evil touch every aspect of us.

And he says, Father, we need you to teach us to think about our, each day and all of our days, and to think about them, evaluate them correctly. And then it's leading us up to the big request, which is the second part of verse 12, that we may get a heart of wisdom.

And in the original language, it's really cool. And you get it there in the English. But what he's really just saying is the heart is the very, very center of who we are, the very, very core of who we are. In a sense for the Bible, where does the mind, where does our thinking come from? Our thinking comes from our heart. Where do our affections come from? Where does our will, you know, where does our, our desires, all of those things all come from a certain key part. It's not as if, you know, we have a mind thinking these things and a heart thinking these things and they're, you know, the, the brain and the, the heart are, you know, they're separated by all those inches. It's, it's, no, there's one thing, one place at the very center of who we are that should be a unity, but it's often very, very fractured. And it's where everything comes from. And, and the Psalm is saying, God, could you put your wisdom, put your wisdom right in the center of where I am. And for the Bible, wisdom is a type of skill.

[33 : 57] skill. It's a skill that you're able to live a life skillfully at peace with the triune God, at peace with creation. You can live in this world with the skill of wisdom that will help you to live a moral life, a just life, a good life, a life that flourishes, and a life that is beautiful. That's what you're, that's what you're praying for when you ask that for to be wise, biblically speaking.

Lord, help my life to be beautiful. Help my life to do, to do things that bring in beauty, that bring in justice, that, that flourish, that thrive, that bless, that are, are at peace with you and at peace with the created order. And so that's what he's saying in light of all of this human frailty. Father, help us to number our days right. How are we going to do that? Well, Father, I can only do that if you put, if you, you put your wisdom at the very center of who I am.

And then, and then he prays out of that perception. And how he prays is very beautiful. Look at how he prays out of it in verse 13. By the way, you know, people say, well, what, you know, okay, George, you didn't give us any applications or all that. No, no. If you're trying to look for applications, there's no better application than to pray verse 12. Like, pray that every morning when you wake up, or verses 13 to 16.

Like, why should I add something when the Bible's so profound? Don't listen to my stupid stuff. Like, look at the Bible, you know? And, and how does he pray? Return, O Lord, verse 13. How long? Have pity. In other words, turn to me.

Look at me. How long? How long do I have to wait, Father, for, how long do I have to wait? Moses, of course, can pray this. Some of us pray this in our emotions because we're, we're struggling with depression, and we don't realize that God already loves us. But then he says, have compassion, verse 13. Have compassion on your servants. And notice they're not saying, I'm not, don't, don't have compassion on me because I want to be a God. I want to be, I want to, I want to be in your house. I want you to be my king. I want you to be my master and have compassion on me. And listen to the beauty of verses 14 and 15. You know, you're looking for something to do to take away from this, and, and it's so astounding that that which is about a meditation upon death leads us to this prayer.

[36 : 25] When you meditate upon death, led by Psalm 90 in context of the doxology, you pray, satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love. Isn't that a beautiful thing to pray?

Father, could you satisfy me every morning with your steadfast love? That we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and as for many years as we have seen evil. And this is the wonderful thing about the Bible. It's a wonderful thing about God. It's the thing which is so beautiful, is that here Moses, 3,500 years ago, he's praying, you know, help us to just be, help us to be glad for as many days as we have a hard time. But God gives more.

Like, Moses prays these things, and he doesn't realize that God is going to deal with this by sending God, the Son of God, to redeem human beings. And if you go and you take this, and then now you go meditate upon 2 Corinthians, the end of chapter 4, Moses and the people before Jesus, we're just praying that you give us some happy days. And God says, I love you so much, I'm going to give you way more than what you're asking. The end of 2 Corinthians chapter 4, God says he's preparing for his people an eternal weight of glory. Way more. And then verse 16 and 17, let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children. Let the beauty, the favor, you see a little note there, a better way to translate is, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us. Yes, establish the work of our hands. You see, when it says, let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children, it's saying, listen, week by week, friends, brothers and sisters, let's gather around the church, let's remember, Steve's going to be leading us in communion, and Steve's going to be, in a sense, causing us to remember what the greatest work that God has done, which is Jesus' death upon the cross for us. And it's not just that, it's why you read the Bible, it's why you have family devotions, it's why you have small groups, it's why you have friends, where you remember what God did to deliver the people of Israel, you remember Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and you remember Jesus calming the storm, you remember God's mighty acts to save us, and you also maybe remember spectacular moments where God has answered your prayers, and you share with each other, and that's what you live out. But at the heart of it is, let the favor of the

Lord be upon us. You see, here's the wonderful image of the whole psalm. He asks, on one hand, for the wisdoms, God's very wisdom to come to his heart, the center of who he is, and he asks for the beauty of the Lord to descend upon him and to come into him. And of course, for us who are Christians, you can see the image of the Holy Spirit there, but it's also just grace, and it's a way to discuss and understand what it is that Jesus has done for us on the cross. That on one hand, it was bloody, and there's excrement, and all that type of stuff, and it was horrible, but on the other hand, it's the most beautiful thing that's ever happened in the entire world. All we know are powerful people who send other people to die for them. And all of the ancient world, and even today, and the gods and goddesses that's practiced in India, and throughout all of Southeast Asia, and much of the world, it's always gods who cause others to die. And here we have the most profound and beautiful story in the world of a god who does not send others to die, but dies that others may live. And you know wisdom, right, about being able to do things? It doesn't lead us into despair. Like, if you think about death, you just end up, well, what's the point of doing anything? Now, our meditation of the world is not going to do anything.

And you know wisdom, right, about being able to do things? It doesn't lead us into despair. Like, if you think about death, you just end up, well, what's the point of doing anything? Now, our meditation upon death has led us to this point in Psalm 90, where we're asking God for the skill to live beautifully, and justly, and well, and flourishing, and making a difference for others. Let that be at the very center of who we are as we're reconciled to him.

[40 : 36] And so we're led to say, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Brothers and sisters, it's important to remember this, and if you don't know where you are with Christ, and this is tugging at your heart, call out to him right now for mercy, and he will give you more.

He will give you Jesus. He will give you more. Let's stand. Father, we ask that this psalm would deeply form us, that you would help us to meditate upon it.

Father, maybe you've put it into some of our hearts, that we should memorize parts of this psalm. For some of us, Father, maybe there's parts of this psalm that we'd want to put on our mirror, so that when we look at ourselves in the mirror, we're also reminded of some of these profound truths.

We ask, Father, that you help us to pray this over each other, and pray it over our days. And we ask, Father, that you would help us to so remember what Jesus has done for us on the cross, and be so grateful for his presence in our lives, in each of our lives.

[42 : 07] Father, that you would give us that ability to number our days, and that you would give us more and more wisdom. That mindful of the fact that we sin, and some of us have very serious secret sins of which we have to repent.

And Father, for those of us who have that, we ask that you would help us to seriously repent, to bring that secret sin, sin out into the light, where you can deal with it, and it can be repented of.

But Father, we ask that you help us to grow within us, that both that penitent heart, that you are our master, our savior, but that you would grant us a life that is characterized by a wisdom that comes from you.

Not a wisdom of the world, not a Canadian wisdom, but a wisdom that comes from your word. And that we would live out of that. And that we would know it's wise. We would be unashamed of it, and rejoice in it.

Humbly rejoice. And so, Father, we ask that you would make us wise, as your word teaches. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, and all God's people said, Amen.