

Gods Greatness, Mans Frailty

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[0 : 00] I want to just turn again to what we read in the book of Psalms, Psalm number 90. And I just want us to consider this psalm for a little this morning.

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 are God, and so on.

Now, as we know, this is really quite a powerful psalm. In some ways, it's almost a unique psalm.

There's an extraordinary majesty about it. Because when you read this psalm, the greatness and the glory and the splendor of God is exalted against the frailty and the weakness of man.

There seems to be this ongoing contrast in this psalm. It's one of the oldest writings in Scripture because it's written by Moses, probably the oldest of the psalms.

[1 : 12] Because we see here it was penned by Moses, Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses, the man of God. And there's so much of Moses in it. Because Moses was one of these extraordinary men of faith.

He was a real stalwart, like Abraham, a kind of a frontiersman of faith. A man who was so committed to the Lord. A man who was hugely used by the Lord.

And a man who was given great insights into the glory of God. And yet a man who was very human. And had such a sense of people's frailties.

A sense of his own frailty. His own weakness. And when you read the life of Moses, you will discover these very things. Where Moses has such an awesome sense of God's greatness.

Of God's splendor. Of God's majesty. Of God's power. Such a sense of his own weakness. And the weakness of the people of Israel.

[2 : 18] And yet a tremendous boldness in prayer. We'll come to see that a little later on. Moses had such a sense of God. That you find that his prayer life brought him, as it were, right so close to the Lord.

And his knowledge of the Lord was such that he seemed to have this great boldness in prayer. And Moses had this sense, despite all of God's greatness and justice.

That he was a God of mercy. A God of grace. And a God of love. A God who delights in mercy. Now when we read through the psalm. And sometimes people can read this psalm.

And as they read through it, they can feel that it's very bleak. And to a certain extent, there is a bleakness about it. Because it highlights our own weakness.

Our own nothingness against the backdrop of eternity. Our life appears so fragile. And often people will come to this psalm and they'll say, well, you know, I don't particularly like it.

- [3 : 26] Because it's highlighting something of who we are. And people often don't like that. But over against that, we have this tremendous sense of who God is.
- And we see here his steadfastness. His unchangeableness. We see here the God who is providing for us.
- And at the very beginning, Lord, the psalmist says, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. You have been our dwelling place. Now as you see, down at the bottom there, it gives the word our refuge.
- So it can either be a home or a refuge. And when you think about it, that's who the Lord is for his people. And it's a wonderful picture. The twofold are refuge.
- And when we meet all the storms and the temptations and the batterings and the bruising of life, when the arrow of the enemy flies, it's wonderful to have somewhere where you feel safe.
- [4 : 30] A place of security. A place where you will not be destroyed. A place that gives you this protection. And that's what the Lord does for his people. He is the refuge.
- And there are times in this world where we feel the world's anger and the world's hostility. Where we feel something of the enemy's onslaught. And we can feel very fragile and very open.
- But here we're told that the Lord is our refuge. But he's also our home. Our dwelling place. And there's something wonderful about home. It's a place where you can relax.
- It's a place of warmth. Yes, security and all that. But whenever we have this idea of home, it's somewhere we love to go to.
- If you're sick, you say, there's nowhere I would like to go. I'd like to get home. I want to get home. You'll find people always saying that. I just want to get home. And so we have this beautiful picture that for God's people, this is who the Lord is saying.
- [5 : 34] Look, he says, I'm your refuge in any time of trouble. And I am your dwelling place. I am for you. I am your home. But as we say here, we see that we are so fragile because we are being reminded here, for instance, in verse 3, from where we came.
- You return man to dust and say, return, O children of man. Now, the word man is used twice and it's got a different idea both times. The first speaks of man's frailty.
- The second speaks of Adam as being a son of Adam. You return man to dust and say, return, O children of man or children of Adam. And again, whenever we come to that, we tend to think.
- We cannot but read that without realizing and thinking about our first parents. And think of Adam and we think of the curse. And of what God has said back there in Genesis that this is what was going to happen to us because of sin.
- That we were going to return to the dust. It's not something that we particularly want to dwell on. But that's what we're told from dust that we came. It's in Genesis 19.
- [6 : 50] By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken. For you are dust.
- And to dust you shall return. And that's why I say there's many people don't particularly like this psalm. Because it is such a bleak reminder to us of who we are and what we are.
- We're just dust. God made us from the dust. And he says because of sin. The wages of sin is death. You will return to dust.
- It's a very harsh in a sense picture. And then again the frailty of man is highlighted because we see verse 5 and 6.
- You sweep them away as with a flood. They are like a dream. They are like the grass. In the evening it fades and withers.

- [7 : 53] Three very graphic pictures speaking again of our frailty. Just like with a flood. We've seen these pictures. We see them over and over again. Particularly over in the east.
- Where they've been hit with floods. And with earthquakes. And with typhoons. Where there are. You see pictures of what were streets.
- And you're seeing the water running. Like a fast. It's just a fast flowing stream. Carrying everything before it. There are trees. There are cars. There are buses.
- There are all the rubble of what were people's homes. The whole thing. It's just cascading down what were streets. Everything in its way. People clinging on. And they can't. Often.
- Very distressing. Harrowing pictures. Well that's the idea. You sweep them away as with a flood. That's what life is like. There you are. You're just swept away in a moment.
- [8 : 52] Then you have the other picture. They are like a dream. And you know what the dream is like. Sometimes a dream can be so powerful. It is so real.
- It is so graphic. There are times that you are actually reacting in your sleep to the dream. Where you're moving. And the dream is so powerful.
- And then you awaken. And the dream fades away. It's gone. It's gone. Just like. Almost like the morning mist. And again the grass. Or the plants.
- Or any of these things. They flourish. And then they wither away. And the Lord is reminding us. And it's good for us to be reminded of these things. Because we're not.
- The Lord isn't giving us these pictures. To instill within us. A settled pessimistic outlook. Because as we'll come through this psalm. We will see.
- [9 : 47] That despite all that Moses is focusing upon. He is not pessimistic. He is optimistic. Because the psalm finishes with great optimism. But Moses was grounded in reality.
- And God is revealing to Moses. And inspiring Moses. And so. It's important for us to reflect upon these things. To meditate upon them.
- Particularly in these worlds. Because so often we can feel grounded and settled. But our world can change so quickly. We've seen that happen in many ways. Just for instance.
- With regard to the whole collapse. Of the great financial institutions within this world. People were feeling that it was going to go on and go on. And all of a sudden. Collapse. Many peoples.
- Their lives were just. As it were. Everything that they believed in. Everything that they had given their life to and for. It's just gone. And in many different ways.
- [10 : 49] God is showing to us. Just how brief and fragile life is. And so. At the very heart of this psalm. Yes. Reminding us. Of who we are.
- But trying to focus us. And focus our mind. Our heart. Our everything. Upon the unchangeableness of God. Because God spans.
- Every generation. From everlasting to everlasting. You are God. And an ending beginning. And an ending end.
- Here we are in our little spot. God's eternity spans time. Time from its beginning. To time to its end. As we certainly will know it. God spans it all.
- With no beginning. And with no end. And here we are in our little spot here. We live out our days. And this is our time. And it will soon be gone.
- [11 : 47] The previous generations. They've come and they've gone. Just mentioned that. Very thing last week. The effect. The impact. That. So many people have. And people.
- All people really have an impact. Upon life. And they go. And they move on. We're always the poorer. But you know it's incredible. Just you look back.

And all these people. Who were stalwarts. And they're gone. And before them. They looked at the others. Who were stalwarts. And they're gone. And we'll have our day. And then we'll be gone.

And that's. That's the way it goes. And we've got to. We've got to look at this. Just how brief it is. Against the vastness. Of eternity. And that's why it's so foolish.

To give all our time. And all our energy. And all our capacity. And all our abilities. Purely to what's going to pass away. Yes we're to work. Yes we're to involve ourselves.

[12 : 44] We're to give. Of all that we have. But never losing sight. Ultimately of God. Because without God.

Life is bleak. It's empty. You go to the book of Ecclesiastes. Remember how the writer summed it up. A life without God. It's vanity of vanities. All is vanity.

And you know. There are many people today. In despair. Because they're looking at. A life without God. And they're looking at. The way life has turned for them. And it's empty.

It's meaningless. I've spoken to people. Coming away from a grave. And they're saying. What's it all about?

What's the point. In anything. Because it seems so bleak. You live your years. And then. That's it into the dust. And that's. That's. That's how the picture is.

[13 : 38] If we do not have the Lord. It is. It's a. It's a harrowing. Empty. Empty. Empty life. And so. Again.

We find it summed up. In verse 9. For all our days. Pass away. Under your wrath. We bring our years. To an end. Like a sigh. Do you know. There's an incredible sense.

Of anticlimax there. We bring our years. To. In the AV. It's got us a tale. It is told. This is a more powerful. This is. Brings it to an end. Like a sigh. There's all your years.

All the work. All the effort. There it is. That's it. It's. It's. It's gone. And there's this. As we see. This tremendous sense.

Of anticlimax. Now. You've got to remember. As. Moses. He penned this psalm. Remember. How Moses spent. Forty years.

[14 : 32] Of his life. The last. Forty years. Of his life. And he would append. This psalm. During these. Forty years. For forty years. Israel. Were wandering. In the wilderness.

And they were wandering. In a wilderness. That they were never. Going to get out of. So you can understand. How. Moses captures. The bleakness.

Of the situation. Because you remember. Israel are there. In that wilderness. Locked in that wilderness. Because of their sin. God had made. And given them.

Great promises. God had. Remember. Taken them out of Egypt. He was taking them. To the land of promise. Remember. Israel rebelled. And rebelled. And rebelled. And rebelled again. And God forgave them.

But there came that. This. Huge rebellion. The massive rebellion. At Kadesh Barnea. When they were on the borders. Of the promised land. And God said. It's now about time.

[15 : 27] To go in. Send out. Twelve spies. You remember. All about it. And of how the twelve spies. Came back. And they said. Yes. Truly. It is a land.

Flowing with milk and honey. And remember. How they brought back. Huge bunches of grapes. So much so. That. Sometimes. Two people had to carry them. The clusters were so big. They said.

It's all true. Wonderful land. But we can't go in. There's huge. Walled cities. All around. And the people. Who live in them.

Are giants. Compared to us. They're big men. We can't do it. And they discouraged the people. So that the people's hearts. Became like. Just melted away.

There were two spies. You remember. That stood up. And they said. Remember. That was Joshua and Caleb. And they said. Don't listen to the other ten. Of course we can go in. God has promised. God will take us in. You remember.

[16 : 23] That Israel. Were so angry. With Joshua and Caleb. That they picked up. Stones. To stone them. And they were. They began to cry. And they said.

Would to God. That we would die. In the wilderness. Rather than go into. That land. And be killed. By these giants. And God said to them.

All right. You'll get what you want. You will die. In the wilderness. I'm not going to take you in. Your. Your family. Will go in. The younger generation.

Will go in. But you're not going in. And you know. After a period of time. They realized. And then they said to them. Oh well. We'll go in. And God said. No. I'm not going in with you. You see.

We have to be very careful. What we choose in life. These people. Refused. To believe God. They refused.

[17 : 20] To accept his promise. They chose. Another question. God said. All right. I'll give you. What you choose. And when you follow that through.

That's how life works out. It's true. With regard to salvation. Jesus Christ. Is held out. Before us. And all the great promises.

Of the gospel. And God is saying. To us. Accept. My son. And people say. No. We will not have this man.

To rule over us. We want to go our own way. And the Lord will say. All right. Have. Your. Choice. Because. At the end of the day.

If people. Reject Jesus. And die. Without Jesus Christ. They receive. What they've chosen. And they've chosen. A particular. End. And destiny.

[18 : 15] And the Lord. At the end. Will say. Depart from me. I'm giving you. What you chose. You chose. Not. To have me. So your choice.

Is an eternal choice. It's bleak. But it's logical. And this is what happens. And it's graphically. Set out before us. With what happened. To the Israelites.

In the wilderness. They chose. Not to accept. What God. Had set out. Before them. And so we find that. They were there.

Wandering. For these. Forty years. And so. You can understand. When we have that. Backdrop. To the. The wandering. And Moses was seen.

One after another. You think of the. Massive crowd of people. You think of the funerals. Day after day. After day. That whole generation.

[19 : 11] Dying. Over these years. Burial after burial. After burial. Everyone a reminder. Of their disobedience. And the rebellion. Against God. So you can understand.

How Moses. Is seeing. The bleakness. Seeing the frailty. Of man. Seeing the weakness. Of man. And yet still. So conscious. Of the greatness.

And the majesty. And the glory. Of God. And that's why. He says. Teach us. To number our days. That we may get. A heart of wisdom. But.

This is what I love. Despite the fact. That Israel. Are going to be wandering. For forty years. And with Israel. In a sense. Are under. God's judgment.

Yet. They are still under. His mercy. And his grace. And that's why. Moses prays. For the Lord. To have pity. And mercy. And love. And you know.

- [20 : 09] This is what I love. Moses is still praying. That the Lord. That the Lord. Would do them good. And that he would prosper them. Make us glad.
- He says. For as many days. As you have afflicted us. And for as many years. As we have seen evil. You know.
- There's a tremendous boldness. In Moses prayer. When you read. This prayer. Satisfy us in the morning. With your steadfast love. That we may rejoice. And be glad all our days.
- You know. I love that. Moses knew. A. That the older generation. With the exception of. Joshua and Caleb.
- That the older. Generation. Who had rebelled. Were going to die. In the wilderness. He himself. Was not.
- [21 : 04] Because of his own sin. Was not going to get into. The land of promise. He was going to lead them. To the borders of it. And yet. This is what he prays. That we.
- Show. Make us glad. That's what he's saying. That we may rejoice. Satisfy us in the morning.
- With your steadfast love. That we may rejoice. And be glad. All our days. Even although. We are going round. And round here. In this wilderness. You see.
- Moses didn't go into. It would be very easy. You might say to yourself. Oh. How easy it would be. Just to be. Going to despair. And say. What's the point. Moses never said that.
- Every day. Was a day of fulfillment. A day. Of potential. Moses lived with God. Fellowshiped with God. Worked for God.
- [21 : 59] Served God. All these days. Wandering in the wilderness. What faithfulness. And he's saying to the Lord. Even although. This is how it's going to be. Still make me rejoice.
- Still make me. That I will be glad. And my friends. What an example to us. As we face. And I'm sure many of you.
- Even today. Are facing difficult. And trying circumstances. Maybe your hearts are sore. And your world is. A confused world.
- Here we have a great prayer. Moses is praying. Just. May we rejoice. And be glad. All our days. And you see that he's.
- He's concerned about Israel's future. It might not be great for. Our generation. But Lord. The next generation. Bless them.
- [22 : 56] Verse 16. Let your work be shown to your servants. And your glorious power to their children. And God answered that prayer wonderfully. Because the children were the future.
- And the children. Were the ones who went in. To the land of promise. And Moses is praying. And praying for the children. You know today. We see. We see so many young people.
- Coming to faith in the Lord. I believe. That's the answer of prayers. That have gone before. And we're seeing it. Generation after generation. Because there's generations. Praying. Praying for the next generation.
- Praying for the next generation. How important that is. And if you might be here today. And you haven't seen your young ones come. Don't stop praying. Because you're not the only ones.
- Who prayed for them. But your people prayed for them. And I believe there's still many yet to come. And that's what Moses was praying. Let your work be shown to your servants.
- [23 : 56] And your glorious power to their children. And then Moses prays. That the favor of the Lord our God be upon us. And establish the work of our hands upon us.

Yes establish the work of our hands. And Moses is here praying. For let the favor. Verse 17. That can be the beauty.

Moses is so conscious. Of God as the creator God. Of making this wonderful beautiful world. But he says Lord. What I really want.

What I really want you to bring. Your beauty to bear. Is make your people beautiful. You made this world beautiful. But there's an even greater beauty than that. And that's your people.

Put your beauty. Upon your people. That I thy beauty may behold. Remember how the psalmist was saying that. This is what he wanted. And you know.

[24 : 56] The more that we desire. To see God's beauty. That I that in thy holy place may reverently desire. Remember it's in Psalm 27.

The psalmist is talking about these things. One thing have I asked the Lord. That I will seek after. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord. All the days of my life.

To gaze. Upon the beauty. Of the Lord. My friend. The more that we gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

The more that we will begin to mirror. And image. That beauty. That is why we have been made. That is the chief purpose. Of our being in this world.

If we rarely spend any time with the Lord. We will not be gazing upon his beauty. And we will not be displaying. His beauty. In this world.

[25 : 51] That's what it's about. May we seek then. To have this desire. To look upon. To gaze upon his beauty. And to become more. And more. Like him. Let us pray.

O Lord. O God. We give thanks. As we come under the word. And. As we are brought to face. Who we are ourselves. And our own. Fragility against.

When we see. The unchangeableness. And the power. And the glory. And the majesty of God. And yet. Although we are dust. And from dust. It's dust that we came.

And to dust. As we return. Help us to remember. That from that dust. It is God who made us. And we give thanks. O Lord. That the dust. Is not the end.

The dust. The returning to dust. Is only for a period. Because the dust. Will one day arise again. And become. A glorious body.

[26 : 50] Prepared. To be reunited. With the soul. O Lord. Our God. Then help us. To put our trust in me. And to believe in thee. With all our heart. Take away from us.

Our sin. Take us home safely. We pray. In Jesus name. We ask God. Amen. Amen.