

0Sunday, July 17, 2022 pm

TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS

Psalm 90:12

Tonight, I would like to talk about a phrase that we mention from time to time and consider its message. This is taken from Psalm 90:12. This lesson has a special meaning to me that I will make known toward the end.
0:90

I. Background

- a. The 90th psalm is attributed to Moses and is the only psalm we definitively know was written by him.
- b. Likely, this was written in his later years as he recounts many of the “evils” Israel had experienced. Likely it was written after Numbers 20 where Moses and Aaron act resulting in his being denied permission to enter the promised land of Canaan. In that tragic chapter, Miriam died at Kadesh, and then the people ONCE AGAIN complain against Moses. He strikes the rock instead of speaking to it. His punishment is great.
- c. However Moses, in this psalm, shows that he still trusts in God (we KNOW he repented – because we see him in the New Testament visiting with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-3. He acknowledges the greatness of God).
- d. Psalm 90 is written with an acknowledgment that what is done is done and that life is frail and will end (vs. 10-11)
 - i. Moses begins by acknowledging God as God of His people AND of all the earth – “from everlasting to everlasting You are God” (90:2) He is a God who can accomplish His plans in His own time. God does not view time as we do (90:4) – to Him, 1000 years is like a yesterday when past.
 - ii. And while He is eternal, we are not – we wear out, sometimes the product of His wrath and anger (90:5-9). In righteousness, He judges EVERYTHING, including us. The focus of this text seems to be on their unrighteousness, especially rebellious Israel, which ought to terrify every one of us. Think of Israel if this is at the end of their wilderness journeys.
- e. This is the ONLY way you can be ready to face eternity.

II. Teach us to number our days

- a. A point to consider in this – we do not know how long we will live on this earth. Moses in vs. 10-12 reminds us that we only have a few years, even if we live a full life. Therefore, we ought to live each day as if it were your last – one day it will be your last.
- b. So this might lead us to ask, how can we number our days if we do not know how long we have left?
- c. “Teach us” – so Moses requests.
 - i. Teaching is an integral part of learning. Teaching is to impart knowledge. Typically, as in this circumstance, we find someone (or something – life can be a great teacher) that knows more than we do, that can impart to us some knowledge so that when done we have a better understanding.
 - ii. Learning what we need to know about God’s word means that someone needs to teach us. That is what the gospel is about and that is how it was done even in the first century – Bible times. Romans 10:14 speaks of the need for preaching. Ephesians 4:11-12 speaks of various teaching roles for the equipping of the saints. Of course we know there are also other ways to be taught.
 - iii. BUT in our text, the desire is that God show us HOW to live our lives. How does God teach us?
 1. Though His word first and foremost – Psalm 119:104, “Through Your precepts I get understanding,…”
 2. Through teachers of His word – as mentioned above.

3. Through life itself – life is a great teacher. And this is the premise of our text.
- d. Teach us to number our days –
- i. David, in Psalm 39:4-5 made a similar request, *“Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah*
 - ii. Live with the understanding that death can happen - Hebrews 9:27.
 - iii. Life can pass by quickly - it is frail and can end at any moment – James 4:14 – our life is a vapor. Job 14:1-2 – a few days and full of trouble. Like a shadow it flees and does not continue. The older we get the more we appreciate what this is saying. The days, week and even years fly by so fast that it is like we have blinked and it is gone.
 - iv. Therefore, we need to learn to live for the moment, realizing how frail it is. There are many who live as if they have all the time in the world and will live forever. That is foolishness.
 - v. Live each day as if it were your last – one day it will be your last. Therefore we need to always be ready. As Moses has noted, it is likely you will live a full life, but there is certainly no guarantee of this. We hear of tragedies every day, and most of us have had experiences that we were totally unprepared for – young people, those of middle age and every other age.
 - vi. This is the ONLY way you can be ready when it happens.
 - vii. Consider Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 – better to go to house of mourning. In all honesty, a funeral is the best place to learn that our days are temporal.

III. Gaining a heart of wisdom

- a. IF we live our lives properly numbering our days, we will “gain a heart of wisdom.”
 - i. Get wisdom, get understanding – Proverbs 4:5-7, *Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.* It is the wise man who lives with purpose and soberness as he makes his decisions.
 - ii. We will live knowing that this world is not our home. We are simply pilgrims here – 1 Peter 2:11. Paul noted that our citizenship is in heaven – Philippians 3:20
 - iii. We will live knowing how precious life and opportunities are. We will strive to redeem the time – Ephesians 5:15-16. We will live realizing that once time is past (and the opportunities that go with it), they cannot be brought back.
- b. But that doesn’t mean we cannot LEARN from the past. Honest reflection on past failures and successes is a healthy thing. But ONLY if we learn from it.
 - i. Recall Paul as he recounted his past. 1 Timothy 1:12-13.
 - ii. Recall David in Psalm 37:25, 26, *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed.*
 - iii. In reality it helps us number our days. How many have reflected on the past and realized how blessed they are? Asking, “Why am I still here?” (considering how foolishly we have acted)
- c. Wisdom can also teach us what things are the most important in life and help to make the right choices concerning those things.
 - i. Matthew 22:37-39 – the greatest commandments – love God and your neighbor as yourself.
 - ii. Philippians 3:7-11 finds Paul gave up everything in this world to gain Christ. Then in vs. 13-14 – His life is about reaching that goal. He presses toward that goal.
 - iii. Psalm 27:4 finds David declaring the one thing he desires, *One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To*

behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. While he might have been desiring to be in God's presence where the physical temple would be, he would not see that in his life. BUT, this does demonstrate a desire to be in God's presence, EVEN while on this earth. Question: WHERE is that the most likely opportunity? Consider the church!

- d. Wisdom will teach us to not let the less important things crowd out that which is most important.
 - i. Matthew 13:22 speaks of the thorny soil.
 - ii. 1 John 2:15-17 challenges us to not love the world or the things in the world because the world is passing away with its lust.
 - iii. 1 Timothy 6:6-7 notes that we brought nothing into this world and we can carry nothing out.
 - iv. Matthew 6:19-21 – where is your treasures?

Conclusion: Let us resolve to keep numbering our days. I want to conclude with a note about this lesson. Most of you know that recently my dad passed from this life. Because of family circumstances he semi-retired just a few months ago and moved in with by sister and brother-in-law in Benton, Arkansas so that they could help care for them. When I was home for dad's memorial, I was privileged to access his computer and acquire his sermons for the past several years. This was one of his final lessons presented at Etna (Ozark) Arkansas before he moved to Benton. I thought it fitting to share one of his latter lessons tonight. AND, considering his passing, this lesson is so appropriate and means so much more to me today. What about you? Are you numbering your days with a heart of wisdom? Think about it!