

TEXT: Psalm 90

TITLE: Living our Lives for the Glory of God through Christ

THEME: Since Christ has earned God's favor for us through his endurance of God's wrath in our place, we may rejoice in the grace of God and trust in His glorious providence even though our lives are brief and filled with misery.

INTRODUCTION

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, when you realize that the Lord has given you many blessings, how do you usually respond? Is it with praise and thanksgiving? Do you sing a song rejoicing the greatness of God? But how do you respond when afflictions, sicknesses, and sorrows come your way? Do you grumble? Do you blame the Lord? Do you curse the Lord? I think that all of us here would agree that it is much easier to sing when things go well. The reality is that we are living in a fallen world. Sorrows, sicknesses, and afflictions are a result of sin. None of us who has experienced troubles and sorrows in life finds it easy not to grumble, to blame, or to curse. So then, what are the purposes of these troubles in our lives? How should we react to our circumstances? And how should a Christian respond to sicknesses, troubles, and sorrows? These questions are commonly asked, and perhaps, questions that we have as in your Christian journey.

Like many of us, Moses, the man of God, had long ago also recognized that our lives are brief and filled with miseries. And he tells us how to respond to our miseries and heartaches; how to respond to pain and suffering and losses; how to wrestle with our own sin, or how to cope with things that happened out of our control. And Moses was not only telling us that we may smile at those troubles, but he was telling us to sing about our sorrows, sufferings, and deaths. But how? Here in this Psalm, Moses tells us that we may rejoice in the midst of the troubles and miseries by considering:

I. Who God is? (vv. 1-6)

II. What is man? (vv. 7-10)

III. In response: We must pray for Wisdom (vv. 11-17)

I. Who God is? (vv. 1-6)

The first thing that Moses tells us on how we may respond positively to our troubles and miseries is to know who God is. And Moses tells us a few things.

a. God is our habitation (vv. 1)

First of all, Moses tells us that the Lord was our dwelling place. Why did he say so? It is because when Moses wrote this Psalm, Israel was most likely wandering in the desert. At that time, they had not yet inherited the land of Canaan. They did not have a permanent home and they were just living in tents. But here, Moses found his comfort through recognizing that the Lord was their habitation. He was probably reminded that the Lord had shown mercy to them when they were poorly oppressed by the Egyptians when they were in bondage. How the Lord was their refuge during their time in Egypt, and how He led them out of bondage and misery. And now, though they were pilgrims wandering in the desert, nevertheless, the faithfulness of the Lord God remained, and that He alone was their rest in their uneasy journey. Snakes and scorpions tried to harm them, enemies scorned them, nevertheless, the Lord was still their habitation during the time of their pilgrimage in the desert. Wherever they went, the Lord was with them in their going out and coming in. The Lord was their home, in whom they were able to find refuge. Moses was confident that just as the Lord had shown mercy yesterday to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and during their time in Egypt, He would also show mercy to them while they were wandering in the wilderness.

b. God is Eternal (vv. 2)

Second, Moses recognized that God is eternal! He recognized that while there was a beginning for the mountains, the land, and the sea, but there was no beginning to God. He was there in the very beginning, from everlasting to everlasting. Further, human beings may sense that the time is ticking away and that our physical bodies are wasting away day by day, but God is not constrained by time (You know how you feel after long day of shoveling snow). And Moses said that the thousand years were "like a watch in the night". What does that mean? In the old days, the Jews used to divide the night into three watches. In other words, a thousand years in the eyes of God were as short as a watch in a night. Moses was telling us that this was exactly where he found his comfort, in the eternity of God! God is the only place where they could ultimately find their belonging! It is because **God is not only our habitation, but our eternal habitation**, who is unchanging and unchangeable! That is why God's eternity should give us confidence in this life!

c. God is sovereign over our lives (vv.3-6)

Third, Moses recognized is that God is also sovereign. God has absolute sovereign dominion over the life of man. God has power to form a man from the dust of the ground. Genesis 2:7 tells us, "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*" Genesis tells us that Adam was created by the Lord, in His own image and he became a living being when the Lord breathed into his nostrils. But just as the Lord has created man, He also has the power to end his life. Here, Moses was also reminded of the account of the Noah's flood, in which the Lord destroyed the world and all of mankind with a flood. In other words, Moses was telling us that the Lord was not only the Creator, but He also has the power to destroy just as He pleases. You know, not having control over our lives are not a comfort to many people. But here, Moses was telling us that the sovereignty of God is in fact a comfort to us. It is because we know that our heavenly Father has sovereign control over all things, and nothing can catch Him by surprise. **It is indeed for our benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by his providence.** Isn't it a comfort for you to know that your heavenly Father is not only your Eternal habitation, but also sovereign over all situations in your life?

Lessons:

1. **You may ask, why is it important to know who God is?** It is because knowing God gives us an idea of who we are! Remember the Reformer John Calvin said that without the knowledge of God, there is no knowledge of man. Knowing God is important for

us, it is because when we recognize the might and sovereignty of our Creator God, it tells us who we are, weak, limited by time.

2. **But how do we know who God is?** God is so gracious that He revealed Himself through His Word, which is contained in the Old and New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
3. **Do you have this God as your heavenly Father?** Do you know this God who created you, who is Eternal, Sovereign, and all powerful? It is a comfort to you only if you know that this God is your heavenly Father. But if you have not put your faith in Him, you are walking in contrary to His will, and He is against you because of your sin. So come and know Him, so that He may be your dwelling place.

II. What is man? (vv. 7-10)

In the next few verses, Moses tells us that we have to know who we are. He turns from the contemplation of who God is to looking at what man is.

a. Our lives are brief

First, Moses said that our lives are like a sleep and like grass which grows up and flourishes in the morning, but is cut down and withers in the evening. What does that mean? **Moses was saying that our lives are short**, just as time seems to pass especially faster when we are sleeping. More than that, Moses compare our lives to grass because grass looks green and pleasant in the morning, but in the evening the mower cuts it down, and it immediately withers, changes its color, and loses all its beauty. Man, in his prime, may flourish, be as green and pleasant as the grass, but death may change us shortly and suddenly, and we are exposed. We are weak, and low, and tender, and when the winter of old age comes, we wither and perish. Or may be a sudden disease or disaster comes, we are gone. But why is it so? Genesis 1:26-28 tell us that we are made in God’s image. We are supposed to be vicegerents of God! And we are to have dominion over the animals, to rule over them! And we were also created upright with righteousness! But why? Why do we have to die?

b. We are sinful and we deserve God’s wrath

Moses tells us that our iniquities are exposed in the countenance of God! And that we have been consumed by God’s anger! **In other words, Moses is telling us that because we are sinful**. We have to die because the wages of sin is death. Death was not natural to us when we were first created. But we have to die because we have sinned and death is a debt to the justice of God, a debt to the law! This of course must be traced back to the Fall! When Adam, as our first federal head, violated the command of God and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 3! As a result, sin was passed down to us, just as the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 16 tells us, “The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.” You see, this was a result from the Fall. We are all by nature aliens to God, it is because of the fall of Adam, we therefore all inherited from him sin and death! And because of our sins, instead of inheriting long life, our lives have become brief. This is the reason why we have to die. It is all because of the Fall, man had become radically corrupted.

And not only that, Moses tells us that because of our sin, we also deserve the wrath of God! Which is the consequence of God’s righteous anger! His wrath is judgement! Remember how the Lord was angry with the Israelites because of their disobedient that the Lord punished them by not letting them to enter the land of Canaan, but to die in the wilderness. This was the wrath of God. And also remember that God destroyed the world through the flood and only Noah and his family were preserved? The flood was a demonstration of the wrath of God! This is what we deserve after the Fall! The Apostle Paul in Romans 1:18 tells us, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” The Apostle Paul is telling us that God’s wrath kindles against those who are ungodly and unrighteous, who is walking in contrary to God’s Holy Law! And because of our fallenness, we have not only become sick in our sin but became dead in our trespasses and subject to the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-3). You see, and this is what Moses was telling us as well, that God is angry toward us because of our sins. And he tells us that if God desires to use our sufferings to punish us, God has all the right to punish us to what we deserve.

Brothers and sisters, this is what man is! We are sinful, and we are also children of wrath that deserve eternal punishment!

Lessons:

1. **Why is it important to know who we are?** John Calvin said that we cannot know ourselves truly without knowing God, and we also cannot know God without knowing ourselves. When we know that how weak and the miserable condition in which we are, that causes us to look outside of ourselves and seek for hope. This is the reason why Moses awakens us by elevating our minds to the eternity of God, because without the consideration of which we don’t know how quickly our life vanishes away.
2. **Have you wondered why your life is full of miseries and brief?** Brothers and sisters, this is the reason! It is because of our sins. And the miseries and the brevity of life are the result of the Fall. Instead of enjoying communion with God in the garden forever, we were cast from the presence of God. Instead of living a life worriless of diseases, we get sick and die. Instead of enjoy the food that the Lord has given to us in the garden, we now have to sweat in order to get our food. The ground is cursed because of sin, and we needed to be redeemed. It is because if there is no redemption, we perish!

III. In Response: We must pray for Wisdom (vv. 11-17)

So, what then should we do? We are dead in sin and by nature children of wrath? In the next several verses, Moses asked God to teach him and the Israelites to number their days, so that they might gain a heart of wisdom. However, how then can we possibly live for the glory of God? Since our sin separates us from God?

In verse 11, Moses then asked, “Who knows the power of your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.” Here, Moses was telling us that knowing our condition as the children of wrath should cause us to fear the punishment that we deserved. However, though all of us are subject to God’s wrath by nature, none of us actually knows the full extent of the wrath of God. Why? **It is because the wrath of God had been poured out on the Lord Jesus Christ! Whom the Father had appointed to endure His wrath on our behalf, so that we might not suffer the punishments that we originally deserved, so that we might live!** When Jesus was on the Cross, He cried, “Father, Father, why have you forsaken me!” Just as a child cries when he lost his father, the Lord Jesus cried with greater sorrow and grief. It is because He who was innocent and knew no sin became imputed with sin, not with the sin of Himself, but for us. The Father had forsaken Him because our sin has been imputed to Him! The Father had poured out His wrath upon His Beloved Son, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him! He who was innocent, holy, and righteous, was forsaken, became a man of sorrow, acquainted with great grief. And He did so only that we might become the children of God in Him. So, brothers and sisters, let me ask you...do you believe in this Jesus, as your Lord and King, who took God’s wrath for you so that you might become God’s child?

And then there is that phrase, “Teach us to number our days.” What does that mean? It means to use our time wisely. This means we must humble ourselves and look to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the best respond to the brevity and miseries of our lives! And This is wisdom! It is not to try to make use of the best out of our lives since they are short and filled of miseries. Positive thinking would not save us. **But we must look to the Lord through Christ, and ask the Lord to teach us by His Spirit and grace, so that we may know our weaknesses and to look to the Lord for new life!** And this Spirit-wrought new life that we have received in Christ give us the ability to rejoice in the afflictions and troubles that we may come across in our earthly pilgrimage (vv.15)! And to live a truly joyful life, for the glory of God! And we must redeem the time...not waste our lives after foolish things. We can enjoy things, but we must not waste it on sinning.

Lessons:

1. **Rejoice in the grace of God and trust in His glorious providence even though our lives are brief and filled with misery.** This is why you can face your trials and troubles. This is why you can sing in the midst of difficult circumstances! This is why you can truly live for the glory of God! That is why when we ask the Lord to establish the work of our hands, He answers! It is because Christ has earned God’s favor for you through his endurance of God’s wrath in your place! You were once a child of wrath, but because of Christ, you have become a child of God by grace!
2. Lord’s Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us. “We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love; for all creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they cannot so much as move.”
3. **Having learned of the wonderful truth of the Gospel concerning Christ, does not that make you want to wonder and cry with the Psalmist, “What is man that you are mindful of him!?”** Brothers and sister, what are we that the Holy God would be so mindful of us? That the Son of God would die for us? This wonderful truth should lead you to praise the Lord all the more for His mercy and grace. And this should also motivate you to live with a greater purpose, and serve the Lord better!

CONCLUSION

In conclusion to our sermon this afternoon, we see that Moses, the man of God, while he was leading the Israelites wandering in the desert, had long ago reflected upon concerning the purpose of our lives in the midst of circumstances and troubles. Here in this Psalm, Moses tells us how to respond to our misery and heartache; how to respond to pain and suffering and loss; how to wrestle with our own sin, or how to cope with things that happened out of our control. Moses tells us that through knowing who we are as sinful creatures, and recognizing that God is sovereign and our Eternal dwelling place in whom we may find rest should bring comfort to our souls. And this should also lead us to pray for wisdom and guidance in order to live for Him even though our lives are brief and filled with sorrows and troubles. **It is because all things are held in your Father’s hands, which nothing bad happens to unless your heavenly Father permits it.**

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, the reality is that your life is short and filled with miseries? But you can wholeheartedly devote yourself to live for the glory of God and to fear God. But you may only do so through Christ, who endured the consequences of sins and the wrath of God so that you might not die, but live. Yes, here on earth you may experience trials and troubles, sorrows and sufferings, but you may rejoice in the grace of God and trust in His glorious providence even though our lives are brief and filled with misery. And not only so, you may pray and ask the Lord to establish the work of your hands, knowing that He will indeed guide you, it is because you know that your heavenly Father guide you by His Holy Spirit. Let us therefore, be faithful in our earthly endeavors, bringing glory to God through Christ! Even in the midst of your troubles and sorrows, rejoice in the glory and sovereignty of God. For **“we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28).** Amen.

Let us pray.