

"Teach Us to Number Our Days"  
(Psalm 90)

Introduction:

Where has the time gone? It passes so quickly.  
Nothing better reminds us than New Years Day.  
It is good to take inventory of how we have spent our time.  
If you were to examine your time, where are your commitments?  
Does it substantiate the fact that you are a Christian?

Theme: We all need to take account of our time and use it wisely.  
And what I want you to see this morning is: Life is brief, and  
you should seek by all means to live each day in obedience to your  
sovereign covenant-keeping God.

Context: A prayer of Moses the man of God.

- A. Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant.
- B. He is interceding for Israel who had sinned and was under the covenant curse.
- C. We are not told what the sin is. It could have been the Golden calf, Israel's rebellion before entering land, etc.
- D. In his prayer, I want you to notice three things.
  - 1. You are transient, God is eternal.
  - 2. Your brief life is futile under His displeasure.
  - 3. Your works are established only by His grace.

I. You are Transient, God is Eternal (vv. 1-6).

A. He is the Eternal God (v. 2).

- 1. He existed before the birth of the earth.
  - a. Birth terminology elicits idea of God's fatherhood.
  - b. He gives birth, as it were, to His creation.
- 2. He is from everlasting to everlasting.
  - a. Endlessly behind to ahead, God is God.
  - b. God was not a man as the Mormons teach.
  - c. Rather, He is infinitely removed from man.
- 3. He has always been a refuge to His people.
  - a. <Ps. 73:1-3>.
  - b. "The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; . . ."Deu. 33:27).
  - c. He has been throughout all generations to His people.
  - d. So Moses begins by extolling God's covenantal faithfulness.

B. You, on the Other Hand, Are Transient (vv. 3-6)

- 1. God turns man back into dust (v. 3).
  - a. Man was originally made from dust (Gen. 2:7).
  - b. Returning to dust was the curse of the covenant of

works.

- (i) Vegetation was to be man's food.
- (ii) But now man becomes food for the vegetation.
- (iii) Things are reversed by the curse.

2. Even the longest of lives are short before God (v. 4).
  - a. The antediluvians lived close to 1000 years.
  - b. But their lives are as a day, or less, as a four-hour night watch, to God.
3. God sweeps man off the earth in the passing of time (5).
  - a. God swept the wicked away in the flood.
  - b. God continues to sweep man from the earth with the passage of time.
  - c. They are likened to grass, which quickly withers.
  - d. The Bible says your life is like a vapor [James 4:13ff]
  - e. And this is your lot until the end of this age.
  - f. Creation will groan under the curse until Christ frees it at His coming.
 

"For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (1 Cor. 15:25f).

# 11. Your Brief Life is Futile Under His Displeasure. (vv. 7-10)

Because life is brief, it is futile to waste it in disobedience to God's commands.

## A. God Punishes Covenant Disobedience (vv. 7-8).

1. Israel's sin brought them under God's displeasure (v. 7).
  - a. Israel, as all men, are under the curse of the covenant of works, *so* their lives are brief.
  - b. But they had also broken the Mosaic Covenant.
    - (i) Again, we do not know the exact incident.
    - (ii) But whatever it was, it represented a grievous sin against God.
2. As a result, their sins were no longer hidden, but brought to judgment.

## B. God Reduced Their Lives to Futility (vv. 9-10).

1. All their days were hard to bear (v. 9).
  - a. The number of their days were shortened.
  - b. They passed as a breath.
2. Even the best of their days become fruitless (v. 10).
  - a. Man's life span is about 70, or 80 years if blessed.
  - b. But their best is futile apart from God's blessing.
  - c. They quickly expired.
3. When you violate God's holiness, you enter a time of futility.
  - a. God frustrates your days.
  - b. Time is wasted, precious time is lost that can never

- be regained.
  - c. Nothing you do is blessed, but all of your best labors amount to nothing.
  - d. So it is until you repent and are restored to God's favor.
4. But if you have never come to Christ, your days are an accumulation for the day of wrath.
- a. Everything you do is not of faith.
  - b. Everything you do increases the great weight of your guilt.
  - c. Nothing you do will be established, but will vanish in the passage of time.

111. Your Works are Established Only by His Grace (vv. **11-17**)

A. But Moses Interceded for the Transgressors (vv. **11-17**).

1. Mediation is a gracious provision in the Old Covenant.
  - a. A Mediator is one who stands between God and man.
  - b. The Old Covenant is not a covenant of works.
  - c. A strict covenant of works would have no mediator. If you failed, you would be cursed, period.
2. Moses stood in the gap, and prayed for God's mercy.
  - a. To have a proper fear of God (v. **11**).
    - (i) It is incomprehensible.
    - (ii) Even then it was greatly restrained.
    - (iii) Today it is still restrained.
    - (iv) Yet it is constantly being poured out (Rom. 1:18).
    - (v) But it will be fully poured out at the Second Coming.
  - b. Wisdom to live life for His glory (v. **12**).
    - (i) Wisdom to know the brevity of life.
    - (ii) Wisdom to use it wisely.
      - (a) Are you living daily in obedience to God's commands, to love Him supremely and your neighbor as yourself?
      - (b) Each precious moment that is lost can never be regained.
      - (c) Life is too short to waste, do all with His singular glory in mind.
3. He prays that God would reverse their situation (**13-17**).
  - a. Instead of God's absence, His presence (**13**).
    - (i) Curse is when Lord turns His back on His people.
    - (ii) It is the opposite of blessing <Num. **6:24-26**>.
    - (iii) He prays that God would relent of His wrath.
  - b. Instead of His displeasure, covenant faithfulness (**14**)
    - (i) Covenant love, unfailing love.
    - (ii) "In the morning" a new beginning after gloom.
    - (iii) So that the Lord's people may rejoice in their God.

- c. Instead of sorrow, gladness (v. 15).
  - (i) For the length of time under his displeasure.
  - (ii) They ask for continual blessing, not brief.
- d. Instead of a hidden God, One that is revealed (v. 16).
  - (i) They want to see God's work of salvation.
  - (ii) Not only for themselves, but also for their children.
- e. Instead of futility, fruitfulness (17).
  - (i) Instead of days declining in God's fury and wrath, days of fruitful labor.
  - (ii) He asks God to bring about a *full reversal* of all these things.

B. But How Can Sinful Man Expect to Receive the Blessing of the Holy God?

1. Moses prayed for God's mercy, but on what basis?
2. How can a sinner pray for sinners and expect to be heard?
3. Only on the basis of God's mercy in Christ.
  - a. In himself, Moses has no basis.
  - b. The Israelites deserved God's wrath.
  - c. But even the grace they received was given to them on the basis of the Christ who was to come.
4. What about you?
  - a. None of you stand deserving of His mercy.
  - b. But to the one who acknowledges his sin and turns to the Lord, there is mercy.
  - c. Christ's atonement is the only basis God's people have ever had of receiving His mercy.
  - d. Christ has done it all perfectly for His people.
  - e. And Christ's present intercession keeps His people in the grace of God <1 John 2:1>.
  - f. It is only by faith in Christ, and His faithful mediation that you can experience God's blessing.
4. But for those of you outside of Christ there is no mercy only wrath.
  - a. You cannot expect to stand in the judgment apart from Christ.
  - b. Your own righteousness is filthy rags and a stench to the nostrils of God.
  - c. Your own sins will bring upon you the just sentence of God: i.e. everlasting destruction.
  - d. You will be swept into eternal perdition, everlasting agony.
  - e. Throw yourself upon Christ, and plead for His mercy or you may be swept away much sooner than you think.

Conclusion: People of God, time passes quickly, let us redeem it for God's glory.

1. Live each moment in the expectation of eternity.
2. Don't let your sins go unconfessed that you should spend one moment outside the covenant lovingkindness of

God.

3. Use each precious and fleeting second of your life for the glory of God.
4. For soon they will all be spent, and no one can reclaim them once they're gone.
5. Use your time very, very wisely!
6. Amen! Let us pray.