

Bnai Chayim, Edmonton
10 June, 2017

Time is Not on Your Side

"All that is not eternal is eternally out of date." (C.S. Lewis)
Your eternal perspective is determined by your attitude towards and use of ... TIME.

Time is the one thing we all have in common. (Explain various ways that we differ).
The key is not the **AMOUNT** of time, but the **USE** of our time. The significance of a life is measured **NOT** by its **DURATION**, but by its **DONATION**. So, it's not a matter of how **LONG** we live, but how **WELL** we live (explain: living well from God's perspective).

Message Intro: We will talk about the experience of Moses. *"There has not arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses whom the LORD knew face to face."* (Deut. 34:10) God measures our heart, not our head.

The 90th Psalm = the prayer of Moses, the Man of God, at the end of a life of a 120 years. He had perfect vision and was still strong. (Deut. 34:7)

Life of Moses = 3 periods of 40-years each.
40 years **learning to be something**.
40 years **learning to be nothing**.
40 years **learning that God can make something out of nothing**.

Psalm 90 is probably the oldest and contains several contrasts:
1-God Who is everlasting and man, who is momentary;
2-eternal and temporal;
3-permanent and perishable;
4-divine viewpoint and human viewpoint.

Verse 12 gives us Moses' **PETITION**:

v.12 *"So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom."*

Explain: wisdom from the point of view of the Tenach: = **the skill of living**. Not just, "What do you understand", but "What can you use"?

Verse 17 = the **PRODUCT** of this Petition.

v. 17: *"And let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us; and do confirm (establish or give permanence to) the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands."*

But, the Qs are: "HOW can the loveliness of our LORD be upon us? HOW can our work be guaranteed in terms of its productivity and permanence? HOW can we acquire a heart of wisdom by numbering our days?"

The answer is found in the THE PROCESS (in the first part of the Psalm) - a four-fold answer:

FIRST, need to understand that this prayer emanates from the heart of an **OBJECTIVE MAN** (knows that his days were limited).

Verse 3: ***"Thou dost turn man back into dust,
'And dost say, 'Return, O children of men'."***

Moses knew that death was certain. He superintended at least 1.2 million funerals in a 38-year period. That's 87 per day, 3-4 every hour. Moses lived in a context of death. This planet is one big cemetery and we are all in the process of moving out. (the numbers will vary depending on the estimate of the number of people over 20 who left Egypt).

Philosophy tries to deny this fundamental reality of death. 19th century taboo was sex. 20th-early 21st-century taboo is death. We don't talk about it.

But the denial of the existence of death does nothing to dissolve its reality.
E.g., corp. executive examined, proclaimed healthy and then died.

The amazing thing is not that people die, but that people live. We think we are in the land of the living on our way to the land of the dying. But, for those who have a personal relationship with the Lord Yeshua, we understand that we are in the land of the dying on our way to the land of the living. If we are going to learn to number our days, we need to begin by recognizing that our time on this planet is very limited.

SECOND - this Psalm issues from an **OLD MAN**, who knows how fleeting and transitory life really is and, therefore, how precious. (**Jas. 4:14**) Attitude of youth: life is limitless. (Explain characteristics of youthful thinking). But, as the years accumulate, we begin to ask different questions, such as "Where did it all go?"

E.g.: laughter of children, re: father's yearbook/hair/sports then, spastic now/Q: life on the ark?

Moses gives us references to measure our lives against God; our history compared to eternity.

4 graphic illustrations/word pictures in the text, the first of which is found in the first part of verse 4:

"For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday (24 hours) when it passes by."

1,000 years to God = 24 hours to man.

We don't live a thousand years, maybe a hundred at best. To understand:

$1,000/10 = 100$ $24/10 = \text{about } 2\text{-}1/2 \text{ hours.}$

From an eternal perspective, the days of your life are passing by faster than the seconds on your watch.

Upon reflection, in the latter part of verse 4:

"Or (a thousand years is) as a watch in the night." (i.e., military watch = 3 hours)

$1,000/10 = 100$ $3 \text{ hours} = 180 \text{ minutes}/10 = 18 \text{ minutes, or just over a } 1/4 \text{ hour.}$

Moses wants us to be infected with the understanding of the sheer preciousness of life.

Different approach in verse 5.

verse 5 ***"Thou hast swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep;"***

It is as if Moses went down to the beach and sees those configurations, rocks, pebbles, seaweeds, the waves rolling in and the tides rolling out. Just about the time you get accustomed to it, another wave moves in, another tide moves out. All generations alike - no exceptions.

Verse 5 and verse 6 relate to the familiar:

verse 5 *"In the morning they are life grass which sprouts anew; they flourish;*
verse 6 *"Towards evening it fades and withers away."*
(e.g., roses / cut & put in a vase; fragrance that turns putrid and need to be discarded)

Sum up 4 graphic illustrations = short time to make an impact upon this planet.

THIRD: GODLY MAN, who knows that there is something abiding and eternal and, therefore, something meaningful, in life.

If all he spoke about was the certainty of death and the brevity of life, then someone would say "Why not embrace the philosophy of the epicureans of 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die'." (Paul: *"If in this life only we have hope, we are more to be pitied"*). Or, Camus (philosophy of despair and urged college students to commit suicide - the logical outcome of any philosophy of despair).

Such a philosophy is not only contrary to the Scriptures, it is contrary to experience. We long for perpetuity to what we do. *E.g.s*, posthumous memoirs; donation of a building; desire for a boy to carry on the family name. We have a tremendous need for meaning and purpose.

Q: "How do you find such meaning?" In the God who is eternal (vv. 1-2):

Verses 1-2: "LORD, Thou has been our dwelling place in all generations.
 "Before the mounts were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the
 world,
 "Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

TIME never takes on significance until we see it in the **LIGHT OF ETERNITY**. It's not what we do, but how we do it.

Misunderstanding in the evangelical community of "public gifts". Thinking some have a higher slice on God's market. Don't understand spiritual gifts are for the Body.

E.g., I **just** teach a Sunday School; I'm **just** a housewife; I'm **just** a plumber. God views our lives from an eternal perspective, do we?

JOHN GARDNER:

"An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing, because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy, because it is an exalted activity, will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water."

Paul (Col. 3:23): *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than for men...."*

Society is plagued with the mania of mediocrity that affects even born-again believers. If we saw our labor and what God has called us to do from a divine perspective (I'm doing this unto the LORD), it would give meaning and purpose to every minute.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the LORD." (1 Cor. 15:58)
That's what Moses was talking about.

FOURTH: It is the prayer of a **WISE MAN**, who knew the importance of setting deadlines and that the secret of spiritual living was discipline. The fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control.

That's why Moses says, "v. 10 - less time than 18 minutes. Let them do the math for 7/10 or 8/10. In other words, God has given us only a little period of time that God has given to you. Why not set deadlines and discipline yourself in terms of your objectives?"

Don't know those who planned to fail, but many who failed to plan - for lack of objective and, particularly, the wrong objective. Greatest concern is that they would succeed in doing the wrong thing."

The only thing you have for sure is today. (Yesterday is gone, forget it; tomorrow hasn't come, don't worry. Today is here, use it.) If you live that day, learn from the past, but not living in it, establishing your goals for the future, but pressing on as Paul did right now - (***Phil. 3:12***), then you're going to enjoy every every experience, whatever it is.

The LORD Yeshua was never in a hurry, despite having just a little period of time to do his Father's will. He had priorities in the midst of pressure. Paul: ***"This one thing I do"***, not these 40 things I dabble in (Phil. 3:13).

The children of Israel, very privileged, but failed to appropriate the blessing intended for them. Why (cite possibilities)? Ans.: Because they drew back in unbelief.

God called them to go directly into the land. They came to a place called Kadesh-Barnea and made a decision which determined their destiny.

Appoint a committee. Came back with a majority report and a minority report. The majority: "We can't." (***Num. 13:31-33***) Minority: "God said it - Let's go!" Majority won out. Majority was not only wrong, but dead wrong!

How did God judge them because they withdrew in unbelief? (list possibilities)
He sent them back to the desert where they boarded a merry-go-round for 38 years until an entire generation was buried. Nothing eternal about their life or work. Their penalty: **THEY WERE ASSIGNED TO KILLING TIME**. Buried over a period of 40 years after they "died".

We need to reach the lost, by God's grace and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and not give in to the temptation to draw back in unbelief and think we can't. After all, we're just one congregation here in Edmonton. And that's the devil's lie!! God wants to take us, individually and as a Body, to use us in our sphere of life, with meaning, to minister to our generation and not draw back like the children of Israel in unbelief.

Close: Ancient prayer -

"So teach us to number our days,
"That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom."

How can we do that? (1-sentence summary of each of Moses' characteristics).