

Readings

Scripture

¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. ² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" ⁴ For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

⁵ You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: ⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

⁷ For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

⁹ For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. ¹⁰ The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. ¹¹ Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

¹² So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. ¹³ Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants! ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. ¹⁶ Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. ¹⁷ Let 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!

- Psalm 90 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

The poet observes that part of the nature of sin is that men hardly ever realize the ultimate relationship between mortality and sin, because they live for the moment and are unconcerned about the opposition between the divine and the human will. In view of this widespread failure of the divine reality to produce any impression upon men, who may not even be aware of God's wrath and on that account do not show any fear of God, it is the poet's aim to make his words bring home to men the importance of the fact of God, and to impress upon their minds how God sees human sin and the pessimistic valuation of life as linked together.

- Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (p. 600)

The poet means to say that everything of which our life is proud (riches, outward appearance, luxury, beauty, etc.), when regarded in the right light, is after all only "labor", inasmuch as it causes us trouble and toil, and "sorrow", because without any true intrinsic merit and worth.

- Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms* (p. 56-57)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 (English Standard Version)

Sermon Outline

His Eternity
Psalm 90

Vintage Vinyl
Brad Anderson

God gives his eternity to needy transients... (Psalm 90:10)

How do we experience God's eternity as needy transients?

As God gives his shelter... (Psalm 90:1-2)

As God gives his instruction... (Psalm 90:3-12)

As God gives his mercy... (Psalm 90:13-17)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What is your earliest memory? Why do you think this incident has stuck in your mind?
- Who do you consider a wise person? How do you see that wisdom displayed in their life?
- At what point in Moses' life do you think he wrote Psalm 90? What country did he consider home? (Psalm 90:1)
- How do God and humans differ (Psalm 90:3-6)?
- Life is short. What else is wrong with it (Psalm 90:7-9)? What picture of God comes in verse 7? Why is humanity full of "labor and sorrow"?
- What does it mean to "number our days aright"?
- Does the final request remove the futility? What gives ultimate purpose to our endeavors?
- Would you call this psalm pessimistic? Realistic? Encouraging? Why?