

Living in Light of Eternity

by Steven J. Lawson

Dr. Steven J. Lawson's sermon emphasizes the importance of living with an eternal perspective as outlined in Psalm 90, urging believers to invest their lives wisely for God's glory.

Duration: 1:14:12

Scripture: Psalm 90:1, Psalm 90:12, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding four attributes of God in order to live a strategic and impactful life. The first attribute is the eternity of God, which is highlighted in verses one and two of the psalm. The speaker emphasizes that human life is fleeting and short in comparison to God's eternal perspective. The second attribute is the sovereignty of God, discussed in verses three through six. The speaker emphasizes that recognizing God's sovereignty is crucial for developing a heart of wisdom. The third attribute is the severity of God, discussed in verses seven through twelve. Understanding God's severity is essential for learning to number our days wisely. The final attribute is the brevity of life, emphasized in the latter part of the sermon. The speaker reminds the audience that life is short and death is certain, urging them to make the most of the time they have. The sermon references Job 14:5 to support the idea that the number of our days is determined by God.

Transcript

Well, we are privileged this morning to have a special guest with us this morning, Dr. Steve Lawson. And, you know, I just want you to know, next week is going to be a bad week for everybody. This is the second week in a row I haven't been able to preach.

And this week was the Shepherd's Conference, so I've had people stuffing my head full of all this truth, and there is a very raging fire within. And I think the people that Daniel studied tonight are even going to be in trouble. But we have a great privilege, Dr. Lawson, we kind of go like two ships in the night, it seems.

When I go over to Samara, a lot of times he's just been there, or he's going to be there. So he takes trips over there also and teaches at the Samara Theological Institute and the Preacher's Institute. And we're both involved in teaching the doctoral students at the Master's Seminary, and so we both are kind of, you know, doing the same kinds of things.

He has impacted my life. One of my favorite sermons that I ever heard him preach was at the Shepherd's Conference a few years back, where he preached the story of Jonah. It was just during the time when the seeker-sensitive church growth movement was, you know, trying to make its inroads into churches, something I was dealing with constantly here.

And he preached the story about Jonah, who was one man, and he had one method, preaching, and one message, repent. And there was no, you know, drama, there was no skits, there was just a man and a method and a message. And, of course, the greatest revival ever recorded in the Bible happened with that one man and his preaching.

So, I have listened to that message many times, and it has impacted my life. So, Steve, come on up and preach the Word. Well, I think you just did preach.

So, he just gave my sermon from Jonah, so that was good to hear that again. Thank you, Jack, very much. What a joy it is to be here.

I want you to know I love your pastor, and he is so highly thought of, and I know that this is a place where Bible exposition is practiced and is the order of the day, and so it is a privilege for me to stand in this pulpit. And, yes, I have so much in common, not only with Jack, but with this congregation as well. Our church really partners with your church, with the Samara Russia Missions Outreach, and I know that you give your pastor as well as your resources, and we do the same at our church.

And so, in that sense, we are brother and sister churches together, and it's just wonderful to be here and to experience your love and be able to give such a good report back to our home church, Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama. Jack is going to come and preach for me in April. I'll be going to Wales and to preach over there to groups of pastors, and so it's just wonderful to be able to exchange pulpits like this.

I just hope our church will send him back, okay, so I'll have a pulpit there to come back home to. I know how gifted he is, but I just want to thank you. Also, I have a great love for Thomas Watson, and I know that your pastor has written a wonderful book on Thomas Watson.

I'm often asked by college students especially, what are the top three books that I've ever read in my life, and I always say number one on the list is A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson, which just revolutionized my life when I was in seminary. I haven't gotten over it yet, and so because of my love for the truth of God presented that way and your pastor's love, I know that our hearts beat together for the same thing. So, it is a joy to be here, and thank you so much for allowing me, affording me this opportunity.

So, if you have your Bible, and I know that you do, you would take it and turn with me to the book of Psalms to Psalm 90, and while you're turning to Psalm 90, just a word of personal testimony. I have been preaching through the Psalms and started in Psalm 1 and have completed through Psalm 150, and I have come back and I'm doing Psalm 119 right now, and I started when I know James, my son here on the second row, was a freshman in college, and he has now graduated, and so I'm still in the Psalms, and it's just been a great joy and delight to me personally to be able to just go verse by verse through the entire Psalter, and I have been really elevated in my heart for the greatness of God through this. One of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 90, and they really all cry out to me and say, preach me, preach me, and I think Psalm 90 won the contest in my heart, so today I'd like for us to look at Psalm 90.

The title of the message today is Living in Light of Eternity. I'd like to begin by reading this Psalm for you and setting it before your heart again. It is a glorious Psalm.

It is a great Psalm that I believe will be for your edification. The Word of God says, You turn man back into dust and say return, O children of men, for a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. You have swept them away like a flood.

They fall asleep. In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew.

Toward evening it fades and withers away. For we have been consumed by your anger and by your wrath we have been dismayed. You have placed our iniquities before you, our secret sins, in the light of your presence.

For all our days have declined in your fury. We have finished our years like a sigh. As for the days of our life, they contain 70 years, or if due to strength 80 years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow.

For soon it is gone and we fly away. Who understands the power of your anger and your fury according to the fear that is due you? Now here it is. So teach us to number our days that we may present to you a heart of wisdom.

Do return, O Lord. How long will it be? And be sorry for your servants. O, satisfy us in the morning with your lovingkindness that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Make us glad according to the days you have afflicted us and the years we have seen evil. Let your work appear to your servants and your majesty to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and confirm for us the work of our hands.

Yes, confirm the work of our hands. There is a famous cathedral in Europe in which there are three large archways that lead from the vestibule into the sanctuary. And over the one entrance on the right is carved into the marble archway leading into the sanctuary these words, All that pleases is but for a moment.

And over the archway leading into the sanctuary on the left side is chiseled into the marble these words, All that troubles is but for a moment. And over the center archway leading down the center aisle into the sanctuary is this inscription permanently inscribed, All that is important is eternal. This is the central theme of Psalm 90.

It is a call for us to live in light of eternity. To live not for the pleasure or for the trouble of the moment. But to live with eternal perspective.

And to live for that which will matter a thousand years from now and ten thousand years from now. For our lives to live and to count for eternity now. The fact of the matter is we become very concerned and consumed with what is only temporary.

What temporarily troubles or what temporarily pleases. And in that we lose sight of eternity. This Psalm is a call to us to step back and to gather the big picture again for our lives.

While we are living in the day to day routine and the minutia of all that is confronting us. And we are busy putting out fires and taking care of this matter. How we need to stop in the midst of our lives and to take a step back.

And to do what the Psalm calls us to do. And ask God to teach us to number our days. So that we may present to the Lord a heart of wisdom.

May we be reminded that there are only two entities that will go out of this world. The word of God and the souls of men. And how wise we are to keep this big picture before us.

And to be constantly and continually investing our lives in which has impact upon the ministry of the word of God. And it being brought to bear upon the lives of people who will live forever and ever. Either in heaven or in hell.

The thunder of this Psalm of Psalm 90. It reverberates out of verse 12. This is the high impact verse of this Psalm.

In verse 12, look at it again. He says, so as a result of everything that he has said leading up to verse 12. As a result of this, teach us.

We must be instructed by you God. There are so many influences that are brought to bear from the world around us. That seek to conform us into the image of this world system.

And so God, we need to be instructed by you. Teach us to number our days. To weigh them on the scales of our understanding.

And to assign the proper value to the time and the opportunities that God has entrusted to us. As we live upon this earth for the kingdom of God. And it is only then that we may present to the Lord a heart of wisdom.

Clear implication. If we do not number our days, we will present to the Lord a heart of foolishness. And who here today wants to be considered by God a fool? No, it is the wise man.

The discerning woman. The person of prudence. Who will ask the Lord to teach me to number my days.

So that I in turn may present my life to God with a heart of wisdom. That's what this Psalm is saying. It is a call for us to live in light of eternity.

And to invest my life within time. So that it will have its impact upon eternity. By way of introduction, you'll note at the top of Psalm 90.

This superscription. This heading. That gives us some insight into this Psalm that I want to bring to your attention.

A prayer of Moses. It reads, the man of God. This Psalm comes in the form of a prayer.

And it is written and expressed by Moses. That therefore makes this Psalm the oldest Psalm in the entire Psalter. In fact, depending upon when he wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

This may be the oldest piece of Scripture in the entire Bible. It was written during Moses' wilderness wanderings. And as Moses wrote this Psalm, it's the only Psalm that he wrote.

You'll recall that he wrote this over 1400 years before the coming of Christ. David, who wrote 75 of the 150 Psalms, wrote approximately 1000 BC. So this Psalm is at least and longer 400 years older than any of the other Psalms in the Psalter.

They are not listed in chronological order. Meaning Psalm 1 is not the oldest Psalm. Psalm 2, the next oldest Psalm.

No, there is a rhyme and a reason for the positioning of the Psalms in the Psalter. Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 are like two doorkeepers as you enter into the Psalter. And they are a continual reminder.

They stand as a pair for every time we enter into the house of the Lord. And into the temple of this book, they speak a very direct message to us. They are intentionally placed there.

You will note on top of the superscription, probably in your translation, it says Book 4. And that reminds us that the Psalms were compiled in five different stages over a very long period of time. And this is the fourth gathering of the Psalms. From Psalm 90 to Psalm 104 is the fourth compiling of the Psalms.

And they just kept augmenting the Psalter until it grew larger and larger. They began with the first 41 Psalms and then they added the next. Until finally we come to Book 4 here.

It is intentionally placed first in Book 4. As Israel has come back from their Babylonian captivity. And they have wasted and squandered 70 years needlessly in captivity because of their sin when they were taken out. This Psalm is placed here for the people of God.

That as they come back to the promised land, as the temple has been rebuilt, as the wall is built around Jerusalem. That as they are given a second chance, they may be reminded by Moses. That we must be taught by God to number our days lest we be taken back into captivity elsewhere.

Think about this as Moses wrote this Psalm. Moses led the children of God out of Egypt into the very brink of the promised land. He spent 40 years going in circles in the wilderness.

And it is in that context the man who probably performed more funerals than any pastor who has ever lived. As an entire generation died in the wilderness. And as they were squandering their opportunity and wasting their time and their lives.

Moses says in the midst of that, so teach us to number our days. That we may present to you a heart of wisdom. What I desire for my life today, what I desire for your life today.

Is I don't want you to waste any time in your life. I don't want you to squander the opportunities that the Lord has set before you. That you will capture the moment.

And if you are alive and breathing in this service. If there is a purpose and a plan and a reason why you are still upon this earth. And you need to invest what time remains in your life for eternity.

And living for what ultimately matters. Not for the temporal pleasures of the moment. And we can enjoy temporal pleasures around us.

But I want you to know there is a far higher purpose why you are here. And that is to live for the honor and the glory of Jesus Christ. And for your life to have impact upon eternity.

So here is how this can happen. Here is why this psalm is so strategically important. As we look at this psalm, there are four attributes of God.

Through which you must see your life, your circumstances, your future. And all that is around you. And if these four attributes of God.

Excuse me. I swallowed my sermon. Can I get a drink of water? You can just chunk it up here Jack.

How about that? The old things passed away. Behold new things have come. So here is the overview.

I want to help you today through this psalm. Live your life strategically. To live your life on target.

For you to live your life with maximum impact upon eternity. Here are the four attributes of God. In verses 1 and 2 we will consider the eternity of God.

If you ever lose sight of the eternity of God. And how that intersects with your life. You will not be able to number your days.

Number 2 in verses 3 through 6. You will notice that is the second stanza. The sovereignty of God. If you ever lose sight of the sovereignty of God.

You will never ever be able to present to God a heart of wisdom. Number 3 verses 7 through 12. Is the severity of God.

How critically important that we understand the severity of God. If we are to truly be taught by God to number our days. And then finally verses 13 through 17.

The mercy of God. This is the paradigm. This is the lens through which you must see your life.

Your future. What lies before you. And if this is not ever in front of you.

You will be very foolish. You will be misguided. And you will inevitably be squandering your life.

And losing what has been entrusted to you. The time that you have to serve God. So let's begin where the psalm begins.

In verse 1. And I want you to see first God's eternity. And I would say to you this is where wisdom begins. In this psalm.

It is seeing God's eternity. Look at verse 1. Lord you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Stop right there.

Think of Moses in the wilderness. As he writes this. He has been leading Israel through this whole time.

And they have no place to call home. For 40 years they are a people without an address. For 40 years they are without a home.

It is day by day by day. They are following the pillar of cloud by day. And cloud by night.

And they have no place to unpack. No place to call home. They have not yet arrived in the promised land.

And it is in this context. That Moses makes an astonishing claim. That is true for every one of us here today.

Even us who have a home or an apartment or a dorm room. He says Lord you have been our dwelling place. It is in you that we live and move and have our being.

I may hang my clothes up at whatever address on main street. Or I may have my mail sent to me at this particular street address. But that's not my home.

My home is God. I live in God. No matter where I am.

No matter where I go. If I move or stay in the same location. That is all secondary compared to what is primary.

And that is Lord it is in you that I live and move and have my being. Lord you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Let me tell you generations come and go.

And there is only one constant in your life my friend. And that is God. Your life is changing.

If you question that go home and look in the mirror. We are all changing. The circumstances around us are changing.

The bank account is changing. Everything is changing around us. There is only one unchangeable reality in my life.

And that is God. You have been our dwelling place in all generations. And then he takes a step further back to get the big picture and to see the panorama of his life.

And he says in verse 2 and this is breathtaking. Before the mountains were born. That means before the act of creation.

Before the foundation of the world. Before time began. Before the mountains were born.

Or you did give birth to the earth and the world. Now watch this. From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

From everlasting in eternity past to everlasting in eternity future. God is the uncreated creator. The sole cause of which everything else is the resulting effect.

Isaiah 43 verse 13. Even from eternity I am he. Psalm 93 verse 2. Your throne is established from of old.

You are from everlasting. My friend we need to understand that God from all eternity past has purposed and planned. All that shall come to pass and that includes the size and the dimension.

And the boundaries and the affairs of your own individual personal life. I want you to know there is no such thing as an accident. I want you to know there is no such thing as luck.

I want you to know there is no such thing as random occurrence. Those are all pagan myths. All that there is in eternity past is the eternal God of heaven and earth.

Before there was even heaven and earth. And God the great architect of history designed and purposed his great plan. Not only for history but for your life.

I want to take you back to eternity past. I want you to step with me out of time back into everlasting. I want you to turn with me to the book of Ephesians chapter 1. I want you to step back into eternity past with me.

And I want to look at one verse. Verse 11. I want you to see a time before God created the angels.

I want you to see a time before God created any person. I want you to see a time before there were any molecules or any atoms. Before any gases, before any particles.

I want you to see a time before God even created heaven itself. When all that there was was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And there in the portals of eternity past.

I want to read verse 11. The sentence begins in verse 9. For times sake just verse 11. And there are four key words that I want to draw your attention to.

We have obtained an inheritance having been predestined. According to His purpose who works all things. Notice the all things.

There's nothing outside of all things. Who works all things after the counsel of His will. Now I want to tell you.

You're never going to be able to present a heart of wisdom to God. Until you understand the eternity of God. That God is always previous in your life.

And God has designed your future and your present. Now there are four key words in verse 11 that I want to draw your attention to. And I want to line these up in sequential order the way they unfold.

I want you to look at with me the word predestined, purpose, counsel, and will. Let's take them in the order in which they unfolded. In eternity past only God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

It begins with the word counsel. That's what happened in eternity past. There was a counsel.

And the only members who attended this counsel and issued a counsel was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Before them lay any number of options to create, not to create. How they would create.

Whom they would create. They could have made the sky purple and the grass orange. They could have had you born at any time in history they so desired.

They could have made a million galaxies, a trillion galaxies, one galaxy. And there in this divine deliberation, in this inner Trinitarian consultation, in this counsel within the Godhead in which they considered every conceivable possibility, there came forth out of this counsel God's will. And you will notice in verse 11 that He works all things after the counsel of His will.

And in God's will, God chose the one best plan that would bring greatest glory to Himself and greatest pleasure to His own heart. And included in this sovereign will across the page, verse 4, God chose all who would believe. All who would ultimately come to faith.

The reason that they do is because they were previously chosen by God to do so. And in verse 4, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. And I can tell you, if you are a Christian today, that in eternity past God drew a circle around your name and said, this one, I will manifest my glory upon them

as a vessel of mercy and pour out my grace upon this one.

And out of this will, which is all inclusive, notice, all things after the counsel of His will, that you would even be in church here today, was a part of the eternal purpose and will of Almighty God. Their third then came His purpose. Do you see that? According to His purpose, and purpose here speaks of the divine determination to execute His will.

It speaks of the resolve of God to carry out His sovereign will from all eternity past. And no man, no king, no nations, no power would ever be able to hinder the outstretched hand of God as He purposes to carry out the counsel of His will. The fourth word in verse 11 is the word predestined, which simply means that the destination is determined before the journey begins.

And that before time began, God having chosen His will and resolved with purpose to execute it, God then poured concrete into those plans, and He predestined that it would all come to pass with all of the intricacies of that plan and will. Not only is God involved in the big picture, but God is micromanaging everything that comes to pass. And there is not a hair that falls from your head apart from the Lord.

There is not a sparrow that falls from the sky apart from the Lord. The lot is cast into the lap. It's every turning up is from the Lord.

God has the entire universe wired. And there is not a maverick molecule anywhere. Now, if you're going to present to God a heart of wisdom, you need to understand this.

You need to get in the elevator and punch penthouse and go all the way to the top and get the big picture of how life operates. That God is transcendent, that God is majestic, that God is eternal. And from all eternity past, this all-wise, all-loving, all-gracious God has gone before you.

And not only has He chosen you for Himself, but He has also prepared good works for you to walk in. Now, turn the page to chapter 2, verse 10, Ephesians 2, and verse 10. As long as we're in the neighborhood, we need to gather this in.

In Ephesians 2, verse 10, you need to understand this, that even from eternity, God has prepared the good works that you will walk in. Look at Ephesians 2, verse 10. For we are His workmanship.

We haven't made ourselves, no self-made people in the kingdom of heaven. No, we are the object of His working. We are His workmanship by His grace.

Created in Christ Jesus, watch this, for good works unto good works. We're not saved by good works, are we? But we're saved for good works unto good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Do you know that God has your future planned and purposed, and that every day there is a sense of destiny about your life, every step, every moment of what you do? God in heaven from all eternity past has purposed your life.

It included where you would be born, the color of your skin, the color of your eyeballs, your temperament, your personality, who your parents would be, the part of the country that you grew up in. All of these have been influences that have been brought to bear, who would live next door to you, who would sit next to you in class, who your friends would be. All of these influences have been ordained by God before time began, and you are the object of His workmanship.

Now, if you're going to present to God a heart of wisdom, you need to understand this. You need to understand the eternality of God, that God has eternal purpose, and God has an eternal plan, and God has an eternal will for your life, and He's not making this up as we go, and He has never deviated from plan A, and He is ushering you forward, and you are contained in this moment in the hands of Almighty God from all eternity past. So, teach us to number our days, because God has allotted these days to us from before the foundation of the world.

Now, come back to Psalm 90, if you would. Psalm 90, because there's more that I want you to see and understand as we consider how to present to God a heart of wisdom, how to live in light of eternity. Number one, there must be the recognition of the eternality of God, that God is previous, that God is uncreated, and that God is the architect and the author of our lives.

Number two, as we come to verse 3, I want you to see not only God's eternality, but second, God's sovereignty. You see, this eternal God from all eternity past now presides over every human life within time, and this God now governs how long we have to be upon this planet. This is a heart of wisdom, my friend.

Look at verse 3, you. This is Moses speaking to God. Remember, this is a prayer of Moses, the man of God.

This is Moses praying to God, You, God, turn man back into dust. That's a euphemism for death. And say, return, O children of men.

What this is saying is that God is sovereign over the expanse of our life. God is sovereign over the number of days that we have to live upon this earth. And it is God and God alone who has created us and placed us within time, space, dimension, and within history when it is that we have appeared upon this scene.

And it is God who, in verse 3, who will say, Return, O child of man, to the dust. Dust here is a reference clearly to death. Genesis 2, verse 7, The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into him the breath of life into his nostrils.

We have come from dust and we're headed back to dust. Our body, our soul, and spirit will go to be with the Lord. Genesis 3, 19 talks about we have come from the dust.

We shall return to the dust. And verse 3 says, it is God who calls each one of us back to the dust at his appointed time. And what is so amazing is that none of us here today have the same amount of time to live.

Some here today will have a very short amount of time. Others of us here today will have a longer amount of time. But God, according to his eternal purpose and plan, has already predetermined the number of days that we have to live here upon the earth.

And we will not live one second beyond what God has already allotted. So verse 3, you turn man back into dust and say, Return, O children of men. Unlike God who is eternal, who is unchanging, who is immutable, who is eternal, on the other hand, man is constantly changing.

Man is growing old. Man is growing weak. Man is fragile.

Man is frail. Man is unstable. Man is temporal.

God is eternal. So verse 4, for a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it passes away. This eternal God, when he looks upon the frailty of man from God's eternal perspective, a thousand years, a millennium, is but a bleep on the screen.

It's just like a passing of time. He says at the end of verse 4, or as a watch in the night, which is only a four-hour period of time in the middle of the night. You go to sleep.

You wake up the next morning. You don't even notice that four-hour watch in the night. That's how quickly human life is passing off the scene.

None of us here today can even comprehend how short of time we have left upon this earth. Listen, you're only here for a short period of time. Do not think you have a long time to live, my friend.

Therefore, you need to weigh a number very carefully your days, because they are so few, and they are so passing, and they are so temporal. Look at verse 5. He continues to talk about death. You, God is the one referenced.

You, God is the one addressed. You have swept them, all of mankind, away like a flood. They fall asleep.

This is a picture here of a flash flood, that life is in the desert, in the wilderness, is just going on as it always has. And in this part of the wilderness area, there is very little rain, and life just goes on as it is. And then suddenly, in the rare time of the year, there is a cloudburst, and it forms what's called a wadi, which is a flash flood, and it just sweeps every tumbleweed away, and it sweeps away all that is in its path, and it just immediately comes, and it immediately goes.

Moses says, that's human life. You're here, you're swept into eternity. He says, in the morning, they are like grass.

And he paints another word picture on the canvas of our mind. In the morning, they, mankind, are like grass, which sprouts anew. In the morning, it flourishes and sprouts anew.

And in this arid desert, wilderness area, it's very hot in the day, cool at night, a desert climate. And early in the morning, as the sun begins to arise, it forms dew. And the dew lays on the ground, and there begins to be kind of an instantaneous little growth that begins to push its way up through the parched ground, but only for a short time until at high noon, where the sun is in full heat, and it beams down, and it evaporates the dew, and this little growth that begins to emerge, it is instantly just cooked and baked, and it just falls over, and it wilts.

And Moses says, that is human life. It just begins to emerge in the morning of life, but by high noon, and it perishes. Look at the end of verse 6. Toward evening, it fades and withers away.

What is he saying to us? That life is short, and death is sure. Listen, the government has done a new statistic. They have recently released one out of every one person dies.

Startling. Film at six. You are going to die.

You are dying. Who knows how much time you have left, swept away like a flood. Sometimes in the full bloom of youth, God sovereignly sits upon the time that we have to live.

Let me give you two references. Just jot these down. Job 14 verse 5. Since man's days are determined, I wonder who determined them.

Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with you. And his limits you have set, so that no one can pass. Listen, you can join a health club.

You can start walking. Et cetera, et cetera. And you need to do that.

But I want to tell you, you are not going to live one split second beyond the allotted time that God has ordained from before the foundation of the world for you. My wife is seated on the second row. One of my twin sons is two down from her.

When our twins were born to us 22 years ago, almost 23 years ago, we had two baby cribs in that bedroom in the corner. And my wife needle-pointed this verse that hung upon this young man's bed. Psalm 139 verse 16.

In your book were all written the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them. Before eternity, God in his sovereignty recorded the precise number of days that you have to live upon this earth. And he recorded it in his book.

And he recorded it in permanent ink that shall never be erased and can never be changed. God has numbered your days. How wise it would be for you to number your days.

How foolish it would be for you to live in oblivion as if you have much time to live. Do you want to present to God a heart of wisdom? Do you? Then you need to number your days. And you cannot number your days without seeing the eternity of God and without seeing the sovereignty of God that it is God who has marked them out before time began.

And when you would enter this world and when you will leave this world and he is sovereignly governing the circumstances and the influences in your life and everything in between and you are responsible to God one day to give an account for how you have lived for his glory. There's a third attribute you need to see. God's eternity, number one.

God's sovereignty, number two. God's severity, number three. This eternal sovereign God beginning in verse 7 is presented to us also as a severe God who brings painful consequences to our sinful choices.

And as you hear me speak of the sovereignty of God, in no way may anyone here today assume that you have been stripped of your responsibility before God for the choices that you make because that is not the case. And now verses 7 through 12 are placed here as a reminder to us that if you make sinful choices in your life, you are wasting your life. And you will be under the discipline of God and you will be going in circles in the wilderness and you will be ever expending energy and not going anywhere with your life.

In fact, your life will be in reverse. And what a tragedy that will be. For you too have been given this opportunity and this life to live and for you to make sinful choices that have monumental effects upon your life.

And if you do, you will be wasting time and squandering your life. So look at verse 7. For we, Moses and Israel in the wilderness is the we, for we have been consumed by your anger and by your wrath we have been dismayed. Israel had been given a glorious future by God and they were led to the very precipice of

entering into the promised land.

And Moses, under the direction of God, sent the 12 spies into the land that flows with milk and honey and into the promised land. And God promised that I will be with you and I will defeat your enemies and everywhere your foot treads, I will give that land to you. And the 12 spies went up into the land and it was their day of opportunity and it was their hour with God to go forward.

And when they went into the land, rather than looking to God, they saw how big their enemies were and they came whimpering back to Moses and said, they're too big, we're like grasshoppers in their sight. And God's wrath and God's anger was upon them because in this hour they responded in unbelief. Listen, if you're going to present a heart of wisdom to God, you need to understand, there are any number of choices that you have to make in any given day.

And thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And I must follow the path that God's word has set forth to me. And let me tell you, if you knowingly, as a Christian, go marry an unbeliever, I promise you, you're going in circles for a very long time.

And when you report to work and if you compromise your integrity and you make choices, I promise you, you're going in circles in the wilderness for a very long time. And you will be wasting and squandering not just years but decades of your life. You don't have time to waste.

I don't have time to waste. And if you don't see God's severity, you're going to present a heart of foolishness to God. And you're going to come up with some idiotic conclusions that it really doesn't matter what I do or choices I make and God will just like override everything.

Yeah, He's going to override with a rod of His anger towards you. So look at it. Look at verse 8. You, God, have placed our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

God sees it all. He hears it all. And He heard all their mumbling and all of their murmuring and all of their rebelling and all of their disobedience.

And God flushed it out of the back closet and He put it out in the front lawn in the clear light of His holiness and He saw it all and there was no secret sin in their lives. And God then in severity brought the consequences to bear of their sinful choices. So look at verse 9. You talk about wasting days, wasting hours, wasting time.

We have finished our years like a sigh. Exhausted, drained because of the effects of God's severity. Verse 10.

Listen, you're not going to live much longer beyond that. You know that? My father is 81. He's dying of cancer.

He has but months to live. He's already exceeded what the doctors said. We've been given, from our human perspective, an extra year and a half with my father.

I'll be performing his funeral here very soon. As for the days of our life, they contain 70 years or if due to strength, 80. And that's it.

You're out of here. But their pride is but labor and sorrow. It is their arrogance.

It is their pride. It is their self-sufficiency that has resulted in labor and sorrow. For soon it is gone and we fly away.

Look at verse 11. Who understands the power of your anger? That is a rhetorical question. You will note there is no answer.

The answer of which is so obvious. Moses will not insult our intelligence by even giving us the answer. For everyone knows the answer to this question.

The answer is no one. Who understands the power of your anger? Not a one of us in this room today. And who understands the fury according to the fear that is due you? Not a one of us takes God too seriously.

In Mobile, Alabama, where I pastor, there are other churches in town. And in those churches, there can be a little gossip around town. I don't know if you know what that's like out here in California.

And if someone moves to Mobile, they'll say, Oh, you don't want to go to Christ Fellowship. They take God too serious there. Which interpreted means we don't have skit time on Sunday morning.

You know what this verse says? We haven't even begun to take God seriously enough. That is the devil's talk to say, Oh, you take God too seriously. Listen, you'll never take God too seriously.

You think too highly of yourself if you think you take God too seriously. Thou man of the moment. Who understands the power of your anger and your fury according to the fear that is due you? Answer, not a one of us.

We are oblivious to the infinite awesome holiness of Almighty God. Now verse 12. So teach us as a result of all of this.

Oh God, so that we don't keep going in circles, so that we don't keep wasting our time. Oh God, teach us to number our days so that we may present to you a heart of wisdom. What this is saying is, it is a prayer on Moses' behalf on the people of God.

Lord, teach us to number our days. Teach us to value our days. Teach us not to squander our time.

Teach us to weigh them very carefully and invest them shrewdly for the kingdom of God and for His glory. That's what you need to do. You need to ask God to teach you to number your days in whatever time you have remaining here upon the earth.

So that you may invest them with maximum rate of return for eternity. I hope not a one of you here today are just hanging out. I hope not a one of you here today have time to burn.

I hope none of you here today have time to kill. I hope every one of you here today feels a sense of the eternal weight of glory pressed upon you. That you would present to God a heart of wisdom.

You only have so many days. No more. When I went to college, I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee.

I went to college at Texas Tech University out in West Texas. I'm the first born child and when it came time to go to college, it was a family event. My father had a red Volkswagen bus and we all piled into this red Volkswagen bus and drove across the country through the flatlands of West Texas to Lubbock, Texas where they brought me to go to college.

I'll never forget, my parents helped me move into my dorm room. And then as they were making their way back down to the parking lot for us to have our goodbyes. My dad stopped in the dorm room and I instinctively stopped and turned around and he said, Stephen, we haven't talked about your allowance.

You need to understand, my father is the most frugal human being who has ever frequented planet earth. My father grew up in West Texas during the depression. Grapes of wrath all began with my father.

Literally in poverty in West Texas out in the middle of nowhere and was able to provide for us through education and became a professor in med school. And everything that came about, God just enabled him to provide for us. But let me tell you, you can take the man out of the country, but you don't take the country out of the man.

This frugal man, I've never had a large Coke in my life. I thought my middle name was refill. He reached into his pocket.

The beginning of August, I played college football. We're getting ready to start two a day practices. Whatever he handed to me was going to last me from August all the way to Christmas.

He pulled out of his pocket some money. No one can caress a dollar bill like my father. He works it from opposite corners.

And I remember he handed it to me and he said, Stephen. This is all you're going to have. And I knew he meant that.

He said, every time you make a purchase, you put your hand in your pocket and you feel that money. Because once it's gone, it's gone. And you'll never have it to spend again.

I'll never forget that talk. That's what God is saying here in this psalm. I have put into your pocket a certain number of days.

And once they're gone, there's no more. You need to put your hand on your heart and number every day. That's what Moses is saying in verse 12.

Lord, teach us to number our days. That means there's not a one of us here today wise enough, prudent enough to do this on our own. We're too easily swept up in the tyranny of the urgent and putting out fires.

And we lose sight of eternity. And when we do, we so often squander our times. And we end up majoring on minors and we minor on majors at best.

He says, so teach us. God, if you don't teach us, I'll be a fool. God, if you don't teach me, I'll waste my life.

So teach us to number our days. Here's the result. So that in return, we may present to you a heart of wisdom.

Notice the cause and effect here. It is the first half of verse 12 that produces the second half. The first half is the cause.

The second half is the effect. We must learn to number our days in order to present to God a heart of wisdom. Therefore, if you are not taught by God, if you are not taught by God to number and weigh your days, you will present to God a heart of foolishness.

And you will have squandered your life. And you will be like Israel going in circles in the wilderness and getting nowhere fast. But if you will see life, your life, through the lens of God's eternity and His sovereignty and His severity, you will be well positioned to enter the promised land.

There's a last attribute that I want you to see very quickly. I hate to say this, but I'm running out of time on my sermon on time. There's a certain irony about this.

Listen, I'm trying to live this like you are, so I am modeling right now what not to do. All right. Finally, I want you to see God's mercy beginning in verse 13.

And this is so important because you know what? There's a lot of us who have already wasted time, is there not? There's a lot of us who have already squandered time. Some of you didn't even come to Christ until more recently. And think about all the time you wasted running with the course of this world.

Some of you have spent time in other churches that don't even teach the Bible. You talk about fool's gold. All of us have wasted time.

All of us need to know that God is a God of mercy and grace and who would enable us to make up for lost time. We all need to know that there is a dimension of God that He can be and for most of us is a God of a second chance. So we see God's mercy beginning in verse 13.

And how good of God to include this in Psalm 90 for us. It is the prayer of Moses. It should be our prayer as well.

Put yourself into the sandals of Moses and pray this to God. Do return, O Lord, how long will it be? In other words, God, help us to recover for going in circles in the wilderness so long. God, return to us.

Put your hand on us again. Return your divine favor. Now, God never left in the sense of His omnipresence.

But what verse 13 refers to is what verse 17 speaks of, the favor of the Lord our God. God, return your blessing. Return your direction.

Return your guidance to our lives. God, if you do not do this left to ourselves, we will just continue to spend like a top in the wilderness. Be sorry for your servants.

In other words, have compassion upon us for what our wrong choices have done to us. Verse 14, O, satisfy us in the morning with your lovingkindness. While there is still time in the morning of life, while I'm still here upon the earth, while there are still yet steps to be taken to move forward in your will, God, satisfy us.

Let there be a new day of grace that will emerge that we may sing for joy and be glad all of our days. Verse 15, make us glad according to the days you have afflicted us. In other words, God, for as long as you have disciplined us, now delight us.

For as long as you have taken us to the woodshed, God, now come with mercy and forgiveness and compassion. O God. Verse 16, let your work appear to your servants.

What that means is, O God, restore your work in our midst. Cause us to stop going in circles in the wilderness. O God, let your work appear with blessing and favor and your good hand to be upon it.

Because God, if you don't put your hand upon our work, it is worthless. It is wood, hay, and stubble. God, cause what I am doing to truly have its impact upon eternity and your majesty to their children.

Meaning what happens to me as a trickle down effect to the next generation even within my own household. O God, even if I only have a little bit more time here upon the earth, favor me, bless me so that my children will at least be better postured for their future. So that they won't have to make the mistakes that I have made.

O God, bless me now only for a moment so that my children may go into the future in the right direction. Verse 17. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us.

What does this imply? It's not upon us right now. God is with us. That's the problem.

He is with us in his severity and in his discipline. God, please remove your hand of discipline and let your favor be upon us. Yes, confirm the work of our hands.

My friend, verse 12 says it all. This is God's word to you today. God has numbered your days.

You only have so much time left here upon this earth. You must number your days. You don't know how many they are.

But that means you must count them to be very valuable and to invest them very wisely. You need to understand the shortness of life, the certainty of death, the length of eternity. Listen, whoever you are, wherever you are today, you'll never be 18 again.

You'll never be 39 again. You'll never be 82 again. You'll never be in college again.

You'll never have, wherever you are, this is your moment in time before God to occupy where you are with what you are, with who you are. Don't squander it. Don't leave time and step into eternity without a Savior.

You will be soon stepping into eternity. I know how you need a Savior, how you need an advocate to represent you before the Father above. If you've never believed upon Jesus Christ, if you have never repented of your sins, there is only one way for you to find acceptance before a holy God in heaven, and that is through the merit of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross for sinners.

And you must come to Christ and repent of your sin and turn from your sin and be broken, be poor in spirit and mourn over your sin and to hunger and thirst for a righteousness that only Christ can give to you. You need to be meek and you need to humble yourself under the lordship of this Christ and say, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. Don't leave time and step into eternity without the only Savior there is.

There is salvation in no other name, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

He is either the lord of that statement or he is a liar. He is the only lord. May you repent of your sin if you have not come to Christ and may you embrace him by faith in your heart.

And when you come to the end of your life, that time ordained by God, the Lord Jesus will present you faultless to stand before the Lord in heaven. You don't want to try to stand there in your rags of religiosity. He will say unto you, depart from me that work iniquity, I never knew you.

But if you'll believe upon Christ, hear me, if you'll believe upon Christ and give your life to him completely, he will present you faultless through the merit of his death upon the cross. If you're to present a heart of wisdom to God, it begins at the cross. And may you believe upon him.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that according to your inscrutable wisdom from before the foundation of the world, that it would please you that everyone in this house today would be here at this moment in time. Not a one of us is here by accident.

Not a one of us is here by randomness. We are all here by divine appointment. And God, I pray that we would draw from Psalm 90 all that you intend for us to receive.

May no one in this house who is without Christ leave here today without the Savior. And may every believer in this house today from this point on, Lord, be taught by you to number their days so that every day that remains upon this earth might be wisely invested with maximum return for eternity and for the glory of God. Seal to our hearts now this which you have sown into us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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