

**Sunday, March 16, 2025 | Standalone Message**

**Psalms 90 | “14,732”**

**READ:** Psalm 90 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. <sup>3</sup> You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!” <sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. <sup>5</sup> You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: <sup>6</sup> in the morning, it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening, it fades and withers.

<sup>7</sup> For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. <sup>8</sup> You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. <sup>9</sup> For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you?

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

Depending on your mood, a sad song is more comforting than a happy one. Famously, Willie Nelson said, “A lot of country music is sad. I think most art comes out of poverty and hard times. It applies to music. Three chords and the truth—that's what a country song is.”

Interestingly, the Red-Headed Stranger could've been describing portions of the Book of Psalms when he said this. Almost half of the psalms (43%) are laments, or what we might call “sad songs.” Mournful tunes are as much a part of religious contexts as they are a part of secular culture.

But, unlike “Hurt” by Johnny Cash, “Tears In Heaven” by Eric Clapton, or “Cats in the Hat” by Harry Chapin, in which lyrics and melodies are sung for general audiences, laments are directed to God alone. As Rob Brockman explains, “Lament is the wailing of the heart before a God who

hears, who listens, and who responds to our cries.”<sup>1</sup> The Psalms of Lament, like the one before us today, give the people of God something to say when they’re going through hard times, when they’re more melancholy than merry. They address a person’s *felt* needs, allowing them to sing when sorrow fills their heart.

The theme of Psalm 90 is *time*. As such, it's structured around three temporal designations:

i. Vs. 1-6 – The Past

**Vs. 1** – The Psalmist says, “**Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**” The past tense, “**you have been,**” clarifies the focus is on the past. The writer is nostalgic for the good ol days when he and his people dwelled beneath the shelter of God’s protective wing (cf. Ps. 91:1). Moses viewed God as the “**home for people who are or feel homeless.**”<sup>2</sup> Doubtless, God was still a shelter for his people, but, as we'll soon see, the Psalmist doesn't feel that way (cf. vs. 7-11).

**Vs. 2-3** – The opening lines establish God’s faithfulness “**in all generations.**” This sets up the writer to expound on God’s eternity. He existed “**Before the mountains were brought forth.**” God predates Everest, Kilimanjaro, and the Rockies. As old as the mountains may seem, they are babes compared to the Almighty. **In fact, He is the one who “formed the earth and the world;”** He sunk the base and laid the foundations of the planet. The Psalmists conclude, “**From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.**” The Lord was there when man was made from the earth, and, at his word, he can return “**man to dust.**” Life and death obey the command of God. When he says, “**Return, O children of man,**” no man can resist his call.

**Vs. 4-6** – God does not view time the way that humans do. The Psalmist says that “**a thousand years**” in the “**sight**” of God “**are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**” Peter references this principle in 2 Peter 3:8, saying, “**With the Lord, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.**” This is not to say a single day is inconsequential, but that God's timetable works on a far larger scale than our own. Our calendar year is broken up into months, weeks, and days. God's calendar year is divided into eons, ages, and millennia.

**So, what’s the takeaway? God is eternal.**

God's perspective is eternal, while ours is temporal. To illustrate this, the Psalmists use three similes. First, he says that God “**sweeps [a thousand years] away as with a flood.**” Second, a

<sup>1</sup> Brockman, Rob, “The Art of Lament,” March 30, 2021, *The Gospel Coalition*, <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-art-of-lament/>, [accessed, March 15, 2025].

<sup>2</sup> Goldingay, John, *Psalms*, Volume 3: Psalms 90-150, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2008), p. 25.

thousand years “are like a dream.” And third, a thousand years is “like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.” As a flood washes away the landscape, so the Lord sweeps away the years. As dreams fade in the morning, so time is forgotten. As the grass grows but soon wilts under the scorching sun, so history rises and falls.

## ii. Vs. 7-11 – The Present

**Vs. 7-8** – In light of the past, the Psalmist moves the perspective to the present. He says, “We are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath, we are dismayed.” It appears that, at the time Psalm 90 was written, the community was under God’s judgment. He explains that the Lord has “set [their] iniquities before [him], [their] secret sins in the light of [his] presence.” Whatever wrongs are in view, God has exposed them. His people had sinned and were now being chastened for their sins. Possible “end,” God’s “wrath,” being “dismayed,” and exposure of “sin”—this is the heart of the psalm. The community was mourning their mistakes, which is why this is a psalm of lament. They were crying out to God because they were reaping the fruit of their sinfulness. As the saying goes, “Bad choices are like young chickens; they always come home to roost.”

**Vs. 9-10** – The Psalmist is genuinely desperate. He feels like “all our days pass away under your wrath.” Judgment was so heavy that he felt that all he knew, his entire life, was God’s anger. The writer says, “We bring our years to an end like a sigh.” His time on this earth feels as if they’re no more substantial than a fleeting moan. This is quite a statement since he admits that “the years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty.”

Why is he being so pessimistic? The Psalmist says though someone may live seven or eight decades, “yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.” Life is a struggle. You’ve got to work away your best years. You’ve got to deal with difficulties. The mountain tops seem few and far between, while the valleys feel unending. From the start of one’s life to its end, existence can sometimes seem like a pain.

**Vs. 11** – The Psalmist concludes this section by asking, “Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?” This is a rhetorical question. The answer is “nobody.” No one can fully comprehend God’s powerful “anger,” nor is anyone prone to think about such a thing. Such thoughts are far from the mind of man. We do not want to contemplate God’s anger towards humanity; it’s too terrible. Yet, this is exactly what the Psalmist is doing. He’s considering his own frailty in the face of the Almighty.

**So, what’s the takeaway?** Man is mortal.

Death, sickness, and all human suffering are a result of the Fall. Even those who are redeemed must still give way before the ravages of time. In this way, since all men will die, all people, be they believers or not, have the wrath of God resting on them. Even to those who have the fear of God, God will show wrath. Psalms such as these bring the sad human condition into stark contrast. This is why Luther says, “Where do you find more miserable, more wretched, more depressing words than in the Psalms of lamentation. There you see into the heart of all the saints as into death, even as into hell. How sad and dark it is there in every wretched corner of the wrath of God.”

### iii. Vs. 12-17 – The Future

In light of God’s eternity and man’s mortality, the Psalmist makes seven requests:

**Vs. 12** – “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” An awareness of our mortality keeps us from wasting our lives. If we ignore our end, we’ll forget to prepare for it.

**Vs. 13a** – Return, O Lord! How long? An awareness of God’s homecoming readies the home to receive him. If we don’t look for Jesus’ return, we’ll be caught off guard when he comes.

**Vs. 13b** – Have pity on your servants! An awareness of our helplessness makes us dependent on God’s compassion. If pride keeps us from help, it will not seek us out.

**Vs. 14** – Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. An awareness of God’s love fills our lives with joy. If the things we value aren’t worth valuing, we won’t experience true happiness.

**Vs. 15** – Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. An awareness of heaven’s mercies makes earth’s miseries bearable. If we’re only focused on our problems, we’ll forget God’s promises.

**Vs. 16** – Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. An awareness of God’s handiwork is a grand heritage for the next generation. If fathers don’t pass down their faith, their children will be faithless.

**Vs. 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! An awareness of man’s finitude makes one dependent on God for a legacy. If the Lord doesn’t build, the builders build in vain.

**So, what’s the takeaway?** Time is a teacher.

I was born February 9, 1987. Since then, I've lived 13,916. Should die on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, I will have lived 28,648 days. Assuming this takes place, only have **14,732 days** left to live.

**EXAMPLE:** There once was a missionary named Charles Thomas Studd. He went to China in the late 1800s when there had never been a Christian presence in that country before. Upon setting out for China, he famously said, "Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." He worked there for 15+ years and then moved to India and the Congo where he eventually died in his late 70's. He is mostly remembered for the poem he wrote entitled "Only One Life".

**"Only One Life" by C.T. Studd**

Two little lines I heard one day,  
Traveling along life's busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart,  
And from my mind would not depart;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes, only one,  
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,  
And stand before His Judgement seat;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God's holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,  
Each with its burdens hopes, and fears;  
Each with its clays I must fulfill,  
living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore,  
When Satan would a victory score;  
When the self would seek to have its way,

Then help me, Lord, with joy to say,  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me, Father, a purpose deep,  
In joy or sorrow, Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,  
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh, let my love with fervor burn,  
And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee and Thee alone,  
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes, only one,  
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";  
And when at last I'll hear the call,  
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last

## **Video Description:**

### **Standalone Teaching | “14,732” (Psalm 90)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Depending on your mood, a sad song is more comforting than a happy one. Famously, Willie Nelson said, “A lot of country music is sad. I think most art comes out of poverty and hard times. It applies to music. Three chords and the truth—that's what a country song is.”

Interestingly, the Red-Headed Stranger could've been describing portions of the Book of Psalms when he said this. Almost half of the psalms (43%) are laments, or what we might call “sad songs.” Mournful tunes are as much a part of religious contexts as they are a part of secular culture.

But, unlike “Hurt” by Johnny Cash, “Tears In Heaven” by Eric Clapton, or “Cats in the Cradle” by Harry Chapin, in which lyrics and melodies are sung for general audiences, laments are directed to God alone. As Rob Brockman explains, “Lament is the wailing of the heart before a God who hears, who listens, and who responds to our cries.”<sup>3</sup> The Psalms of Lament, like the one before us today, give the people of God something to say when they're going through hard times, when they're more melancholy than merry. They address a person's *felt* needs, allowing them to sing when sorrow fills their heart.

## **Sermon Manuscript:**

---

Grace Pointe Baptist Church

12029 Eastern Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21220

Contact: [info@GracePointeLife.com](mailto:info@GracePointeLife.com)

Website: <https://www.gracepointelife.com>

Give here: <https://www.gracepointelife.com/give/>

---

<sup>3</sup> Brockman, Rob, “The Art of Lament,” March 30, 2021, *The Gospel Coalition*, <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-art-of-lament/>, [accessed, March 15, 2025].