

Wisdom for the New Year

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[0 : 0 0] Well, for our kiddos, you're already heading out. That's great. Please head out to Children's Ministry. And for the benefit of our guests, my name is Dove Cohen.

I'm a member here pursuing eldership, and I have the privilege and the opportunity to share God's word with you this morning. So grateful to you. I'm 90. Pray bless yours as well.

We're going to be talking about truths and prayers for the new year. So Psalm 90, truths and prayers for the new year. So if you want to open up your Bibles to Psalm 90, we'll get there in a second.

But as introduction, Jonathan Edwards once wrote, resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think be most to God's glory and my own good, profit and pleasure in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now or never so many myriads of ages hence.

In the fall and early winter of 1722, Edwards penned the first 35 of his famous 70 resolutions, set against an acknowledgment of total dependence upon God.

[1 : 1 4] Edwards drafted statements that were God-entranced, biblically informed, statements that served to solidify his resolve, to make his life count for the glory of the Lord.

Edwards' resolves are far cry from those popular New Year's resolutions made today. Resolves like exercise more, lose weight, eat better, spend more time with family, travel, take a social media break.

Good things that Edwards most likely would have agreed with. But divorced from their relation to God, these resolutions can be void of much depth and meaning.

So this morning, I want to help us to reflect upon our lives like Edwards. With the coming of another new year, we can feel the urge to look back upon how we've lived over the past months and year and look forward to how God may be calling us to live in the days and weeks ahead.

That desire to reflect and plan and project, it can be a powerful and very helpful one. But we must be careful to do this reflection in light of Scripture and the eternal truths contained within it.

[2 : 3 7] So this morning, we're going to explore Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses. We're going to dive deep into the depths of the soul of a man who met God, that experienced both the trials and triumphs of human existence, and that prayed requests which flowed from the soul on behalf of a people, a people just like us, who have been rescued by God, who needed God's empowering grace to stay close to him, and who God ultimately held out the opportunity to know and experience him and glorify him throughout our days.

So this morning, based on Psalm 90, it's a pretty simple outline. Who is God? What is man? And again, in light of these truths of who is God and what is man, we're going to look at some prayer requests for the new year, based on Psalm 90.

Before we do this, let's first read the passage. Let's read Psalm 90. A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you would form the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

You return man to dust, and say, return, O children, to man, for a thousand years in your sight, or but as yesterday when it has passed, or as a watch in the night. You sweep them away as with a flood.

[4 : 20] They are like a dream, like grass, that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and is renewed, in the evening it fades and withers. For we are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath we are dismayed.

You set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath, we bring our years to an end, like a sigh.

The years of our life are 70, or by reason of strength 80. Yet their span is but toil and trouble. They are soon gone and we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you?

So teach us to number our days. We may get a heart of wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long. Have pity on your servants.

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love. We may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days you afflicted us and for as many years as we've seen evil.

[5 : 30] Let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to your servants, to your children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us.

Let's establish the work of our hands. God, may you bless the preaching of your word and establish this sermon. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What these eyes had seen. In exploring Psalm 90 this morning, let's first consider the context of this psalm through its author, audience, and occasion.

First, the author, Moses. In the title of this psalm, Moses describes simply with what may be the most meaningful title a human being could be given.

Man of God. Consider what Moses throughout his life had witnessed. The inside of a woven basket. An Egyptian princess.

[6 : 34] A royal palace. A parched desert as he fled from Egypt. A burning bush. A bloody Nile. Frogs, flies, gnats. Fiery hail.

Darkness. Death. A split red sea. A pillar of cloud and a fire. A trembling mountain.

The back of God. This psalm comes from a heart that had experienced the holiness and grace and gravitas of the Lord.

If any man had known the weight of God's glory, it was Moses. And this man, this man of God, had written this psalm on behalf of a people wandering through the desert.

A people who had seen the salvation of the Lord. And then soon forgot. And complained. And charged the Lord. Yet remained within God's covenant faithfulness.

[7 : 34] This is a psalm of wandering. Of trekking through the desert towards a promised land. Ultimately, this is a Christian psalm. For haven't we seen the holiness of the Lord?

Haven't we experienced his grace? Haven't we seen his salvation? And aren't we trekking through the desert of this world who is our promised land of eternity with the Lord?

Yes, this is a psalm written by a distinct man on behalf of a distinct people. But God gave it to us. God gave it to us to preserve deep truths and deep prayers.

Truths and prayers that can deepen our souls as we pray them ourselves. So what do these truths preserve for us in Psalm 90? First, who is God?

Who is God? It's a big question. Let's look at verse one. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

[8 : 43] God was Israel's dwelling place, their habitation, their home. He himself had been their rock of refuge for generations, from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob.

Through the sojourning in Egypt, God had been the hope of the hearts of Israel. Their eyes had ultimately looked back to him for comfort, for hope, and for salvation.

And they'd always known God as the eternal one. In the beginning, God had always rung in their ears. Truly, before the mountains were brought forth, wherever God had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, like we sang, he's God.

Just consider, before the mountains, before the seas, before the lights, God is. Before the earth had formed, when the spirit hovered over the waters, God is.

Truly, from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past, even from the moment when God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit decided to create this world, God is.

[9 : 59] God. This God was Israel's dwelling place, their hope, their confidence, their desire, their God. Not only that, but consider verses 3 and 4.

You return man to dust, and save eternal children to man, for a thousand years in your sight, or but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. Moses, and Israel knew, that God is God.

He is the creator, and the sustainer, of all. He is the one, that returns man to dust. He is the one, who holds our days, in his hands. He is the one, that counts the hairs on our head.

He's God. And for this great God, a thousand years, in his sight, or as but yesterday, or a watch in the night, truly time, is as nothing, to God.

Time, which for us, can pass so, so slowly, as we sit at our desks, at work, whereas we, or it can pass through our hands, like sand at the beach, that we desperately, try to grasp.

[11 : 08] Time, a thousand years, the rise and fall of nations, the development, of new technologies, the advance of history, is but as yesterday, or a watch, in the night, to God.

surely, this holy, great God, of infinite glory, is the God that Moses, and Israel, had encountered, as they walked through, a parted Red Sea, as they heard the thunder, at Sinai, as they met, God.

So that's who God is. What is man? What is man? Let's look at verses five and six.

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

In Psalm 90, man is swept away, by the Lord. Our lives in God's hands, are at his full, and total discretion. We live, because he chooses for us, to live.

[12 : 20] And when it's time to sweep us away, like in the time of Noah, well, God sweeps us away, and death, as with the flood. I know, pretty sobering.

But, this is scripture. This is what it says. We're like a dream, and like grass, that is renewed in the morning, that flourishes and then fades and withers. Truly, man is a breath.

Man is a breath, compared to the eternality, of God. Have you ever had a dream? You're in the middle of it, you're engaged in it, your heart is totally involved, as if it's real, and it seems to last for like hours, right?

And then you wake up, and you realize that, it's now like 11, 15, like you've been asleep for like 10, 15 minutes. Maybe an hour. And, what was so vivid, for such a seemingly real amount of time, evaporates from your memory, within seconds.

To Moses, in Psalm 90, that is man. We're a dream. We're grass. That is the life of man, compared to the eternality, of God.

[13 : 33] So, it's against this backdrop, that the weight of God's glory, and the ephemeral nature of man, that Moses then moves on, to make requests of the Lord. Requests fitting for a people, traveling through the desert, in need of God, every step of the way.

And for a new year, how fitting are these requests, for us to pray. So, let's take a couple minutes, and meditate on a few. First, verse 12. So, teach us to number our days, for we may get a heart, of wisdom.

A lot of what we've seen of God, in this psalm, and a lot of who we are, as God's creatures, and as God's people. It would be wise for us, to ask God, to help us to number, our days. To remember, we only have 70, or maybe 80 trips, around the sun, and each journey, well, each journey only lasts, 365 days.

And when you're young, that may seem like, a lot of time. When you get, a little older, a little gray haired, I got some gray hairs growing, and you see life moving fast, your children getting so big, and so quick, and your body, beginning to show signs, of aging, it becomes more, and more apparent, that our lives, are finite.

That we only get, so much time here, that for us to live lives, that magnify, the Lord, as much as possible, we must truly remember, to number our days, to count them, to consecrate them, to use them, for the Lord.

[15 : 04] So this year, may the Lord teach us, to number our days, that we may gain, a heart of wisdom. All right, second request, let's look at verse 14.

Satisfy us in the morning, with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice, and be glad, all our days. May God, satisfy us, in the morning, and in the afternoon, and in the evening, with his steadfast love, like we sang about.

Steadfast love, that has shown, that has been shown to us, through his common grace, for the food, that we feasted on, at Thanksgiving, and at Christmas, the clothes, that keep us warm, and the shelter, that protects us, from the elements.

And steadfast love, he's shown for us, in giving us life, in sending us his son, of sacrificing, his son, of rising Jesus, from the dead, so we may know, his forgiveness, his justification, his sanctification, his adoption.

How much of God, how much love, has he shown to us, that we can rejoice in, and be glad, in all our days. So this year, may the Lord, satisfy our souls.

[16 : 22] Every Sunday, every day we wake up, may our souls, be satisfied, with the steadfast love, of the Lord. So we can be glad, and rejoice, all our days.

All right, one final request, the Lord, verse 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.

Yes, as we head, into the new year, may the favor of the Lord, our God, be upon us, and may he establish, the work, of our hands. First, let's remember, who this great God is, that we want to establish, the work of our hands.

He is the eternal one, the creator, the sustainer, the one for whom a day, is like a thousand years, and a thousand years, are like a day. This is the one, to whom we pray for favor, and who we ask to establish, the work of our hands.

And let us pray, this great prayer then, that God, would establish, the work of our hands, in our hearts, in our marriages, in our parenting, in our jobs, in our church, in our community groups, in our discipleship huddles, in our preaching, and praying, our evangelism, and outreach, in our planning administration, in all we do, to build his kingdom, and his church.

[17 : 37] May we establish, may he establish, the work of our hands, may we grow deeper, in love, with God. May we lean on his word, more and more.

May we deepen our knowledge, and appreciation, of the gospel, of his salvation. May we become more loving, may we become more bold, may he establish, the work of our hands, in 2024.

So, all that being said, let's take a couple minutes, and just get really practical. A wise pastor, maybe sitting in the back, man in the camera, he once instructed me, that if we pray, for something sincerely, we should do everything we can, to bring it about.

Obviously, in a spirit of reliance, upon the Lord, and acknowledgement of him, but also with all our heart, and soul. So how can we live in a way, that helps us to number our days, that helps us to be satisfied, with God's steadfast love, and invites the Lord, to establish, the work of our hands.

First, to number our days, to number our days, we must live, with intentionality, and acknowledging, that we only have, 12 months this year, we only have 52 weeks, we only have, 365 days.

[19 : 00] How can we be, as intentional as possible, in loving, living a life, worthy of God, and his great gospel? Consider, what do you believe, God is calling you to, this year?

What do you want to be, and do, by the end of the year, or at least by Easter? Do you want to know, the nature of God better, and have a greater sense, of closeness to him?

Do you want to understand, the gospel better? Do you want to grasp, a doctrine like God's sovereignty, in salvation more deeply? Do you want to be, a better husband, wife, son, daughter, church member, friend, where do you stand to grow?

And again, what do you believe, God is calling you, to do or be, by 2025, for his name, and his glory? If you can articulate that, at least one or two areas, where you want to grow, then just think, how can I grow, in those areas?

Who can I hang out with? Where can I serve? What podcasts, or sermons, or books, can I intentionally, take in, listen to, read? What content, or what good works, can I do, that will shape my mind, and heart, and that will help me, to become, that which God, would have me, to be?

[20 : 22] If you don't know, where to start, either in identifying, where to grow, or how to grow, ask a friend, ask a community group leader, ask a deacon, or an elder, take someone out, for coffee, say that you want, to number your days, live this year, with intentionality, and ask them, for counsel, ask them, for areas, that they think, you could grow in, or material, that will help you, to get there, it may take a meeting, or two, even with different people, but don't settle, don't coast, don't just float, acknowledge, that you only have, so much time, number your days, live with, the heart of wisdom, and pursue, where God, is calling you, to grow, and serve, we only have, one life, which will soon be passed, only what's done, for Christ will last, make it count, number your days, you may gain, a heart of wisdom, second, how can we be satisfied, in the Lord's steadfast love, more and more, every morning, every day, all year long, well, remind yourself of it, daily, consider building habits, that will support you, in doing this, write down, or just verbalize, to God, thanks for a few things, every morning, fill your home, or commute, with good quality, worship music, good worship music, that reminds you, of the truths of God, and who he is, and his steadfast love, pray with your spouse, or your children, or a friend, and just give thanks, for some time, each week, and consider, rededicating yourself, to spending time, with the Lord, even just 10 to 15 minutes, a day, as many days, as you can, reading the Bible, and praying, frankly,

I have no better way, to get to know God better, and to experience, his steadfast love, than to spend time, with him daily, day in, day out, asking for a spirit, and then pursuing communion, with him, through his word, and prayer, and yes, while family, and marital devotions, are great, and yes, while Christianity, is a community experience, it is no less, an individual experience, if you cannot, or do not want to spend, 10 to 15 minutes a day, with the Lord, just by yourself, what's that saying, about your relationship, with the Lord, get alone with him, invest that time, with him, he will bless it, don't give up, on the times, with your spouse, and with your children, but get alone, with the Lord, he will bless the time, and pursue him, just individually, by yourself, finally, how can we invite the Lord, to establish, the work of our hands, well, let's first make sure, we're doing what God, wants us to do, we're building our lives, according to his priorities, let's be prayerful, about how we're spending, our time, and maybe even invite, others opinions in, others thoughts in, others counsel in, to see what we need, to add to our lives, we need to take out, start, stop doing, and help us assess, if there's any, shifting, that we need to complete, or activities, that we need to eliminate, so we can invest, where God, would have us to invest more, second, let's make sure, that we are pursuing,

God's church, God's kingdom, God's way, with excellence, integrity, and kindness, with holiness, and peace, and joy, with love, and courage, and boldness, and zeal, and all this, the what of life, and the how of life, let's also remember, the why, the Lord, let us live, for him, he is worthy, he owns us, and is there anything, that we want, more than to walk, in close fellowship, with him, to know him, to experience him, day by day, that, is what will satisfy, our souls, day in, day out, that's what will bring, us gladness, and joy, on Monday, and Tuesday, and Thursday, as we're headed into work, whereas we're coming down, the stairs, to shepherd our children, for the day, so, in conclusion, God, is a great God, he is surely, our dwelling place, he is surely, the eternal one, he is surely, our creator, and sustainer, and we, we are finite creatures, totally dependent, on the Lord, with lives, that only last, so long,

Jonathan Edwards, he recognized this, when he wrote, his famous 70 resolutions, may we, do the same, may we resolve, to live lives, in light of a God, who is great, and glorious, and alive, let's apply, the wisdom of Psalm 90, as we launch, into the year ahead, may 2024, be lived with intention, with the number, of our days, impressed upon our hearts, may 2024, be lived, in a deepening experience, of God's, steadfast love, rejoicing in that, on the easy days, and the bumpy ones, when it's sunny out, when it's cloudy out, knowing that, he is sovereign, and that he's shining, above the clouds, and he's always got, a good plan for us, and if it's cloudy out, we can trust, in a steadfast love, as the clouds will pass, and we'll see the sun again, in 2024, may God, establish the work, of our hands, hands dedicated, to building his kingdom, his way, for his name, and for close fellowship, with the Lord, and ultimately, may we do all this, through the gospel, remembering that in all this,

God is good, it will sin, we'll mess up, we'll forget the number, of our days, but God, God sent Jesus, to live, to die, to rise, so ultimately, he would be, our hope, so he would be, our salvation, so he could be, our shepherd, who will guide us, through this year, through dangers, tools, and snares, as well as, green pastures, and calm waters, he will guide us, because he's adopted us, into his family, we are his sons, and daughters, that he dearly loves, and he's dedicated, he's dedicated, the power, of his resurrection, to working everything together, for our good, all because of his grace, and for his glory, skill, skill, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

[27 : 43] God, we praise you because you are our dwelling place. You are great, and you are good. And God, we confess that our lives are only so long.

They're finite. You are eternal. They're finite. But Lord, we thank you. Lord, we thank you that you've given us the wisdom that we can count the number of our days.

Let me get in hard wisdom. Lord, thank you that you have steadfast love that you want to bless us with. You want to remind us of every morning. Lord, thank you that you are eager.

You are desirous to establish the work of our hands as we pursue your church, your kingdom, your way, your will this year. So we pray that you do that.

We pray that you would help us to number our days, to know your steadfast love deeply and personally. And would you establish the work of our hands?

[28 : 42] We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.