

SummerInThePsalms #8 – If Tomorrow Never Comes

Psalm 39

Intro:

A few days ago I had the privilege of talking to a gentleman about his relationship with the Lord. I asked if he knew the Lord, and he did. I then asked if he'd mind telling me about it. He was glad to. It never gets old; I love to hear the story of when people met and trusted Jesus.

Anyway, one of the things he said jumped out for a number of reasons – primarily because I knew this was where we would be today.

He told me that when he was a young man, he heard a song by Garth Brookes, “If tomorrow never comes” and couldn’t get it out of his mind. God’s Spirit used it to speak to his need and draw Him to the Savior.

“If tomorrow never comes”. It has been one of my favorites as well. It is a great song, and greater truth.

Before a country songwriter put it to music, another songwriter, a shepherd-king, set it to prayer.

He touched a chord in the souls of eternity bound souls as he wrote,

“Lord, make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.”

Today, we join David as he muses, writes and sings, “if tomorrow never comes.”

Let me share two observations before we turn to our text.

1. As I studied for today, **the text didn’t take me where I thought it would.** We were just going to look at verses 4 and 5 and develop the thought. However, those verses – that core truth- is part of a passage. While it is certainly true alone, **it is part of a fascinating, mournful and illuminating journey.** We are invited to join David in the discovery.

2. This Psalm is **written in the dark aftermath of David’s great sin and its fallout.** We will soon join him in a deeper look into that time and the disastrous consequences of our sin (Psalm 51). Today, just be aware that **we are joining David in that dark, difficult time after his exposure, before his restoration.**

So, “If tomorrow never comes...”

I. His Seething Resolve

I have heard and actually used verse 1 as a memory verse, as a great example to follow. **It is, but in context, it is, as I said, not as we sometimes use it.**

In fact, **it is a little strange. And in strange – our “spidey senses” start tingling** because there is something to be discovered.

A. The Choice:

David resolves not to sin with his tongue – **which is good.**

He certainly doesn’t need more sin to add to his plight. James 3 gives us great insight into the need for us to control our tongues.

B. Causes:

1. One is stated – *“while the wicked is before me”.*

For David to complain and lash out would **simply give the enemy more to relish.**

Worse, David complaining outwardly about his misery could only be **seen by “evil” people as hypocritical.**

After all, **what was happening was the direct result of David’s choices.** There was no one to blame but himself. ***To complain and get mad – at others, at life, at God – would just make matters worse.***

2. Then, there was **the awareness that God was the One allowing, even causing this to happen.**

Vs. 9- *“I opened not my mouth; **because thou didst it**”.*

To lash out in anger would be to essentially blame God.

While it might be a common response, it is not a good idea to judge and accuse God!

C. The Consequence:

It backfired!

His silence didn’t soothe—it scorched. The fire burned hotter in smothered silence.

To be wise when we speak and before whom we speak is good;

To clam up and not talk to anyone, not even to God, is destructive!

The Psalms aren't a study in emotional suppression; they're a masterclass in Spirit-led expression.

As we find so often in the Psalms, **David took his burning heart to his God!**

II. His Sincere Request Vs. 3-4.

A. The finality of life: “to know my end”.

We will not live forever. In fact, **“it is appointed unto men once to die”**.
Death is no respecter of persons, age, position or circumstance...

B. The fleeting nature of life: “the measure of my days”

We each have only an **allotted time**. No one knows when!
James 4:14

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Psalm 90 – Written by MOSES: David knew it!

4. ... **a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday** when it is past, and **as a watch in the night.**
5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood...
9. ... we spend our years **as a tale that is told.**
10. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; **for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.**
12. **So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.**

C. The frailty of life: “that I may know how frail I am”

Why does David dwell on death and frailty? Because until we're ready to face death honestly, we're not ready to live faithfully.

When we are ready to die,

- **to leave our life here, with its influences and opportunities forever set, and**
- **to stand in His presence,**

We then are ready to live!

C.S. Lewis gives voice to what David felt in his bones.... In The Problem Of Pain, **“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”**

“I am progressing along the path of life in my ordinary contentedly fallen and godless condition, absorbed in a merry meeting with my friends for the morrow or a bit of work that tickles my vanity today, a holiday or a new book, when suddenly a stab of abdominal pain that threatens serious disease, or a headline in the newspapers that threatens us all with destruction, **sends this whole pack of cards tumbling down.**

At first I am overwhelmed, and all **my little happinesses look like broken toys.** Then, slowly and reluctantly, bit by bit, I try to bring myself into the frame of mind **that I should be in at all times.** I remind myself that **all these toys were never intended to possess my heart, that my true good is in another world, and my only real treasure is Christ.** And perhaps, **by God's grace, I succeed, and for a day or two become a creature consciously dependent on God and drawing its strength from the right sources.”**

vs. 5b – **“every man at his best state is altogether vanity”.** **At our best – we are empty, lacking.**

From the depth of David’s despair comes an awareness that often can only come in the darkest nights and most difficult moments.

It ends with “Selah” – *Think about it! Let it sink in.*

III. His Somber Response

A. The Plight Of Humanity. Vs. 6

We get somewhat lost in the old English. Consider this translation: NIV: 6. Surely **everyone goes around like a mere phantom** [ghosts- NET, shadows- ESV, NLT]; *in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.*

On our own – we play. We pretend. We act...

We spend our strength chasing shadows, mistaking motion for meaning.

But it is empty. It is a shadow with no substance.

B. The Proclamation: vs. 7

- *I realize my folly. My sin. My rebellion. The senselessness of it all!*
At rock bottom, David doesn't find self-help. He finds hope—and it's not in himself, but in God.
- *"my hope is in thee"*

C. The Prayer: vs. 8-13

- **Forgiveness:** transgressions, sins, rebellion!
- **Deliverance**
- **Restoration – vs. 10-13: *David had lost everything but his God!***
David prayed for restoration of the sweet fellowship he once had! Vs. 12-13
David prayed for the end of God's fierce chastening! Vs.10
David prayed to be restored to health and happiness!

So, if tomorrow never comes, would you be at peace with your Savior – or would you wish for one more day to make things right?

With God – the most important relationship?

- **Salvation:** Do you know Jesus as your Savior? Are you sure? When did you meet Him?
- **Repentance and a spiritual reset?**
1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
In the words of David -
"Deliver me... Hear my prayer... O spare me..."
- **Surrender: *"my hope is in thee"***
It is time to quit playing meaningless roles in the drama of life!

With Others?

- **Those we love? Ill. – Ruby Berberette & daughter Tana**
- **Those He loves?**
Whatever He wants, Wherever He leads – **In Him there is hope that is real and joy that lasts!**
Paul told the Corinthians – ***"Christ in you is the hope of glory!"***
"If tomorrow never comes..."
David looked into the mirror of death—and found the face of grace."
When we are ready to leave, we are ready to live!