



BALM PSALMS: PSALM 90

Community Group Study Guide Week of July 25, 2021

Introduction

- As the meme that Pastor Jan described illustrated, we're conditioned in our culture to not think about death. We seek distractions and diversions to keep our minds from thinking about it. Clinging to things, feelings and experiences of this life for our ultimate satisfaction, our thinking and our lives are marked by disillusionment.
- We think that life is all there is, so we think we have to make the best of it. Because there is a lot of truth in this thinking (life is short), it is one of Satan's most compelling lies.
- Despite what Satan leads us to think, there is more to this life than the material and there is more after this life.
- It's only when we fix our eyes on God himself that we will not veer off course, we'll know where to go, what to do with our lives and we'll be able to number our days.
- Context: Psalm 90, as the start of book three of Psalms, interacts with Psalm 89. Psalm 89, a dirge, or psalm of lament, describes a moment in the history of Israel when it seemed like God had renounced his covenant. After the despair of Psalm 89, Psalm 90 redirects readers to the reality of Israel's situation. It wasn't that God renounced his covenant with Israel, but that Israel had rejected God and were dealing with the consequences of their sin. Moses inclines the followers of God to call upon the mercy of God in the face of death and life's trying circumstances, and to view all of life's problems from the lens of God's word.

God is Home - so come home (v1)

- V1: Moses, of all people (40 years in pharaoh's courts, 40 years as a shepherd in the desert, and 40 years leading the Israelites through the wilderness), knew God as his dwelling place/home. As sojourners of this world, we should know this, embrace this and praise God for this. He doesn't just provide for us, provide protection and provide shields, but but he is provider, protector, shield, and home. Even if we feel like we've lost our home, or as if life isn't going the way that we planned, we can feel at home in god.
- The only way to come to God is through faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross on your behalf.

God is Eternal - we are not and we are (v2-6)

- V2-6: These verses meditate on the fact that God is eternal. Have you ever meditated on this fact?
- V3: We are dust. We came from dust and we'll return to dust, but what happens with our soul? Our body returns to the ground, but because God breathed his breath into us, our soul continues into eternity. Therefore, on the one hand we are not eternal, but on the other we are. Moses wants us to meditate on this as a source of encouragement. It should direct us to the point that, though we die, our hope is in something that is eternal, God, and is a living hope.
- Satan wants to distract us from the basic facts of life and eternity. There are three things that are eternal: the word of God, the God who spoke the word of God and the eternal souls that were created by the word of God (see 1 Peter 1:22-25).
- As proponents of the word of God, we believe that God's word, the Bible, is an extension of himself. The Holy Spirit uses the word such that when people hear it, He makes it to come alive in their heart and changes their heart. Since they are born again by something eternal, they are granted eternal life. That's what Christians are to focus on.
- Ephesians 2:1-2 talks about Satan as the prince of the power of air, like a dog who only has power over the areas granted to him by God. We should think of him as prince of the power of the airwaves in our day, and see how he tries to limit the ministry of the church by dividing and conquering. If he can divide the church by getting its members to think that different things are of essential importance to focus on and preach he limits its power to do faithful ministry. Satan subtracts and divides, Jesus adds and multiplies.
- Prov. 4:25-27 and Joshua 1:7-9 encourage us to focus on what is essential in our own lives and in the church, which is the preaching and application of the gospel to hearts. If we think other issues are most important, perhaps society has caused us to veer off course
- Unity in the church is created when everyone is sacrificing their own personal preferences for the ultimate mission, which is to share the gospel of Christ.

God is Just - we deserve justice (v7-11)

- V7-11: These verses talk about why we die. The response: God's wrath. Death is a visitation of God's wrath and punishment for our sin, our rebellious and prideful acts and thoughts against him.
- It is because we live in a condition of sin that we "fly away," or it feels like our days are fleeting despite having

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To view death and suffering from the lens of scripture.

Heart

To trust that God will extend steadfast covenant love toward those who humbly turn to him in the face of death and suffering.

Hands

To be focused in the way that we navigate problems in our own lives and in society, interpreting everything from the lens of scripture.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kids' Summer Nights:

Registration is now open for kids ages 4-11 to attend our free, weeklong VBS program this summer! You can register your child(ren) or sign up to volunteer [here](#).

Pray for the Lord to use Kids' Summer Nights for his glory! Pray for the team of volunteers who are sacrificing to make this ministry go forward.

eternity written on our hearts.

- People question if God can be good given the existence of death and suffering in the world, however, the existence of these things is proof of God's existence. We know that these things ought not be a part of life, which is an admission that things are not the way that they should be. We appeal to an objective morality when our hearts and bodies rebel the idea of death and suffering. If God isn't God, then there's nothing wrong with death and suffering, and the greatest crimes in history (like the Holocaust) just happened.
- Satan spreads messages in the world that direct our attention to problems outside of us instead of directing our attention inward to our personal sin.
- Moses instructs us to praise God for his mercy for the life he allows us to live, and his preservation justice in sending judgement for our sin.

God is Gracious - we need grace (v12-17)

- When we see sin as the root of all of our problems and the world's problems, we should hate it, repent of it and turn to God to receive grace.
- Moses provides six petitions to God to help us keep the proper focus on the basics of God, life, Satan, sin, death, salvation, heaven, hell, and the purpose of suffering.
 1. V12: help us realize the brevity of life and weigh our days. This should help us to look at each day and consider it a blessing and a means to show our love for God and people.
 2. V13: to help us see that we are in this condition because of our sin. In the same way that God calls us to return to the dirt (v3), we ask him to return to us.
 3. V14: to have mercy on us according to his steadfast love. We ask God to forgive us not according to anything we've done, but according to his steadfast, covenantal love.
 4. V15: to give us as many good, joyful days as bad, sorrowful days. God answers this in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, which tells us that God doesn't just promise to balance our experience of good and evil, but has prepared an eternal weight of glory for us. From this point, we should see that there is purpose to our pain (1 Peter 1:6-7, James 1:2-4, Phi. 4:4). When we see what it took for God to save us, we should see that every day, regardless of what we face, is an opportunity, a second chance to live for the Kingdom of God.
 5. V16: to see God's glory and power made manifest in how he builds up his children and his church.
 6. V17: to let the work of our hands be established. As we try to do everything we can for God, we ask him to bless our efforts and let them be useful for his kingdom.
- How did God answer Moses prayer (v13)? He only let him see the Promised Land during his life on earth, but Luke 9:28-31 shows us that he is there and that God answered in a way far beyond what Moses could have imagined.
- Jesus is the only reason that God answers when we ask him to have pity on us. It is because of him that our sufferings and trials matter. Apart from him, we just die and nothing in our life matters.
- Closing verses: Hebrews 12:1-2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Psalm 90

1. Can someone summarize the main sections of the sermon?
2. In its literary context in the Psalter, how does Psalm 90 interact with Psalm 89?
3. How would Moses have known well that God was his “dwelling place”?
4. Throughout your life, how has God been your dwelling place?
5. While analyzing verses 2-6, Pastor Jan said, “On the one hand we are not eternal and on the other hand we are.” What does this mean?
6. What are some beneficial thoughts or lessons that you have derived while pondering that God is eternal (and you are not)?
7. When you ponder the challenges that are apparent in your own life and in society, what are the theories or “...isms” that you tend to think could resolve them? Or who are the figures that you tend to think could best address them?
8. What does the Bible say is the source of all of the problems in man’s heart and God’s creation? How does Jesus address this issue?
9. In verses 12-17, Moses petitions God to do six things (listed above). Which petition sticks out to you or addresses your current spiritual state the most?
10. When people question God’s existence because of the existence of death and suffering in the world, how are they actually providing a proof for the existence of God?