

¹⁰ The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. ¹¹ Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. ¹² Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. ¹³ Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.

Teach us, o Lord!

Life is often a real rat race, isn't it? Go here. Go there. Run this errand. Pickup this person at this activity. Drop off another at that place. We run, run, run, run all the time. I'm not really sure age matters that much. Young or older we seem to busy, busy, busy. Some days it seems like we need more than 24 hours a day to accomplish everything that we wish to get done. Yet, we all know that nothing last forever. Someday all this running will come to an end when the Lord either calls us home to heaven, or returns on that last day. Then what?

We have no idea how many more days we have left in our lives. It could be years, months, a week or even a day. So, what does Moses mean when he says: **"Teach us to number our days aright?"** Is he trying to tell us that we should expect to live to 70 or 80 years old? If you want to know how many more days are left in your life, you subtract the number you have lived from 70 or 80 years, and that is how many more you can expect to live? No. God doesn't give us a timer to know when exactly we might die. Yet, he does mean when he tells us to **"Number our days"** we are to keep things in their proper priority. It is so easy to get wrapped up in the things of this world, that we forget about the most important thing -- our eternal relationship with our Savior.

This morning we have been focusing our thoughts on the final judgment that we will all face. Moses has one final prayer for the children of Israel before he dies and goes to heaven. He has one final time to teach them how to number their days so that they might have a heart of wisdom. He is also teaching us this morning. Let us take a look at this lesson he is teaching by looking at the words of our text under the theme: **"Teach us, O Lord!"** 1. *To number our days;* 2. *To gain a heart of wisdom.*

Life is short. Moses reminds us of that in the words of this same Psalm: **"⁴ For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by or like a watch in the night. ⁵ You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning — ⁶ though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered."** (Ps 90:4-6) It seems like the longer we live life, the more it seems to be true that life is short. Every day we live, it brings us one day closer to that day when we will meet our Judge. The day of our death is coming!

Death. The mere mention of that word can cause some people to shiver. Moses reminds us in this Psalm that death is no laughing matter. Adam and Eve were originally created to live forever. But then Satan got involved and messed up this world. Death was brought into the world as a judgment against them.

In this Psalm, Moses doesn't beat around the bush talking about death and what it means for the human world. **"⁷ We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. ⁹ All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan."** Death is a judgment for sin. It should terrify us. God would have every right to wipe every human being off the face of this earth. He demands perfection, and we can't meet that demand. Every day that we live, it brings us one day closer to pass under God's wrath. Moses says: **"For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you."**

If that would be where the story ended, it would be terrifying. But that isn't where the story ends. Moses prays that we **"number our days aright, THAT WE MAY GAIN A HEART OF WISDOM."** What kind of wisdom is he talking about? Wisdom that comes from knowing that we are sheltered from God's wrath by God himself. **"¹ Lord, you have been our**

dwelling place throughout all generations. ² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

When Moses is speaking these words, he is nearing a 120 years old. If there ever was a man who had the right to speak about "wisdom", it would have been Moses. His life could be divided into thirds. For the first 40 years of his life, he lived in wealth and plenty. He was the adopted grandson of the king of Egypt. His every need was met. The next 40 years were spent as a poor shepherd in the wilderness.

When he was 80 years old, God came to him and told him that he was going to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to a promised land. So, then at the age of 80 Moses began his next task of leading the children of Israel -- a task that would take the last 40 years of his life.

The words of Psalm 90 are the reflective words of a man who lived a life of both joys and sadness, a life plenty and a life of need, a life of following God, a life of sinning against him. Over those 120 years, Moses learned that by himself he could only fear the wrath of an almighty God. He had also learned the wisdom in knowing that he could also find refuge in that same God.

That wisdom filled his heart with gladness. **"¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. ¹⁶ May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children."**

It is that same wisdom that fills our hearts. It is the same wisdom that brings comfort to a heart that is filled with affliction and trouble. It is that wisdom that moves us not to look to ourselves for answers, but to our God. It is said that Abraham Lincoln had said on more than one occasion: *"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of those about me seemed insufficient for the day."*

What does all this mean for us? It means that through faith in Jesus, you can face the end of this life knowing that you deserve death – you deserve to face the anger of an almighty God. But you won't. God in his mercy has forgiven your sin. Every day that you have left in this life, is a day that starts with a clean slate, wiped clean with the blood of Christ. May we ask our Lord: **"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."** Amen.