

A dwelling place throughout all generations

Psalm 90:1-17

Good morning and welcome to worship on this beautiful Lord's day. As always, it is such a joy and privilege to be able to gather together in the presence of the Lord with one goal in mind, to worship Him and Him alone. Here this reminder from the prophet Isaiah this morning when he says, **"In that day you will say: 'I will praise you, Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. ² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation.' ³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.**

⁴ In that day you will say:

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. ⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

Let us pray.

Our reading this morning is taken from the Book of Psalms and we are looking at Psalm 90, titled 'A prayer of Moses a man of God'. It says, from verse 1 to 6 **"¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. ³ You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals." ⁴ A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. ⁵ Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death - they are like the new grass of the morning: ⁶ In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.**

Now let's pause for a moment to understand this: This prayer opens with this most amazing statement of faith. In the first two verses, the focus of this prayer is on two specific things. The first that I want to look at here is a statement about who God is – He is, in no uncertain terms, the Creator God. Over and over again, the scriptures speak about God's work in His creation, He created all things, by His word all things were made, He laid the foundation of the world, He brings forth the mountains, streams, rivers, from the highest peak to the depths of the world, everything that is in existence is because He made it so. Our attention is drawn to this in this prayer bring glory to the Lord as He '*brings forth the earth and the world*'. But notice that this is not simply a declaration of His power in creation. He says, before all of this, from everlasting to everlasting, that is, for eternity, past, present and future, you are God. It is a proclamation that He is the one and only God who was and is and is to come, unhindered by space or time or anything else in all of creation.

The second aspect that is highlighted for us is that the Lord is our dwelling place throughout all generations, specifically, he says, "*Lord, you have been...*" meaning that He isn't simply a dwelling place for that single generation led out of Egypt with the Exodus, not simply a dwelling place for that one single generation that followed, those who entered into the Promised Land and not simply one single generation to follow. He has been, He currently is, and He will forever be, a dwelling place for His people. And the question we ask ourselves is this, '*why do we need a dwelling place*'?

Well again, I believe that there are certain aspects of life that we tend to overlook and yet it is something that stares us in the face each and every day – and that is the fact that this life is finite. For so many people, we walk around as if there is an endless amount of time given to us. Nobody likes to think of their own mortality, nobody likes to think that one day everything we know and love will cease to exist because let's face it, if that was the focus of our lives, well life would be exceptionally sad with a constant sense of morbidity. No! We want to see long-life; we want to believe that we're invincible, we want to believe that we have it all figured out and there is nothing that can stop us, right? But the fact remains, we are not, and we do not.

And this is what the Psalmist highlights for us within the next few verses. Having established the understanding that God is eternal and that His glory is within all of creations, he now compares mankind's existence with that of God's. For us, we are returned to the dust from which we were created, destined to experience the taste of death in this world, like new grass that springs up in the morning and lasts for a

little while but when evening comes, it becomes dry and withered. Now this of course is metaphoric language describing an understanding of our short existence here on earth. And what seems like a lengthy period of time to us, in the eyes of the Lord, is like a fleeting moment for Him.

Now having established the understanding that God is eternal, that His glory is within all of creations and that the human life is finite, the Psalmist now moves on to crux of this prayer. From verse 7-12 he says, **“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. 10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. 11 If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. 12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

In this, he highlights the core issue by giving us a sense of just how frail we are and the state in which we live – quite simply, man lives under the sentence of death. Because of our iniquities, because of our sins both secret and public, God's wrath was upon us and we were sentenced to return to the dust from which we were created. Is this unjustified? Is this God being spiteful?

When we rely solely upon ourselves, as we so often do, when we turn from the Lord, away from all that His grace and mercy offer us, away from all that He has called us to be and to do, then we must understand what that leads us towards and what it leads us away from. Scripture is clear on this issue – Romans 6:23 says it like this, **“23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** And this of course should be the prayer of every believer, that we would see sin for what it is, that we understand that there are consequences to our sin, that we should strive to live better lives, not because we are worthy of anything, but because of the gift given to us by the Lord in Christ Jesus.

The Psalmist says from verse 13, **“13 Relent, 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. 16 May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children. 17 May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands.”**

This part of the prayer is one of hope. It is a call for God's relentless grace, compassion and love to be upon us as His people. You see, while there is a righteous anger that comes from the Lord, from Him comes also joy and hope. We face the struggles of life daily, we face hardship, pain and suffering way more than any of us would like to. We know that sin is an ever present part of our existence and that, in itself, has the ability to weigh us down, the ability to cause pain, the ability to cast a shadow of doubt upon our lives as well as our faith. Yet there is this plea that in the Lord, we would find a new dawn, rest and comfort from this dark and long night we are faced with – there is a plea to see the fulfilment of God's promise of rest (for those hearing this Psalm, rest within the Promised Land, for us, it is a rest in the Kingdom of God). In Matthew 11:28-30 Christ says, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** He is our eternal dwelling place, from generation to generation. Do not let sin, guilt and shame rob you of this gift, but choose life, choose Christ Jesus, who is your rest.

Let us pray.

Opening song: Hosanna - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQWI26M-a0Y>

Song of praise: My Dwelling Place - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvQGzTqoOV0>

Lincon Hardouin
Trinity, Lynnwood
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