

## The Prayer of Moses (Part III)

### Psalm 90:13-17

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Introduction: We come tonight to our third look at Psalm 90, the oldest psalm written. It is attributed to Moses, the man of God. I suggested the psalm can be outlined: The eternity of God (:1-2); the frailty of man (:3-11); & the possibility of mercy (:13-17). God's eternity is seen by the fact that He is our sanctuary as well as our security. Man's frailty is seen in his brevity & iniquity. The pivotal verse of the psalm is verse 12, "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*" We considered in that verse the prayer of man ("*So teach us*"), the perspective of man ("*to number our days*"), & the prospect for man ("*that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*"). We close our look at this psalm by considering the possibility of mercy. Note with me here the need for mercy (:13, because of God's wrath), the nature of mercy (:14-15, because of God's compassion), & the notice from mercy (:16-17, because of God's glory).

#### I. The **need** for mercy (:13) > because of God's wrath

##### A. "Return, O LORD" (& cf. verse 3 & Psalm 80:14):

1. A **request** for the Lord to turn from His anger & wrath toward Israel.
2. A **realization** that they deserve His wrath.

##### B. "Repent Thee":

1. God's change of **attitude** is spoken of in human terms.
2. God's course of **action** can only be an act of mercy.

##### C. "Reconcile Thy servants":

1. In **spite** of their rebellion they were still the servants of God.
2. In **light** of His mercy He is asked to deal favorably with them.

#### II. The **nature** of mercy (:14-15) > because of God's compassion

##### A. "Satisfy us early with Thy mercy" (:14):

1. The **request** – For the dawn to reveal His mercy implies that they are still in the night of trouble; yet anticipating mercy in the morning (cf. Lamentations 3:22-23).
2. The **result** – That they may "shout for joy" ("*rejoice*" - & cf. 5:11). "It is our duty to be glad in the Lord & rejoice in Him always" (Plumer). Compare Neh. 8:10 with Phil. 4:4).

##### B. "Make us glad..." (:15):

1. The **request** – For sadness to be replaced by gladness; that present joy may be in some way proportionate to past trials.
2. The **recompense** – "God who is great in justice when He chastens will not be little in mercy when He blesses, He will be great all through; let us appeal to Him with unstaggering faith" (Spurgeon).

Illustrate: As if the Israelites are saying, "None can gladden the heart as Thou canst, O Lord; therefore as Thou hast made us sad so be pleased to make us glad" (Spurgeon).

Application: Plumer writes: "The generation that grew up under those great displays of wrath & mercy in the wilderness was the best generation of Jews that ever lived. Its influence for good was long felt among the tribes. If the Israelites had trials in the wilderness for 40 years, these were followed by long centuries of amazing blessings in their own land."

### III. The **notice** from mercy (:16-17) > because of God's glory

#### A. The **revelation** of God's glory (:16):

1. God's glory is revealed through His work with His servants, Israel.
  - a. God is glorified through the **preservation** of His servants.
  - b. God is glorified through the **presentation** of His servants (into the Promised Land).
2. God's glory is revealed to the children of those who died in the wilderness.
  - a. Consider their previous **concern** for their children – Numbers 14:1-2; 31.
  - b. Compare their present **comfort** for their children.

Application: "How eagerly do good men plead for their children. They can bear very much personal affliction if they may but be sure that their children will know the glory of God, & thereby be led to serve Him" (Spurgeon). For us? III John 4?

#### B. The **declaration** of God's work (:17):

1. The word "*beauty*" (used only here & in 27:4) might refer to God's blessing. It can also refer to His holiness to be reflected.
2. God's work is done through the instrumentality of man's hands; yet only by His enabling (see Psalm 127:1 & cf. John 15:4-5 with Philippians 2:12-13).

Application: "If our works are done in God's strength, according to His will & by aid of His Spirit, they will be stable & be found unto glory & honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (Plumer). Consider I Corinthians 3:10-15.

**Conclusion:** I call your attention again to how Warren Wiersbe outlines this psalm: "We are travelers & God is our home (:1-2); we are learners & life is our school (:3-12); & we are believers & the future is our friend (:13-17)." He then concludes: "Life is brief, so Moses prayed, '*Teach us.*' Life is difficult, & he prayed, '*Satisfy us.*' His work at times seemed futile, so he prayed, '*Establish the word of our hands.*' God answered those prayers for Moses, & He will answer them for us. The future is your friend when Jesus is your Savior & Lord."

Is this your prayer tonight: "*So teach us (me) to number our (my) days, that we (I) may apply our (my) heart unto wisdom*"? Is this your understanding tonight: "*It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him*" (Lamentations 3:22-25)?

If this is your prayer & your understanding, then may this be the song in our heart & on our lips: "The Mercies of God." Let's sing it in closing after we pray.