**TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS**

***Psalm 90
A Prayer of Moses – the man of God***

​**1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
 Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
3 You turn man to destruction, And say, “Return, O children of men.”
4 For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.
5 You carry them away like a flood; They are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up:
6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers.
7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast
 is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.
12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

I have often used this reading at the graveside service when we lay to rest a loved one. In the only recorded Psalm written by Moses (note: the Jewish *Midrash* claims he also wrote Psalm 91), it infers that he used it often during those hundreds of thousands of funerals he likely preached in the forty years of wilderness wandering. These are words that would have likely been memorized by Israel after all those memorial services. And while they speak of our appointment with death, they also emphasize the necessity of living life with purpose, knowing the day of death is coming. Moses, like Paul (Rom. 2:11), tells us of God’s goodness and wrath. Knowing that truth calls us to a decision. To a wise man that choice is crystal clear – “*So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom*.”

In that Sinai Desert the life expectancy was seemingly about 70. Some might reach 80. Even so, being a septuagenarian or octogenarian was to be kept in perspective from God’s viewpoint. To the Lord even being a millenarian (think Methuselah) was only like “*a watch in the night*” (3 hours), or like “*yesterday when it is past*” (something quickly forgotten).

To “*number our days*” can be better understood by Paul’s advice to the Ephesians.

*“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”* (Eph. 5:15-17).

In other words, as the Latin’s put it, *Carpe Diem*. Seize the day! Live your life with wisdom based on the study of the Lord’s will. Remember God in the days of your youth so that when you are old you will have few regrets (Eccl. 11:9-12:8). Be able to say with David, who likely wrote this in the twilight years of life: *“I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread”* (Psalm 37:25).

I write these words due to the recent news of so many of my friends and loved ones facing death or life-threatening circumstances. It has impacted my spirit deeply and caused me to reflect on these wise words of Moses.

I was sitting in Perkins’ restaurant this week with my brother Gary Grannes. He had just lost his wife Linda and we were speaking of the impact and perspective of death. I had mentioned writing about Erma Bombeck earlier in the week and he said he had an article that they had read together and wanted to share with me. Her humorous syndicated column on home life that ran in most major newspapers from 1995-1996, along with her 15 published bestseller books, made her a fan favorite among many women of that generation. But this article was different than her others, for it had no humor inserted, only wisdom. I ask you to read it now and take it to heart:

**IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER**

-by Erma Bombeck
(Written after she found out she was dying from cancer.)

I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern
 if I weren't there for the day.

I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.

I would have talked less and listened more.

I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded.

I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when
 someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.

I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband.

I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life.

I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil, or was guaranteed
 to last a lifetime.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that
 the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, Later, now go get washed up for dinner."

There would have been more "I love you's." More "I'm sorry's."

But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it... live it ... and
 never give it back.

Stop sweating the small stuff.

Don't worry about who doesn't like you, who has more, or who's doing what. Instead, let's cherish the
 relationships we have with those who do love us.

Let's think about what God HAS blessed us with. And what we are doing each day to promote ourselves
 mentally, physically, emotionally, as well as spiritually.

Life is too short to let it pass you by. We only have one shot at this and then it's gone.

Hezekiah, when told of his impending death, begged for more days of life. God graciously granted him an additional 15 years (2 Kgs. 20:1-11). What would you do if told that in 15 years from today you would die? How would you live today, or tomorrow, or the day after? Would you fret over the election process? Would you worry about the crazy world news? Would this pandemic take on a new meaning? Seriously, how would you “*number your days*?” Carpe Diem. Live your life with love in your heart for all men.

That said, know this from my heart to yours … I love you. - Rick