

Psalms for All Seasons
Week 6 Sermon - The Song of Moses
Scripture - Psalm 90

Main Argument - From the palace to the wilderness, Moses learned all about the unfailing love of God and he learned to ask for BIG things.

Welcome back church! Over the last five weeks we've looked at Psalms that walk us through some of the most important seasons of our lives.

- We looked at Psalm 1, which taught us how to have our faith watered in every season.
- We looked at Psalm 23, which is the psalm of God's promised provision, now matter what place or season we find ourselves.
- We looked at Psalm 78, which is a psalm for the season of child-raising and grandchild-raising.
- And Psalm 122, which is the Psalm for seeking God.
- And Psalm 96, which is for the seasons of singing.

Today, we complete our series with a Psalm by the most seasoned writer in the Bible: Moses. Moses is one of the most impressive men in history. Born a Hebrew, raised as an Egyptian Prince in the house of Pharaoh. Moses lived to 120, and likely wrote Psalm 90 towards the later part of his life.

I want to tell you his story today, because I want to show you his Psalm.

The story of Moses reads like a movie – which is probably why so many movies have been made about him. The story of Moses is a rags to riches to rags story. Moses was named Moses because the word Moses means “drawn out.” He was born to a slave family at a time when Pharaoh was condemning all baby Hebrew boys to death.

Have you heard this story before? It's a good one!

Moses grows up in the house of Pharaoh. He's a prince of Egypt. He's educated, widely read, he speaks multiple languages, understands history and geography and philosophy and military strategy. But through all that, Moses knew he was a Hebrew. So...

The bush is on fire, but it doesn't burn. Moses walks over to it because he's curious. God manifests Himself in the bush. “*MOSES!*” He says. “Moses, I want you to go to the new Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go.”

Daily, God shows these former slaves multiple manifestations of His power:

- He sends them a pillar of fire by night, and a cloud to guide them by day.
- He sends them water from a rock.? (Show movie clip)
- And manna from the sky.

- And when they tire of manna, He sends them quail.

The children of Israel witness miracle after miracle, and they still lack faith. They're frail and finite and fallen and afraid. And Moses watches. And cares. And scolds. And encourages. And over these forty years, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. 50% more material than any other biblical author.

After 40 years of writing, Moses writes one last page. This one isn't about Israel's history, or forbearers. It's not about the commandments or the law. Moses' final writing is a song. We call it a *Psalm*. Some believe this song is the first of its kind: the archetypal psalm that forms the pattern for all the Psalms that follow.

Moses writes Psalm 90.

Weeks ago we learned that the book of Psalms is actually five books of Psalms; And Psalm 90 is the first Psalm in the fourth book. The fourth book of Moses is Numbers. Numbers is a book about wilderness wanderings. Psalm 90 is written by Moses during these wanderings.

After all that he's observed. All he's experienced. All he's seen of God and of people, whether rulers or slaves, indentured or free. Urban or rural or desert. People call this Psalm simply, "The Song of Moses." Can I read it to you?

Please open your Bible or Bible app to Psalm 90.

Hear now, the Song of Moses, which is called...

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

¹ *Lord, you have been our refuge in every generation.*

² *Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God.*

³ *You return mankind to the dust, saying, "Return, descendants of Adam."*

⁴ *For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night.*

⁵ *You end their lives; they sleep. They are like grass that grows in the morning—*

⁶ *in the morning it sprouts and grows; by evening it withers and dries up.*

⁷ *For we are consumed by your anger; we are terrified by your wrath.*

⁸ *You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.*

⁹ *For all our days ebb away under your wrath; we end our years like a sigh.*

¹⁰ *Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years.*

Even the best of them are struggle and sorrow; indeed, they pass quickly and we fly away.

¹¹ *Who understands the power of your anger? Your wrath matches the fear that is due you.*

¹² *Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.*

¹³ *Lord—how long? Turn and have compassion on your servants.*

14 Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days.

15 Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity.

16 Let your work be seen by your servants, and your splendor by their children.

17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands—establish the work of our hands!

Now that's a long Psalm, let's walk through this together.

Verse 1 begins with "Lord." Which is "Adonai" in Hebrew. Adonai is a ruler. "Elohim" is translated as "God." And when you see the word "LORD" (in all caps), that's the Hebrew word "Yahweh," Which is the covenant name God gave to Moses when Moses said, "Who shall I say sent me?"

"Yahweh" is the name that reminded them He was the God who made a covenant with them.

"Adonai," Moses says. "Lord, our King, you have been our refuge in every generation."

In these first 2 verses, Moses is saying,

A. God is Great

1. He is our Refuge. (v. 1) Our fortress, the One who protects us from our enemies.

2. He is our Creator. (v. 2a) "Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth..." (v. 2) Moses says.

3. He is Forever. (v. 2b)

"From eternity to eternity, you are God." (V. 2b)

Moses grew up around greatness.

- He grew up in the great house of Egypt.
- His adopted grandfather, the Pharaoh, was great.
- For his first 40 years, the palace staff bowed and told Moses that he himself was great.
- After 40 days on Mt. Sinai, Moses learned who was truly great and who wasn't.

90 days after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God summoned Moses to the mountaintop. Can you picture this? This is God! He's big and He's powerful. He shakes mountains and He speaks like thunder!

What Moses found out on that mountain top was that *God is great*. And what Moses found out in the valley is that *we are not*.

B. We are Not.

1. We are frail. (vs. 3-6)

2. We are fallen. (vs. 7-8)

3. We are finite. (vs. 9-10)

For 40 years, Moses lived with upper class Egyptians. For 40 years, he lived with working class Midianites. And for 40 years, he lived with lower class former-slave Israelites.

God is great... and we are not: that's the theme of the Song of Moses.

Follow along from verse 3:

³ You return mankind to the dust, saying, "Return, descendants of Adam."

Verse 4:

⁴ For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night. ⁵ You end their lives; they sleep. They are like grass that grows in the morning—⁶ in the morning it sprouts and grows; by evening it withers and dries up.

God is great, and we are finite. Time doesn't age Him, but we age overnight.

⁷ For we are consumed by your anger; we are terrified by your wrath. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

God is great, and we are fallen. Nothing we do gets past Him.

- That piece of candy you took when you were 8 years old?
- That time you dissed your mother when you were 14?
- When you pushed your little brother down, and pretended it was an accident?

Yeah...God saw all of that... But here's the good news:

He's our Creator, and Life-Giver, our Eternal Refuge. He knows us, and knows we aren't perfect, and can't be perfect. We are frail and fallen and finite.

That's why He sent His Son.

RECAP

This is Moses. He's reflecting on 100 years of watching human beings from the palace to the desert to the wilderness.

"We're all the same," he says, "frail and fallen and finite."

¹⁰ Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years. ...they pass quickly and we fly away.

Moses is saying, “God is big and strong – and we are small and weak.”... which is not meant to be an insult. It’s only meant to diagnose reality. Because sometimes we deceive ourselves and think we are really something.

Moses’ conclusion is:

4. *We need perspective. (vs. 11-12)*

That’s what he’s saying in v. 12 when he says:

12 Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.

“Help me see my life the way it really is and what it was meant for so that I can live the life you intend me to.” That’s wisdom in our hearts.

If his conclusion is, “We need perspective,” his application is, “once we get perspective, we ought to acknowledge God can really help us. And since He can really help us, we should ask Him to really help us – and not ask timidly, and not ask for small things.” Moses’ application to God’s greatness and our smallness is, “Ask Him for really big things!”

Ask BIG Things

That’s the final paragraph of his song. In his final 5 verses, Moses prays 5 prayers, and they are all “go-big-or-go-home” prayers. They’re BIG prayers.

Big prayer #1 = “Turn and have compassion on me.”

C. Ask for Big Things

1. For compassion on me. (v. 13)

It’s the most important prayer you’ll ever pray. And the first prayer you must pray if you want God to hear you. It’s the prayer He wants to hear from every person so that He can grant them compassion.

ANALOGY

Follow this for a minute:

We are frail, which means we are not strong.

We are finite, which means we don’t last long.

And we are fallen, which means we have all done things that are wrong. And all of those wrong things sit before the face of God and have to be dealt with.

Follow really closely now:

When a friend of yours, or a spouse, or your child, does something wrong to you, you have two choices: you can make them pay, or you can forgive them.

If your child breaks something that doesn't belong to him, you can make them pay to replace it. Or, you can say, "No big deal, I forgive you."

If it is a big deal – say, they punch the neighbor kid in the face, and you say, "No big deal," your child grows up crippled, because he or she never learns to regret their wrongs or make things right with the person they've wronged.

So, when you wrong someone, and it's a big deal, like you smash their face or steal their car, that can't be ignored – because it would diminish you to ignore it. You have to ask for forgiveness. For your sake. Otherwise, the wound of what you've done festers forever. You walk around guilty and feeling guilty, and you become a distorted image of the kind of person you were meant to be.

Well, follow this for a second more: when you do something wrong to another person, the more important that person is, the bigger the deal it is.

For instance, if you're a high school football player, and you punch one of your teammates in the face, that's not good. It's a kind of big deal, isn't it? Something needs to be done. You need to ask forgiveness, and you might need to make some restitution. Maybe pay a doctor's bill for their visit to the E.R.

But, if you're a high school football player, and you punch the coach in the face, that's a bigger deal.

And, if you punch the principal in the face... that's a *really* big deal.

The more important the person, the greater the crime.

The biggest deal would be to punch God in the face.

Examples:

If you read about the Israelites in the wilderness, they were doing stuff that punched God in the face all the time.

(1) God told them not to make any idols to replace Him, and the minute Moses went up the mountain, they all pulled out their earrings and made a golden calf.

(2) God gives them manna. It's amazing food. And they complain about it. (Try complaining about your mom's cooking and see how she feels about it).

(3) God gives them 10 commandments to obey, and they break every one of them on a regular basis.

Moses knows he's dealing with a big bunch of big rule breakers. So if they're going to pray big prayers, they first have to ask God to forgive them. They have to get their relationship right with Him.

That's what Moses is doing when he prays in verse 13, "Lord... Turn and have compassion on your servants."

Moses is asking for God's forgiveness. He's admitting that they need it. And asking humbly for it.

And that's the first prayer. "*God forgive me.*"

Then, once they're in a right relationship with God, they can ask for some things that will make their lives wonderful. And Moses doesn't hold back. He prays big, bold prayers.

Big prayer #2 is... for God's love and joy to come to them.

2. For Your love and joy. (v. 14)

Love and joy. In the New Testament, there are four words for love. The one you may have heard is agape. Which means unconditional love.

In the Old Testament there are several words for love too. This Hebrew word for love is the closest to agape.

It's the word "hesed."

There's *love*, and there's *hesed love*. When you see "hesed," in the scriptures, it's always translated with two words. Here it's "faithful love." Other versions use "steadfast love." Or "unfailing love." Or "lovingkindness."

A little boy once explained that love is when his mom gives him toast with butter on it. But loving kindness is when she puts jelly on it too.

God's hesed is a love that will never leave you or let you go.

Moses prays, "Satisfy us in the morning with your hesed love, so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days."

That's a really big prayer.

Instead of praying for a new toga that will make him happy for a few days, or a new chariot that will make him happy for a few weeks, Moses prays for joy that will make him happy forever.

Imagine if you could have joy that would *never* leave you? I guarantee you'll never have it without asking for it. You'll never find it on your own. Only God could grant it to you.

Hesed love, and joy.

Big prayer #3 is...

3. To make up for the pain of my past. (v. 15)

This is big prayer because every one of his companions had either been a slave all their lives, or, if they were younger and had been born in the wilderness, and wandered in the wilderness all their lives.

The prayer is, "Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity."

Big prayer #4 -

4. To let us see how You're at work. (v. 16)

I can put up with pain as long as I can see God is doing something with it.

Moses' prayer is, "Let your work be seen by your servants." That's a big prayer you could pray every morning: "Let me see you at work today, Lord."

And then there's Prayer #5 which is a huge prayer, because it's really a prayer for a lifetime.

In verse 17, Moses prays that God would establish the work of our hands.

He asks the Lord...

5. To make something significant from my life. (v. 17)

[Missions Opportunity in Romania, Poland, etc.]

When I think about Moses' prayer, "Establish the work of our hands!" I want to pray, "Lord, this is the work of our hands."

The work of our hands cannot be eternally established unless it involves eternal objects, and the only eternal objects in this world are people, and God's word.

The work of our hands is helping people who don't know God get into a right relationship with Him. That is the only work that will last for eternity.

This is why we are going to talk about...

[Describe next sermon series here...]

SUMMARY

God is great... and we are not. This is the simple reality Moses witnessed through the seasons of his life. From the palace to the wilderness, Moses lived several lifetimes and experienced the power and faithfulness of God in a multitude of ways.

This same faithfulness and power is available to you and I as well through the savior of all, Jesus.

What would you ask Him for today?

What's one BIG THING you want to ask of Him today?

Forgiveness? Love? Mercy? Grace? Provision?

These are His areas of expertise, so bring your BIG THING to Him in prayer today. And if you've never asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins, today is as good a day as any.

Let's pray together.