

PSALM 90: Our Great Big God

(1 Peter 1:13-25)

Big Idea: To live out our short time here wisely, we need to have the right view of God.

Play video clip...

Doesn't that make you feel quite small? I know I feel really small after watching that.

It's quite hard to grasp just how enormous our universe is. The numbers and the facts are too big for us to imagine.

When last have you felt really small? Perhaps you read something, or someone said something to you or you experienced something...and you realized sjoh...I'm quite small.

You might have felt overwhelmed by a conversation you had, a song you listened to, a movie you watched or because of your workload.

I have three older sisters, they are the best. I love them all. But I get on best with my oldest sister, probably because we are quite similar.

She is very calm, gentle and never raises her voice. She is very chilled and relaxed, but also very strong and independent.

Although she is the sister I get on best with, she is also the sister I am most afraid of.

She is calm and chilled but if you step out of line or get on her bad side she has the power to make you feel incredibly small.

It's almost magical, she sees right through you and is able to completely expose you.

She speaks calmly, without raising her voice and getting over emotional. Once she is finished speaking to you, you have no comebacks.

Like I said you have been completely exposed and therefore you feel vulnerable and wish the ground would swallow you.

Thankfully I have never experienced this before but I have been witness to it before. It is both amazing and terrifying at the same time.

What about you? When was the last time you felt really small?

Tonight as we work through Psalm 90 that is exactly what we will all experience.

As we reflect on our great big God and our relation to him we will see how huge he is and how tiny we are.

Let's pray.

The first thing we encounter and are to meditate on tonight is...

1. Our Great Big God

Have a look at the first two verses with me...

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.

God is our refuge. God is the safe place for humanity. From the creation of the world, in every generation God has been a place of refuge.

As we trace the line of people in God's word we see that to be true, from Adam and Eve all the way to the apostles and all the way to us, God is our refuge.

God provides for people, his grace is seen all around our world. We can always count on God.

That's because God is not like us, he has always existed. Before creation God has existed. Before the strong sturdy mountains or anything else in our world existed...God did.

God exists from eternity past to eternity future, he is not bound by time. Let's pause there for a moment and reflect on our great big God.

God is not bound by time. God exists in eternity.

When I was teaching this to the teens at confirmation class earlier in the year...my head got sore.

God exists outside of time, but he still acts in our time. He sees all of our time at once. Creation, Noah's ark, Moses and Jesus death all at once.

It's hard to get our little heads around...it's hard to grasp because we have no idea what that feels like.

That's the point God is much greater and bigger than us. God is not like us he is different.

We see more of this in the second section...

2. Humanity: Limited by time

Follow with me as I read from v3...

**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.**

Unlike God we are limited by time, we are not eternal. We have not always existed.

We have been created by our eternal God. He formed us out of the dust and as Moses reflects on God’s eternity he remembers God returns us to the dust.

Compared to God our lives are very short and extremely limited. It’s very sobering hearing these words.

Don't you feel slightly offended. Moses says compared to our great big God our lives are like grass that sprouts and grows in the morning and is withered by evening.

That really puts things into perspective doesn't it? For those like me who can't visualise this let's pretend this sheet of paper is eternity.

This dot I am making is our life. Can you even see it? That's what our life is like when compared with the eternal God.

It's ridiculous. There really is no comparison. Besides it being really short...we don't even have any control over it.

Did you spot that as I read that section. God returns us to the dust we came from.

Let's chew on this for a while longer.

Our lives are consumed by busyness. Our careers, our families, our 'me' time etc...

We are told we are the most important things in this world, we believe we are the most important things in this world.

We believe that nothing can function without us. The reality is...our lives are short and we really aren't in control of a whole lot.

In our short limited life span we can't really achieve a whole lot, we believe we can, but we can't.

What's more is that we have no control over when our lives will end. God does...we don't.

In our pride we like to think that we can control when our lives will end. We believe that when

we eat healthy, exercise, be kind and keep our minds engaged we will live longer.

All great things to do, but there no guarantees in that lifestyle. God knows when our time is up, we don't.

That's quite hectic. Our great big God is really awesome. Compared to him we are frail. But sadly it doesn't end there for us.

As we continue we see that...

3. Humanity: Facing God's wrath...because of our sin

Follow with me as I read from v7...

**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.

Not only are we limited by time. We are also due
to face God's wrath and anger.

Because we aren't just creatures that are limited
by time, we are rebellious, sinful creatures.

That's the reason death entered into our world in
the first place, mankind chose to listen to
themselves instead of God.

The frail creatures decided that they knew better
than their almighty creator did.

We see all this unfold in Genesis chapter 1-3. God the good creator makes a good world. He gives mankind dominion and rule over his creation.

God is in charge, God sets out the rule for his good creation. Instead of listening to God mankind chooses to listen to themselves.

That's what sin is, ignoring God's good rule. Choosing to listen to yourself instead of listening to God.

When you reject what God has to say and put yourself in his place you sin against your creator.

As we have already seen God is much bigger than us, there is no real comparison. Choosing yourself over our great big God is really quite stupid.

Since that fateful day we have continued to spiral downwards in our sin. It's not hard to see that as we look around in our world.

Violence, abuse, rebellion, racism, rejection, heart ache, sickness and death plague our world.

As Moses reflects on God and our lives he realises that our lives are not only short, but they are also filled with struggle because of our sin.

Our lives fly by, Moses reckons we have 70 years or eighty if we are strong. I just turned 35 this last week so that means I am half way to death.

It's quite a jolting psalm isn't it. It really shocked me in my reflections on it. The other shock in this section is how scary God is.

Because of our sin we will face God's wrath and anger. We can't escape our sins even our secret sins the ones we think no one knows about.

God sees them, God knows them. Our sin is a huge problem and to be taken seriously because God is a great big God who is very powerful and scary.

God is to be feared, God is to be taken seriously, God is in charge.

At the beginning I spoke about my sister who is quite scary because she is able to expose you.

Well she doesn't compare to God. He knows everything...every single thing we have ever done.

He even knows those dark, horrible thoughts we have had. That's why we face his wrath and should be terrified of his anger.

We often talk about God's love, kindness and patience, all true...but we mustn't forget God is very scary.

God's wrath and anger is very real. It is controlled, but still terrifying...

We see this in the flood, we see this when God rescues Israel from Egypt in Exodus, we see it in the desert when the Israelites grumble and complain against God.

We see it in Israel when evil kings are in power and Israel turns away from God to worship idols and serve fake gods.

How can a loving God be so scary? A helpful way for us to understand this is to think of good loving parents...

My mom was lots of fun. She had a great sense of humour. I could joke around with her and tease her.

We had lots of laughs together. But when I stepped out of line I knew there were consequences.

Then I faced my mom's punishment, which was very real and very scary. It didn't change the fact that my mom loved me.

In fact it proved she loved me, because she was willing to punish me and bring about justice for my bad behaviour.

She loved me enough to discipline me and to make me a better person.

And that is exactly what God does for us. God is a good, loving and just God. The fact that he judges sin proves that.

If we left it here, we would all be in trouble...we are all sinful, we can't save ourselves and therefore we all face God's wrath.

But the Psalm doesn't end there, it goes on to show us just how awesome our great big God is.

Finally we see that...

4. Our Great Big God teaches us

Have a look at v 12 onwards with me...

**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!**

When we have seen how frail we are as humans
and how short our lives are, we can feel quite
helpless and useless.

We could feel as though there is no point, we are here for such a short time.

Moses calls on God to teach us. To give us wisdom. Remember wisdom in the bible is all about fearing the Lord.

It's about knowing that God is bigger and greater than us. It's about choosing and trusting God above anything and everything else.

Moses calls for wisdom, for God to teach us to number our days carefully, knowing that we are only here for a limited time.

We should really value and appreciate our time here on this earth because it is so short.

Moses calls on God for wisdom, but in v 13 he also calls on God for compassion.

And it's a great picture. We saw in the previous section that we are facing God's wrath. We have turned away from God's ways because of our sin.

God has in a sense turned away from us. But now Moses asks God to turn to us to come and get us in our mess and help us.

Such a great picture of God coming to us and saving us and helping us to live out our days here on this earth.

Moses calls on God to have compassion on us, but he also asks God to use us for his glory.

Remember we are God's creatures, we are part of his creation and when we live wisely we bring God glory.

As his image bearers we reflect his glory to the world around us. Even as frail limited humans, we have purpose in God.

God will use us for his glory, to bring glory to his holy name and to be witnesses to the world around us.

It's a great Psalm of Moses, that has echoes of the creation story in Geneses 1-3 and even some echoes from Exodus as we reflect on God's glory.

It's a sobering Psalm that is very real. Why are we here, how are we to live, what is our purpose?

Without God the picture is very bleak and pretty much pointless...but with God and his word life although limited here, makes sense.

More than that we see our purpose. This is fleshed out for us a bit more in the 1 Peter passage that was read for us earlier, let me read again for you.

1 Peter 1:13-25 says...

¹³ Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. ¹⁵ But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. ¹⁷ If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. ¹⁸ For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and

spotless lamb. ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²² Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, ²³ because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For

All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls,
²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed
to you.

Jesus has rescued us. He is God's wisdom in the flesh. Jesus is the great example to us. Jesus is God's word in the flesh.

Moses in Psalm 90, basically preached the gospel to us. He gave us the first version of two ways to live.

We were created by a good, eternal and loving creator. We belong to him. We rebelled against him and therefore face his wrath and anger.

We deserve that for our rebellion, we can't save ourselves because we are weak sinners with an expiry date.

But God has rescued us through his word, through his teaching. He has shown us compassion and will use us for his glory.

We are therefore left with a choice to choose to live out our day for God's glory or for our own glory.

Choosing God's glory leads to eternity and gives us purpose and a healthy perspective on life.

Choosing our own glory leads to death, it has no point and will leave us empty and everything we do will be pointless.

In this 1 Peter passage we see the gospel fleshed out even more in that Jesus as God's word is our rescue plan.

Jesus, God in the flesh lived amongst us a human limited by time and death. Jesus lived the best life, the perfect life.

Jesus then died on the cross and through his blood he redeemed us. We couldn't save ourselves and so God literally stepped in to save us.

Jesus' life, everything he did points us to God.
Jesus' life helps us to see how we are to live
while we are here.

Jesus numbered his days correctly. Jesus only
lived here for 30 odd years but in that time he
brought glory to God in everything he did.

God did bless the works of his hands, because
Jesus lived a life of obedience and fear of the
Lord.

Jesus listened to God his Father all his life. When
tempted, when betrayed, when abandoned even
when he was overwhelmed by anxiety he chose
God.

That's the challenge for us. We are to follow our
King Jesus' example of life. That's what Jesus
called us to do...to follow him.

We need to hear and preach the gospel to ourselves regularly. We can never stop hearing about God's great love for us.

We can never stop remembering how desperately we were in need of rescue. This is an element of the gospel I have come to realise we neglect.

The gospel helps us to number our days correctly. The gospel helps us to keep the right perspective we need in this world.

The gospel keeps us grounded and makes things real for us. The gospel humbles us, makes us feel small, but gives us purpose.

We were lost before we heard and understood the gospel, we were in darkness, but through the gospel the light has gone on.

We are found by God, we know why we are here, we have a purpose. We are to live for God, to listen to him and bring him glory through our short limited life.

That's why the New Testament is full of gospel, it's full of warnings and rebukes about forgetting the gospel.

We need to hear the gospel regularly, we need to live our lives out in respect to the gospel.

The glorious good news the gospel brings to us should be at the centre of our lives.

Whether we are struggling, when we are thinking about our future and what we want to do with our lives.

When we think about living our lives as a single person or a married person. Whether we have kids or not.

Whether we choose to relocate or how we manage our money. The gospel must be what drives us.

The gospel makes us wise. The gospel puts things into perspective. It answers the big questions we all grapple with.

Why am I here, what's the point of my life? Am I really safe? It's all there in the gospel.

The gospel also motivates us to tell others about God, to share the great truths we have in the gospel.

It motivates us by reminding us of all we have
and how loved we are.

But it also motivates us because it reminds us
this world is ending soon, our lives are ending
soon and therefore we need to be urgent in our
evangelism.

That's really important, sharing the gospel with
people is REALLY important. Let's tell the people
around us about our great big God.

Here is a famous CS Lewis quote from the Lion
the witch and the wardrobe to help us remember
our God is both loving and sacry...

"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh"
said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he-
quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about
meeting a lion"..."Safe?" said Mr Beaver ..."Who

said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe.
But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.”

God is scary but to those that know him he is good he is safe. If we want to know how to best live out the few days we have on this earth we need to listen to God.

We need wisdom, we need to remember our place. God is in charge, yet incredibly in his bigness he still uses frail us to do his work for his glory...Amen