

Sermon preached by Rev Chris Moroney at the Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral,  
Sydney on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007. Reading: Psalm 90  
Topic: "Perspective"

At 11 am on 11 November 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years continuous warfare. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month attained a special significance in the post-war years. The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war. This first modern world conflict had brought about the mobilisation of over 70 million people and left between 9 and 13 million dead, perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave. Here in Australia, Remembrance Day is a good time us to consider before God the frailty of human life and our dependence on God and to gain a proper perspective on our own problems. The horror of war. The sadness of conflict. The grief at loss of family members. Even man's inhumanity to man. All these things cause us a great deal of pause and reflection about the value of each person and the importance of having the right spiritual perspective on life.

We should never take things like freedom, peace and security for granted. To live here in Australia at this time is a great and wonderful blessing. It has not always been like this. And if God had not so ordered the events of history, it could have turned out very differently. God enabled our fighting men and women and the armed forces of our allies to prevail. in World War One and World War Two. The outcome was never a foregone conclusion. Victory came at a tremendous cost and as the result of a great deal of determination and defiance against overwhelming odds. Only by the grace of God do we enjoy the freedoms of our present day society. Secondly, we need to be aware that although we do not like warfare, we still need our Defence Forces and the diligence of our Australian Government to maintain our security.

We must continue to pray for God's protection and for God's guidance to be given to our leaders. But it is also a time for reflection on Psalm 90. A time to gain a renewed perspective on the frailty of our humanity and the greatness of our God.

## **1 God's Eternity – Our Security**

The fact that this is called a Prayer of Moses reminds us that this is part of the heritage of the people of God in the Old Testament. These are the sentiments of the people of God, the family of faith. There is a long tradition here of learning to know God and to trust God with every part of their lives.

Many of us will have a place that we call home, a place where we feel safe.

But increasingly, the family home is no longer there. Home is more often, the people with whom we feel safe and comfortable to be ourselves. Here the author is saying "Lord, you are our refuge, our dwelling place, our home base, our security blanket, our haven from the storms of life."

It has been like that for generations. It is a family tradition to put our trust in God. We have been doing it as long as our family has been around, but even before that you were there. You are the eternal one, having been there before the mountains, and they seem to have been there forever. Psalm 90:1-2

From before the beginning of time, right through to after the end of time, you are God. Not just in terms of existing, but actually ruling, sorting, directing, protecting and guiding, but also judging, and from our perspective, hearing and answering our prayers.

## **2 God's Sovereignty – Our Frailty**

When we meet one another, we will sometimes ask each other, "What's your name?" and "Where do you come from?" We usually mean, where do we live, or even where did you grow up.

But this Psalm reminds us, that whatever our earthly origins. In fact we are from the dust of the earth. And after we are born and we will die. We will return to the earth, at least our physical bodies will. The older we are the faster the years seem to fly by, and before you know it, you are going to the funerals of people your own age. Our lives are a small part of the universe. Our lives are fleeting, a little piece of the jigsaw puzzle of life. And especially from God's perspective, our years pass like a moment in time. Psalm 90:3-6

Our lives come and go. Under God, some of us lives longer lives than others, but everyone's life is relatively short in the light of eternity. That's why John Chapman can write a book near the end of his life, especially for other people in their retirement years, saying "The best is yet to come." He means spending the rest of eternity in heaven.

### **3 God's Anger – Our Destiny**

In the midst of life we have various troubles. The wars have certainly brought lots of problems to many people. For many of us, we have relationship troubles, personal sicknesses, health challenges and financial trials. We seem racked with problems that we cannot fix. And we wonder, where is God in all of this? What can we do to receive the help of God, the sovereign and eternal one, when I am so frail and helpless?

The Bible is very blunt is reminding us that this world is full of toil and trouble, because we all go away from God, some more than others, but our independence, is real defiance of the word of God and the will of God for our lives.

The consequences of sin in the world, is suffering in our lives. Sometimes the things that happen to us are the direct result of our rebellion against God. At other times it is the result of living in the sinful world that is under the judgement of God.

Verse 7-11 express the frustration of living through tough times, and feeling as though we are under the judgement of God. There may be a number of people who know about the sin in our lives. People will suffer because of our bad habits, our thoughtlessness, or even our meanness. But we read here that God also knows about the secret sins of our lives, the things that no-one else could know.

How do we manage in the light of sin and suffering?

Here is what we should do:

We turn to God again and again.

We pray to God again and again.

We cast ourselves on him.

We must acknowledge any sin in our lives.

We must throw ourselves on him mercy.

We must confess our sins and seek his forgiveness and healing.

There is a close link between confession of sins and being made whole, forgiven, saved and healed. Psalm 41:3-4 (ESV) Psalm 103:2-4 (ESV)

We also see the encouragement to confess our sins in James 5.

We are reminded that the failure to come clean with God about our rebellion means that we will meet our human destiny, the judgement and wrath of God. This is the consistent view of the whole Bible.

### **4 God's Compassion – Our Hope**

The Psalm concludes with a prayer that God's steadfast love would be the basis upon which God showers his people with blessings. After a time of affliction and punishment, God would help his people to appreciate the kindness of God and value the time that God has given them. This Psalm uses both "Lord"(v1) meaning ruler, the one who is in charge of everything and "LORD"(v13), meaning Yahweh, the personal name of

God. God is the powerful yet personal ruler of the Universe and the one who cares for us individually. We should look to him for the good things in life and seek to honour him in the way we respond to each situation in life. There is nothing that happens that is outside his control. We see his perfect timing in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring about his good purposes for us and for the world. Jesus is the fullest expression of God's loving kindness. Hebrews 10:11-14

On that basis we can pray with confidence for God's will to be done in our lives, for his promised salvation to our personal claim and for his healing power to be at work in our lives day by day.

This helps us to keep a right perspective on the problems we face.

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”

Psalms 90:12