

An Old Man's Prayer | Psalm 90
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Preaching Draft | August 2, 2026

Just a very few days ago when I was at The Falls Church car wash, waiting for my car to be washed an older gentleman I've never seen before, while walking slowly towards us, suddenly just collapsed. A woman and I tried to support him and called for more help ... we called 911. Eventually As we were waiting, the man began to regain consciousness, and we sought to find what was happeningconversation was difficult, we told him help was on the way,

and , then, after a bit,

he looked at me and whispered, "I don't want to go to the hospital. Can you just take me home?" We did not feel qualified to make that decision, and when the medics came, they decided it was important to take him to the hospital. I wasn't able to learn his name but As I eventually drove away and have continued to think about that incident from time to time, I keep seeing that old man's face as he pled "don't take me to the hospital. I don't wanna go to the hospital.I want to go home"

Life is rarely really easy, and there are many/times when you must do things you don't want to do, but I have learned that especially, when you get old, it is likely that you will have to do things you don't want to do. ...to face things you really don't want to face...in his very last conversation with Simon Peter, John 21, the Lord Jesus spoke ominous words to his disciple....." very truly I tell you, when you were young you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go". He was warning Peter that faithfulness to the lord would be costly..... in Peter's old age he would Face martyrdom... but then Jesus said, (still,) "Follow me, Peter". Follow me anyway even when you are old and tired.

"When you are old they will lead you where you don't want to go"

It will be true for some of us; THIS IS THE FIRST THING I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER. PT #1
When you are old, you may have to do some things that are really difficult.... It may very well be necessary for someone to take you where you don't want to go . "Don't take me to the hospital....Please, I don't want to go to the assisted living community..... Please, I don't wanna go to the memory care unit. I want to go home "When you are my age you see this more and more.....it's painful, painful, painful for everyone

My wife and I have a pretty large family, and our grandchildren range from age 14 to 28. The average age of our grandchildren is about 18. We were with several of them this week...

When you're 18 you think you're immortal but when you're 80 you realize you're not.

I'm closer to 80 than 18 now and some of you are too. As you get older, you begin to think more about the decisions and challenges of the older years. You spend a good deal of time trying to prepare for it and as you think about these things, you pray about them too..... you pray about the things you hope to be able to do while you're still able and you also PRAY about the hard things you MAY have to do

We have just this morning read the prayer of an old man. Psalm 90 is believed to be the oldest of all the Psalms and written by Moses. At least that's the tradition. When HE was a very old man God asked Moses to do a series of hard things

Things he really did not want to do and tried to avoid But it was God who was asking him to do these things and so he obeyed and that was beginning of many difficult, painful, years. Obedience to God is surely not always easy, but it's the way that is best for us...if you haven't learned that yet, believe me, its true

This psalm, we think, is how he prayed about life as a very old man after years and years of following the lord. Psalm 90. It has a lot to teach us

A few months ago I was with my siblings, and we talked about this prayer of Moses with some of our children and grandchildren. My sister is 83, my brothers are 89 and 92.. but we found it relevant to all ages . Since then, I've continued to think about it. And it seems more and more relevant.had wanted and intended to speak to you today about this entire prayer . But realized I simply wouldn't t have time to say what needs to be said. So this morning will just look at a portion and hope you will take time to reflect on the whole Psalm yourself....

But first

Do you know who Moses was? Maybe not..... he lived probably in 15 or 1600 BC, born in Egypt, where his people had been slaves for 400 years. Thousands and thousands... Abraham had been the Father of the Hebrew people but Moses became really the founder of Judaism. You can read about him in the first 5 books of Bible which are based largely on his notes, his record

Moses was born at a bad time for his people. pharaoh the king of Egypt Was dependent upon the Jews but had become fearful that they had grown so numerous that they had become a threat to his kingdom.

Pharoah was a wicked man, and declared that for a while, all newborn Jewish baby boys would be killed. SO Moses mother hid him in a basket in the river Nile among the Reeds during the day and her daughter stayed hidden close by to watch over him, but one of the pharaoh' s many daughters discovered him , her heart went out to this little baby and determined to save him. She secretly adopted him. She raised him as a member of the royal family. her father , the king, probably never knew because he probably had scores of grand

children. Moses received the finest of educations, was raised as a prince, but he always knew that he was Jewish. ...desperately wanted to do something to help his people who were severely, cruelly oppressed. That deep concern of his boiled over one day when he killed an Egyptian soldier who was beating one of his relatives. Word of what happened quickly spread. The King learned of it, learned the whole story and took action to have Moses killed, so he fled.

With little but the clothes on his back he slipped away out into the desert, assuming he would never be able to come home again. He settled in a far away place where for the next 40 years Moses raised Sheep, goats and a family. It seems he was pretty content until one day the most unexpected thing happened. God simply walked into his life, and it was the beginning of a relationship with God that was utterly different from anyone else's, ever. Moses was already a very old man but God told him Go back to Egypt, and meet with the current king, a man whom Moses had likely grown up with, tell him you're taking Every single one of the Hebrew people back to their home land because God said to do it.

And Moses did.

The story of that confrontation with Pharaoh, the ten terrible plagues God sent on Egypt, the Passover night when all the Hebrews departed, the miraculous rescue from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, Moses receiving of the Ten Commandments, the establishing of the tabernacle, the priesthood and Jewish worship, the miraculous feeding of them all in the desert,

These stories

Are the heart of OT.....they were terribly hard timesthe people constantly refused to trust God or Moses, grumbling, Rebelling, disobeying Moses and the Lord, and finally when they reached the border of the Promised land, they refused to go in, refused to trust God to give it to them...all this led God finally to shut them out, to condemn them to wander in that huge endless desert till everyone of that rebellious generation died. It was just the worst.

And esp for Moses, because

for 40 years, dismal, devastating, crushing, heartbreaking years, Moses had to take care of them. Countless nights he sat up crying out to God; how many times he must've come near despair; how many thousands of funerals he had to preside over!

At last, the old generation died away, and a new generation came along, a different sort, who respected Moses, who trusted God, who were toughened by the desert life and ready to take the land God had promised them. The young leaders he had trained were ready to lead. By then Moses was very old. He had done all God asked of him. He had taken them right to the edge of the promised land

But Moses Wasn't able to go in with them. He died right at the border, on a mountain just across the Jordan River, alone, just with God. trusting that they would make it.

AND

Sometime during his last years we think he wrote this prayer ...

Psalm 90. the prayer of an old person who , when he was old, had to go where he didn't want to go...

this the second thing to remember. PSALM 90 is a PRAYER WRITTEN AT A TIME WHEN LIFE WAS HARD it's a prayer well worth studying and praying for ourselves.....wish there were time today to really study the whole thing.

.. it was written during a very painful time....it's honest, it's raw , it's full of both faith & painMoses of course didnt know Jesus when he prayed it, didn't know that Gods own son would one day become the Passover Lamb, he didn't know he could call God "Father " as Jesus taught us, But He knew God , he was cClose to God, In fact he's the only person in the Bible who is repeatedly described as " the man of God".....God spoke to him directly over and over and Moses was truly a man of prayerI encourage you to study this prayer and learn from it.

His prayer begins with awe. Then moves to his pouring out his heart about how hard and fleeting life is, then ends with four specific requests...requests that are appropriate and wise st any age,

- Teach us to number our days with wisdom
- Give me joy and a satisfied spirit
- Help this Younger generation to know you
- Help us to complete the work you have for us to fulfill our calling

as I said , for now just look at the beginning

In beginning He looks out into the heavens and is overcome with awe.
Vv 1,2, (read it with me)

" . Lord God, you are forever, you always are, there has never been a time when you were absent ...lord you are outside of time, you made the earth, you made us, and Lord in all these generations when we have been slaves and wanderers , homeless, with no home of our own, you have become our home. "

Perhaps you've seen the new movie the Odyssey .what some miss is that it is really a story about home, about a man's longing to go home having been away in battle for twenty years. But for Odysseus, home is much more than Ithaca....it is his wife, his son, where he became who he was. Where he belongs. He places his commitment to be home with Penelope , with his son and father even above the opportunity of immortality . It's a beautiful picture of love and longing for home.

But as an old old man Moses, the man of God saw something even more beautiful, deeper, something Odysseus did not know.

Moses must have longed from time to time for a home, a safe and secure place to retreat to, where he and his little family could live out their days but Moses knew that for him this was not to be.

Moses hadn't had a home since he was a young man, only a tent and constantly on the move, but as an old man he learned a truth that is rarely learned, and this is THE THIRD POINT. That

Wherever you are, wherever you go, you may be totally alone, maybe moving quickly from place to place, life may be unsafe, but God is there with you and he is your home when you have no home. Moses had learned what few of us learn, that God's presence was enough. To be with God is to be Home

On many occasions, when we were still in the old church, people would sometimes come to me and say that the very first time they had come and taken a seat in that building and worship began they had a deep, inexplicable sense that they had "COME HOME".. Yes it should be like that when we come together here but you can know his presence anywhere

I hope you will learn to, sometimes, just STOP, in the midst of whatever you're doing, stop, be still for a moment, rest, lean yourself back onto God " Lord God you are here, I am with you, I can trust you. I'm home. Right here, because I'm with you.

300 years ago a wise old Saint named Isaac Watts pondered the meaning of this psalm. his imagination soared, and he wrote the words we still sing today. O God our help..... He reminds us that God is our help, hope, our shelter, our defense, and twice he goes back to verse one of Moses prayer saying God, you are our eternal home. .. our eternal home....

sometimes here and now we sense we're at home with God, and that is a foretaste of what is to come for those who love Him. Friends I want you to learn that God is your shelter, your resting place, your safe place of peace, your home every moment. And I also want you to, learn to live here and now in the peaceful expectation that one day you will go to live in your true home

Have you had the experience of traveling to far off places places you've wanted to visit, but then at the end of the traveling found it is just so good to be home again? I know not everyone's home is all that good, but if you have a happy and peaceful home, then ultimately there's nothing like it. It's where you love to be. But, and this the last point,

when a believer dies, he goes to his TRUE HOME. Our home with God will have all the good, Home things we love, multiplied many times, but none of the bad.

My entire personal outlook towards death and the next life changed when I had my very last talk with my dad before he died. He took me complete by surprise ,told me that Christ had been right there with him earlier that day and that nothing, absolutely nothing could possibly have been better than to go home with Christ right then .

It was so real to him. It was so wondrous that he knew it would be better than anything here... I was deeply moved...I didn't know what to say. believed my father but I couldn't quite grasp the enormity of what he was telling me... he was going home...he was young.....his life was so full here but he was sensing something completely different.....good things we just can't grasp in this earthly life

Hopefully you will have many wonderful experiences in this life, that you will experience the very best, sweetest things this world can offer but as C.S. Lewis said we should not mistake these things for our true home

Moses had learned that even tho he had no earthly home, he had God , and in the presence of God, he was home. But Christ said more than that during his final days just before his crucifixion Jesus gathered his disciples together to comfort them. Yes he was leaving them, but he wanted them to understand. He was going homeJohn 14. “ don't let this throw you. You trust God don't youtrust me ...there's plenty of room for you in my father's home ...if that weren't so would I've told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you. And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so that you can come and live where I live.” home is with our Heavenly Father Sometimes we can actually sense being at home with him here while we are in this life, but it's when this body dies that we truly are able to go home.. sometimes in facing terminal illness or close to death , some feel that they are leaving this life too soon, sad, disappointed, not ready to leave, but friends where gods children are going is the real home ...there will be no disappointment there.

When my parents sent me away from home, six hours away to a boarding school at age 14 , I was so homesick. It was hard for me. I hadn't been away from home.

Sometimes when people are reaching the end of this life they get home sick too, but it's home sickness for their true home . At times over the years when I've been sitting with very old people or people who are dying they've said to me. “ John I'm ready to go home. I want go home now.” if you've ever been really homesick, what these people are feeling is perhaps something like that. But Homesick for something more, something sweeter, for the completion of this life and fulfillment of the next . If God is our maker, if God is our father, if God is our home, then there comes a time when we simply want to be with him completely.

This is what the slaves were thinking about , longing for ,in their days of distress When they used to sing the old spiritual “swing low sweet chariot coming for to carry me home”. It's why sometimes at funerals you might hear a soloist singing the old hymn “ softly and tenderly. Jesus is calling Jesus is calling me home”

Remember how we read a few minutes ago about Peter and how Jesus warned him what would happen when he was old..... I have to believe that when Saint Peter was taken out of prison, his arms shackled and being led to the site of his own martyrdom , he must've been remembering those words of Jesus warning him that this day would come BUT that Christ had promised him when that time came he would take him home to be with himself. For the person who knows the Lord, that's what dying is, going home to be with the Lord. There is no fear for the person who knows Christ.

God sent his son to call us into a new way of living here and now, to be Gods people following him in a life of love, forgiving, reconciling , peace, It begins when we say YES to him, when we ask for his help, his forgiveness his leadership , when we open up all,of our life that we can ,to all that we know of him, it's not always easy following Christ, but it's why we're here, and it doesn't end at death, just enters a whole new dimension. What have I said? 1. When you are old, you are like I have to do some things that are really difficult. 2. The prayer of Moses was written at a time when he was older in life was hard and a good guide for us in our own prayer life.3. Wherever you are, God is your home. 4.When a believer dies he goes to his true home

Last month three other men and I, men I've known for a long, long time traveled to France to visit Normandy and see where the great courageous D-Day invasion took place. but after a few days there we journeyed East to visit one of the major battle sites from World War I. It was even more soBering, to stand in those trenches where for so many months so many men had died in what seems to,us today a pointless , unnecessary war. At one point We stood in an enormous where German and allied forces had fought to the death , and all around the crater on a walkway the names of men who had died right there. In a few places there were memorial stones which we read and on one of them was a story I will never forget.

An account by Private Tom Easton, Second Battalion. Tyneside, Scotland.

On July 1, I was not yet 20.When the whistles blew for the assault, the bagpipe started and we advanced towards the crater side-by-side .we didn't want to look like cowards. There were enormous losses; out of 1000 men, there remained only one officer and 200 men .

Later there was one event that remains etched in my memory. During the attack, we moved along the German front line, where I saw one of my best friends sitting at the German artillery position. He called me over and when I got to him, he asked me to sit down. I protested, telling him we had other things to do.

He said it wouldn't take long , and he asked me if I could hear music. I could hear absolutely nothing. He described to me what he could see,' the whole sky was opening up , orchestras

This is a preaching dra..

were playing ,choirs were singing, and all the ancestors were there telling him to come and join them. 'He held his arms out. 'There's my old father,He says , they're waiting for me. He fell forward and I saw..... a piece of shrapnel had gone through his chest. (he was dead)

These things shake you, but it was a momentous experience for me, and in spite of the shock it gave me the courage to do my duty as a soldier.”

And that's the point, when you know that in the end you are going home, it gives you the courage, the strength to go on in even the hardest things.