

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.
¹³ Return, O LORD!
How long?
And have compassion on Your servants.
¹⁴ Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!
¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days *in which* You have afflicted us,
The years *in which* we have seen evil.
¹⁶ Let Your work appear to Your servants,
And Your glory to their children.
¹⁷ And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands for us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.

Introduction

Next Tuesday is the 1st of January 2019.

Everybody around the world will have dreams and expectations of what they would like to happen during this New Year.

If we are Christians, then this Psalm will teach us something about God that we can take with us into a New Year.

Psalm 90 is the oldest psalm in the book of 150 Psalms.

It was written by Moses, the man of God. (Joshua 14: v. 6)

The subject matter of this Psalm deals with the **frailty of human sinful nature, life and death, and how we can cope with living in a confused and difficult world.**

It is a Psalm that is ideal as we consider the future of a New Year.

It is possible that Moses wrote this Psalm after Israel's failure to move forward in faith at "**Kadesh Barnea**" as recorded in the book of Numbers chapter 13-14.

This is when God condemned the nation of Israel to live in the wilderness for 40 years until the older generation died.

This tragedy was followed by the death of Moses's sister, Miriam. (Num.20: v. 1)

Also Moses's brother Aaron died. (Num. 20: v.22-29)

It was between those two deaths that Moses disobeyed God and struck the rock. (Num.20: v.2-13.)

So how did Moses become a "**man of God**" after spending 40 years in pagan Egypt, that ended in failure, and 40 years as a humble shepherd in Midian, and more years trying to shepherd nearly 3 million Israelites in a desert.

Well for Moses it was not easy, but he did get the victory over his circumstances.

In this Psalm he shares his heart with us in order that we might have the strength and wisdom from God to go through life's journey in 2019.

I hope that this message today will encourage us throughout 2019.

There are three things that Moses teaches us in this Psalm.

The first is that we are travellers as we journey through 2019, but **God is our HOME.**

The second thing that Moses teaches us is that we are **constantly learning** and the circumstances of our life in 2019 is our **school of learning.**

The third thing that Moses teaches us is that if we are **believers in Jesus Christ**, then our **future in 2019 will be a blessed time.**

1. We are only travellers in 2019, but God is our home. – v. 1-2.

For everybody, life is a journey, from birth to death.

However, for believers in Jesus Christ, it is a **journey from earth to heaven.**

However, the road that we travel on is **not an easy one.**

Jacob called the 130 years of his journey, "**few and evil**" (Gen. 47: v. 9)

Nevertheless, Jacob was a follow of God to the **very end of his life.**

He died, leaning on his staff, while he was blessing each of his sons.

(Hebrews 11: v.21)

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

Moses lead a nation of former slaves, who spent a lot of time **complaining**, and they **didn't always appreciate his sacrifice in leadership.**

In Numbers chapter 33 there are 42 different places where Israel camped during their journey.

However, for Moses these places **never** became "**home**" because **God himself was always his home. This is a wonderful truth to take through into 2019.**

There are lots of people who attend O.I.C. from foreign countries.

Perhaps during 2019 you might get homesick?

However, if you are a Christian, remember that God is your home!

You are a citizen in Heaven and Jesus is your visa for eternity.

Moses says in v. 1 "**Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**"

He declares in v. 2 that **God is the everlasting God who created this world and everything in it.**

(Deuteronomy 33: v. 27a)

⁷ The eternal God *is your* refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting arms;

Moses knew how to “**abide**” in the Lord and find “**strength**”, “**comfort**” and “**encouragement**” and **help** for each day.

Exodus 33: v. 7-11.

⁷ Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp. ⁸ So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. ⁹ And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses. ¹⁰ All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. ¹¹ So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Moses had his own quiet times each day, where he spoke with God.

If we are going to survive spiritually during 2019 then we will need to have a time spent alone with God, reading His word, the Bible, and talking with Him.

This is the most important part of your 2019, spending time alone with God and His word, the Bible.

But the thing that we need to remember is that talking with God is a **two-way process.**

He talks with us, and we need to listen to Him and obey His teachings.

The New Testament equivalent of “**Abiding in God**” is John Chapter 15: v. 1-11.

(in N.L.T. – John 15: v. 1-11)

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

We will never be effective for God, unless we are connected to Him and willing for Him to sanctify our lives.

The pruning knife of God is never easy, but it does produce more fruit for God's glory.

Disappointments are often God's opportunity to grow your faith.

I know a Pastor from the U.K. who moved to the U.S.A. to pastor a Church.

He shipped all his worldly goods in a container to the U.S.

His wife insisted that she take her best bone china tea and dinner set. It was very expensive and very durable.

The container arrived in the U.S. and the contents were put into a rented house by the Church members. The Church members got everything ready for their new pastor.

The Pastor arrived in America, only to discover that a few days before his house was burnt to the ground, and the only thing that was not destroyed by the fire, was his wife's best "**English-Bone- China**" tea and dinner set, and plates etc.

The reason that his wife's bone china survived was that it had already been fired to such a high degree in the process of it being made, that it would not burn.

God spoke to the Pastor as he collected the bone china.

God said to Him, you are a preacher of sanctification, and challenge people to fully surrender their lives to God. Now you know that the only thing that survives the trials of life, are things that are already burnt, and surrendered to God.

For the rest of his life, this Pastor was able to use this illustration to preach about sanctification and the surrendered life for all Christians.

God can never take away that which he already owns and controls.

If we surrender our lives to God, for His will in 2019, **whatever happens will be for God's glory.**

The preacher who told me the story about his house being burnt down, told the story in a meeting in London about 25 years ago. He was about 70 years old at the time, and had been using this illustration for over 20 years.

When he told it, it was a very powerful illustration.

I hope that it has been for you.

The way of blessing in 2019 is to make God your home, and for God to feel comfortable in your home. You will not be disappointed in 2019 if you do this.

2. We are constantly learning in life, and our circumstances in 2019 are the school where we can grow and learn. – v. 3-12.

Moses was educated at the best place in Egypt. (Acts 7: v. 22)

However, the lessons that he learnt walking with God were far more important than his academic education.

In these verses Moses teaches us two important life lessons.

Firstly, life is **brief** and passes us by quickly – v. 4-6.

Secondly, life is **difficult** and at times it seems pointless – v. 7-11.

In v. 4-6 Moses gives us some illustrations to teach us the brevity of life.

In v. 4 Moses tells us that **compared with eternity, our lives are very brief.**

Even a thousand years in God's eyes is very brief.

Moses educates us about some grass areas in Israel.

In the morning the dew falls on the grass and it grows a little, but after the mid-day the sun starts to wither the grass, and by the evening it is looking dead.

Moses died at 120 years, Joshua at 110, but David was only 70 when he died.

We never know when God will require our life to end.

What matters is that we **prepare ourselves for the event of our death.**

Next year 2019, God will bring experiences into our lives to **mature us and grow us to be more like Jesus.**

Our Sanctification process continues next year.

It is only as we obey God's word in our personal experience that we are going to grow as a believer in Jesus Christ.

The solution that Moses offers us is to **“teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”**

So what does it really mean to number our days?

The Hebrew phrase can be translated **“weigh or measure our days”**.

It means making effective use of each day for **the glory of God.**

There are three things that I would like to suggest in order to help us to number our days.

a) **Be good stewards of your time.**

There is a saying in England that goes like this: “If you want something done, ask a busy person”.

The reason for this is that busy people know how to manage their time.

The devil sends people into our lives to waste our time. The Holy Spirit sends people into our life, that we might give them quality time.

We need to **minimize our wasted time** and **maximize our effective time.**

The average Japanese person spends 1 hour 15 mins. each day going to work on the train.

This is just over 6 hours each working week for a 5- day week.

What could you possibly do on a train in 6 hours?

You could **pray for 6 hours** and see God do wonderful things in answer to your prayers.

You could **learn Bible memory verses,** and God would encourage you and use His word to speak to other people.

You could **listen to the Bible on your iPhone,** or read a good Christian book.

This would encourage your soul. Be selective about your reading.

There are many things that we could do to number our days.

Maybe if 2019 was going to be your last year, you might plan all the things that you want to do. People call this their “bucket list”.

I wonder how many of us would choose to do **spiritual things,** rather than just things that give us fleeting pleasure?

b) **Be careful to take the opportunities that God will give you.**

2014 was a difficult year for my wife and I. We didn't really know what God was doing in our life and where He was leading us.

But an opportunity came directly from God to come to Japan and serve you here at Osaka International Church.

If we had decided not to come, and there were plenty of reasons we could have given for not coming, I believe we would have **missed a God given opportunity.**

Whatever the sacrifice, my advice is to take **every opportunity that God will give you in 2019 to serve Him.**

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as God speaks to you about opportunities.

Don't judge your opportunities for God on what you can do yourself. Judge them on what God might do through you as you surrender to Him!

c) **Balance your life well between Ministry, Family, Fellowship, and Leisure.**

We all know that Japanese companies demand long hours from their workers.

Some Christians have decided to do part-time work to give themselves a better life-work balance. This enables them to serve God better.

The sacrifice can often be that they have less money. This is hard. However, God always honours those people who honour Him.

(1 Samuel 2: v.30)

³⁰Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.

3. If we are believers in Jesus the future in 2019 is going to be blessed. – v. 13-17.

Up to now the Psalmist, Moses has been a little negative. However he now encourages us in this last section by appealing to the grace of God to work in our lives.

What we need more than anything else is for **the grace of God to work in our lives.**

When Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord, then He carries you into 2019 as your friend.

This last section emphasizes God's compassion and unfailing love.

God desires to bless us with His presence, even when we go through trials and tribulations.

v. 13-15 in N.K.J.

¹³ Return, O LORD!

How long?

And have compassion on Your servants.

¹⁴ Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,

That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!

¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days *in which* You have afflicted us,

The years *in which* we have seen evil.

Moses knew what it was to have God's blessing, and he wanted to have it again.

God is the God of **new starts and new opportunities.**

Learn from your past mistakes and failures, but don't let it bind you in a negative way.

God wants to bless you next year.

What Father doesn't want to bless His children?

As we move forward into a new year, start afresh with God.