

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

"Teach us to number our days." Psalm 90.

Introduction: New Year an imaginary division of time made by man for his own convenience. But it gives pause for thought. River of time flows between two eternities.

I. this Prayer Reminds us of the Brevity of Life.

A. There are several figures in this Psalm.

1. "as a watch in the night" - v. 4

2. "as a flood" - v. 5 stream, mighty torrent.

3. "as a sleep" - v. 5 Shakespeare - the Tempest

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve; and, like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

4. "like grass" - v. 5 short duration - morning, evening: Reminds us of James 4:14 "For what is your life? it is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

5. "We spend our years as a tale that is told." v. 9.

Shakespeare: "all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances: and one man in his time plays many parts..." (Macbeth) "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day, So the last syllable of recorded time; and all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more." "it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

B. This is contrasted with the God's eternity. vs. 1-2

II. This is a Prayer for the Battle of Life

- A. Life is a battle, with its struggles, troubles, and sorrows. see verse 10.
- B. None are exempted from service in the great warfare of life. (Ecclesiastes 8:8)
"and there is no discharge in that war.")
Some of us are raw recruits. Some are in the midst of the strife. Some are nearing the end of the conflict. Life is not an end in itself, but a battle in which we are trained and tested and put on probation for the life which is to come.
- C. Yet in this battle there is ultimate victory - verse 3 - a clear and strong promise of resurrection. "destruction" = "dust" - "return" = resurrection.
- D. Our troubles are caused by God's wrath. V. 7
- E. His wrath is because of our sin - V. 8
- F. His help and wisdom will enable us to win this battle of life.

III. We find the Beauty of Life in ans. to that prayer.

- A. "to apply our hearts unto wisdom" means to live in fellowship with God.
- B. Then we will be satisfied, rejoice, and be glad. V. 14
- C. Then the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us. V. 17

Conclusion: In the Strasbourg Cathedral there is a great and famous clock. In the center are 4 figures representing the four ages of life, and in the midst of them stands Death. - Childhood, Youth, Manhood, Old Age. Put yourself in one of the 4 groups. What have you done with your life? What are you doing with it now?

91,000 accidental deaths in U.S. in 1949
31,500 auto deaths in 1949
9,400,000 injured in accidents in 1949
876 killed in "July 4 weekend this yr. 1950"
last week-end one person died accidentally every 10 min.