

What am I passing on to the next generation?

9 days ago, I attained the ripe old age of 70 but be assured I don't yet feel it and am determined not to act my age. But more aware of my mortality, I was reminded of Psalm 71, a prayer of David that I preached on 11 months ago: *Now that I am old and grey, and when my strength is gone, do not forsake me, my God until I declare your power to the next generation. In You, I have taken refuge and You have been my hope, my strong confidence since my youth.*

What will I pass on? A bungalow, a scratched car, savings, books, a lot of paper and fading memories? Having been legally trained, I had already written my own will. And I included this sentence, *“I leave monetary riches to my children and grandchildren but my greatest desire is that each should know for themselves the riches of God's love and grace in Christ.”*

Today is Bible Sunday and the Scottish Bible Society has challenged churches throughout Scotland to preach on Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses that challenges the Church, God's people today in Christ, to pass on not so much bricks and mortar, cash, bric a brac or mementos but how we can find our refuge and home in God's love.

Listen now for God's word in Psalm 90

Reflection 2: Faith for Generations – What am I passing on? Psalm 90

Do you notice how in our families we tend to pass things on from generation to generation? Grannie's remedies for colds & flu, the proper order of dinner & present opening on Christmas day; & more importantly, ways of living in the world that speak of our values and of what is most important to us: telling the truth, what makes a good friend, keeping your word, how we should treat others.

Psalm 90, entitled a Prayer of Moses speaks about **generations** in its opening verses. It's full of truths about God & about us. Moses lived over 3400 years ago. For over three millennia, these truths have been declared & passed down from generation to generation of God's people.

It asks some big questions: how are we to approach this life, when our own lives are so short? How are we to live, in the face of the truth that we all die? How can we live with a holy & just God, when our sin is laid before Him; & how then to pass on grace & truth of God in Christ?

Psalm 90 gives us 3 big answers to pass on to the next generation, truths about who God is and who we are, that help us understand life, the universe, everything.

1. Making God our home
2. Learning to live wisely
3. Letting God fill each day.

1. Making God our home

v. 1 – ***“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”*** This is the grounding truth, the anchor for everything else the Psalmist will say:

The sense of the Hebrew word is of God as *refuge* for His people. *Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go for you are my rock and my fortress.* (Psalm 71:3) *Lord, you have been **our dwelling-place throughout all generations** (90:1). If you make the Most High your **dwelling** – even the Lord who is my refuge... (Psalm 91:9).* Moses is saying that God has been a place of refuge, a place of safety for His people. Generation after generation of God's people have made God their *home*. Each generation of God's people must come to believe this truth about God and experience it for themselves. It doesn't happen by accident but must be passed on from one generation to the next.

That God can be our dwelling place, our refuge, is one of the key answers to the questions of life. It is a revelation from God: we couldn't work this out for ourselves. Moses declares that God is eternal; God day that is existed in eternity before the earth was formed – v. 2. To God, ***a 1000 years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by*** (v.4). By contrast, our human life is finite: our normal life span is limited to 70s or 80s (v. 10). We too are creations of God, who have a beginning, given life by God. & our lives have an end as God also brings our lives to an end. (v.6)

The Psalmist speaks of the frailty, fragility and temporary nature of our lives. Death silences any pride or boasting in who we are or what we have done.

The Psalmist also reflects on other truths about God – & about us – that seem to throw into question the possibility of any relationship with God. For God is holy & just & our sin draws His anger. There is no hiding from God's judgment. Before any generation of God's people can come to know the truth & experience of God as our dwelling place/ refuge, we need to deal with the truth of the holiness of God, the reality of our sin & of God's right judgment because of that sin. How then, can we possibly find our home in God?

The answer is the *compassion & unfailing love* of God. In the fullness of time, God revealed His plan how the Lord can be our dwelling place, a place of refuge, safety & security. Through trusting in Jesus, our earthly lives expand into eternity, death is overcome, & life – rather than being futile – is given meaning as we are gathered into God's eternal purposes.

2. Learning to live wisely

If vv. 1-10 provide the basic truths to help each generation discover God as our dwelling place then vv. 11-12 show us how to approach life in light of these truths about God
v. 12 – teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom

The word *gain* here is associated with harvest. The heart of wisdom is not something we can merely pick up at a supermarket or in an on-line shopping basket & add to our lives; it is the result the product of investing our days – our lives – in the right way. Wisdom - to be wise - is to reflect God, to mirror his actions & to live our lives in light of the revelation of God. So opening word of Psalmist's prayer in v. 12: *Teach us...*

We & younger generations today are surrounded by information but not much wisdom. The Bible insists that wisdom comes from God, the good news that God throughout the generations has continually & consistently revealed what God is like; it is all there in the Bible. Are we reading the bible each day, listening to God's voice & for God's word for us? & will we then, pass on this truth and reality

3. Letting God fill each day

What does a life look like when God is *our dwelling place*

.. *and* we allow God to teach us how to live?

vv. 13-17 give a wonderful picture. Our days pass so quickly (v.6) that we've got to use each one wisely (12) but now he tells us that every day is to be filled with God, & with the satisfaction, love joy & gladness that come from God. He starts by talking about mornings. Perhaps you have had the experience of waking to a new day & having a child or a spouse or parent throwing their arms around you & saying, "*I love you.*" -

Love transforms our experience of life.

Moses prayed to God, *Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love.* (14)

No matter what life throws at us, no matter our circumstances, to wake each day & be met with the unfailing love of God brings satisfaction. That word, *satisfy*, speaks of being filled, having plenty & being content with God's good gifts. And then Moses prays that *may your deeds be shown to your servants & Your splendour to your children. May the favour of the Lord, our God rest upon us* (v. 17) – an awareness of God's presence & love in our lives. ..

... **Life with God – as our help and our refuge, our home and our hope.**

.... **By grace, that is what we can and must live out, share & pass on.**