

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – July 7, 2020

The lord be with you.

Too soon old, Too late, smart.

That's what I hear some people say. And well, I sure at hope that I would have been smarter by now... Do you ever feel that way? Things we wish we had known years ago... Well, I have a prayer today from the Bible that God might make us smarter, that God might wise us up to how to live. Here it is, Psalm 90:12. So teach us to count our days, that we may gain a wise heart... So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

This is a prayer by Moses in a Psalm by Moses, which makes it the oldest Psalm, and it is the only Psalm by Moses that we have. The Psalm gives hints that it was written by Moses as a Israelites are coming to the end of 40 years in the wilderness, and in reflecting back on those 40 years, Moses like Solomon is seeking wisdom. I mean, Moses might have had the sense of too soon, too late, smart as Moses is about 120 years old at this point, which is just a reminder that it's never too late to seek wisdom. The Hebrew word for wisdom is *chokmaâh*, translated here as wise. The basic meaning of *chokmaâh* is to have a skill, it is the very word that Moses used as in the Book of Exodus, for the skill that workers have to make elaborate vestments for the priest.

It is this skill that people have for working gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood in constructing the tabernacle there in the wilderness, it is the *chokmaâh* skill for embroidery fine linen and yarn. You can find *chokmaâh* all the way to Exodus chapters 28 through 36, if you wanna look for it. But *chokmaâh* is the skill, it is the skill to take materials at hand and to make something beautiful. So here in this prayer, Moses is praying for *chokmaâh* to live life skillfully, to live life, so as to make something beautiful. It's a great prayer to pray. Notice that Moses connects living life with *chokmaâh*. Moses connects that with counting our days, there's a link here, so he prays, teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart, a heart of *chokmaâh*.

Now when it comes to counting, well, we learned to count when we were children, so counting is something we already know how to do. Moses is asking God for something more, he's asking God to teach us something that only God can teach us, he's asking God to teach us how to count our days, so as to embrace what it means to be human and to have only a finite number of days to live. Teach us Lord. Teach us. Earlier in this Psalm Moses reflects on the shortness of life. Too soon, old. Moses says in Verses 5-6, he says, Our days are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning, in the morning, it flourishes and is renewed in the evening it fades and withers. Yes, Moses. Too soon old, we are.

You see that this is a prayer for God, to teach us, to teach us how to think rightly about the time that we do have. To teach us to treasure, to buy up each moment and use it, rightly. Teach us what it means to make the most of every day that is *chokmaâh*, that is living skillfully. Lord teach us. When we're young and we just kind of think we will live here forever. My late wife, Melody and I, we divided life up BC and AC. Life before cancer and life after cancer, and we were agreed that life after cancer... well, it was a lot more difficult than life before cancer. But we were agreed that life after cancer was fuller, richer. Why? Well, because we were counting our days, we only had so

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many, and that meant we suddenly came awake to learn to see the beauty in every moment, to see the beauty in every sunrise, to see the beauty in every plain, ordinary, humdrum day that we had.

They are a precious... That's why I often say that the years I worked with hospice were some of the happiest years of my life. Why? Why? Because everyday I was with people who were counting the days, people who actually knew they were terminal, hey, we're all terminal. But being on hospice, they were just a little more aware of the fact of life. I like to think that I gained some wisdom working with hospice people, as most of them were counting their days and living with a little more skill, and from hospice patients, I learned, I learned five things that we need to say before we die, we need to say... Forgive me. I forgive you. I love you. Thank you. Goodbye.

Five things we need to say in counting our days, but you know in time, I learned that there was also a sixth thing we need to say, we need to also learn to say, I forgive me. I forgive me by God's grace. I can say that I forgive me as I am so freely and fully forgiven by our Father in heaven, and I learned not to wait to until I am in hospice to say often those six things as they make life so much better... Forgive me. I forgive you. I love you. Thank you. Goodbye. And yes, I forgive me.

Well, I like this prayer of Moses as I'm learning not to treat time so casually. Times the of stuff, of life. And we must pray to really know that we have limited time here to do what we have intended to do, and we have limited time here to prepare for that wondrous Life to come, and we could start with those around us, we can start with those around us making sure that with them we say the things that we need to say.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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