

# Numbering our days unto wisdom (i)(Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [ 0 : 00 ]     The text I have on my mind this morning is found in the 90th Psalm.  
Psalm 90 and words that are found in the 12th verse. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.  
So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.  
These, of course, as you know, are the words of that great man of God, Moses, who was the author of this very striking and wonderful psalm.  
And he was a man, you might say, almost, we might judge him to be one, that scarcely needed to pray a prayer like this.
- [ 1 : 31 ]     Because the word of God reveals to us, through its pages, how wonderful his days were. He had a wonderful life. Various indeed in experience, but remarkable in degree and significance.  
And you might say, well, if I was Moses, if I had the same life or experience as Moses had, I should hardly be praying a prayer like this.  
So teach us to number our days that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom.  
But the very fact that it is Moses that is uttering these words of our text should impress us with the importance of the words themselves.
- [ 2 : 45 ]     And I want, therefore, to consider this morning, in our meditation upon these words, the great necessity and importance of being, first of all, taught by God.  
And then what follows that teaching is also equally of a great importance. And that is to number our days.  
Now, Moses was not thinking when he prayed this prayer, like a good many people do think, how much longer have I got in this world, in this life.  
They would like to know how long they have. That wasn't in the mind of Moses for one moment. What he wanted to be taught and understand was the value of his days, the significance of his days.  
To be able to put a right estimation upon experience that he had passed through in the course of his life, through the days of his life.
- [ 4 : 25 ]     Now, as I was coming along, I was thinking that this is the last Lord's Day of another year. And people are bound to look back over a course of time when we come to a stage or period such as this.  
We think, what have we been doing in this year that is now almost drawing to a close? How can we really estimate the importance of it?  
We may very well miss the significant aspects of this year. that if we would know and be able to evaluate the real experience and the real nature of those things we have been passing through.

Like Moses, we need God to teach us. We haven't sufficient wisdom of our own to really estimate and put a right value upon the things that we have passed through.

So teach us to number our days. My wife was saying, you will of course continue the messages of Christmas.

[ 6 : 11 ] Well, I preached to you people, most of you, last Lord's Day about the wonderful coming of the Lord Jesus into this world.

And again on Thursday, we had a service devoted to that message. And I felt constrained this morning to cast a look backwards over the year that is now nearly at an end.

And to think of the days, the outstanding days. The days that God has made precious and important to us in our lives.

And we want the Lord to teach us what those days really mean. Their significance and their value.

Now let us look for a moment at Moses. What a strange and wonderful life he had. And it was divided equally by periods of 40 years.

[ 7 : 31 ] He started off, as you know, and with a marvelous miracle really. He was brought up in the house of Pharaoh, greatest throne of the day in which he lived.

He was steeped in all the learning and all the advantages of Egyptian culture.

he had everything that he could have wished for within his reach. You may depend, there would be nothing denied the man, the young man, while he was steeped in the luxurious position of being Pharaoh's daughter, the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

And having all the advantages of royalty at his command. Forty years he enjoyed this way of life, this experience.

Well now, you'd say, does anyone need God to teach them? Surely that is the most advantageous position anyone could come into, possibly.

[ 9 : 01 ] To be taken from a poor, lowly home, as it was, where Moses was born, and elevated to the highest place and position in the land, to be steeped in all the wisdom, knowledge, luxury of Pharaoh's court.

You might say, do we need anything to tell us that that must be a most wonderful, remarkable, and outstanding experience?

You see, this man says this, so teach us to number our days. In other words, teach us, Lord, to understand and put a right value and a real value upon such things that we pass through our days.

Our lives are made up of days. You may, some of you, have an outstanding day. One was no doubt an outstanding day to come halfway across the world yesterday, on Christmas Day.

That will be a day to remember. But there are spiritual days, days in which the Lord comes and speaks a word and deals with us in our needy case, applies the word of truth to our hearts and consciences, so that we cannot lose sight of the fact.

[ 10 : 45 ] It's an outstanding reality and experience. And we say that is one of the days of the Son of Man on the earth.

One of the days when we came into close contact with the Lord Jesus. and there will never be a day like that in all your experience.

But so many people, they live their days, they look at them, they think that they're made up of this material advantage.

They are constituted by this or that privilege or abundance. And they think those are the outstanding days when I gained a little of this world's goods or when I had some special enjoyment, some outstanding scene or experience.

But Moses puts all that on one side and he says so teach us to number our days, to put a right value and a real value on our days.

[12:07] Well then, forty years he was therefore in the king's pharaoh's court, protected and having all the advantages as I have been saying, that a royal heir to the throne would undoubtedly enjoy nothing too much for him to receive.

If he asked for it he would have it and forty years he went on enjoying this great outstanding privilege and then there came a time when he had to leave it all, turn his back on it all and go out from it and go out into complete utter poverty to go into the backside as the word of God describes it of a desert and to occupy himself with the most common occupation that could ever be the lot and portion of man to be employed a shepherd a shepherd wandering in a desert minding a few sheep for forty years or people will say well here is a total extremity here is a complete opposite condition of life and experience yes it was but Moses wanted to be able to value and to see the difference and to know the cause of that difference and to put a real and a right value upon it so he was forty years then in the desert in

Midian unknown quite oblivious to all the wonders and wealth that was going on in Egypt and all other parts of the world until one day all of a sudden that forty years comes to an end and he comes to an end in this way he is passing through and no doubt he has passed through this area time and time again with the sheep he has seen a bush there recognized it knows its dimensions he has no doubt observed it as he goes along this particular time after doing so for forty long years he suddenly sees that bush burning and he looks the second time at it it would not be a common sight no doubt in a desert to see a burning bush but what was a most uncommon sight was to see that that bush was not being consumed it was burning all right but it was not being destroyed a strange phenomena presented itself to his eyes it was a burning bush without being consumed and like you and me seeing something that is totally outstanding unusual and unusual

Moses drew near to see more closely what the cause of this strange sight phenomena was and as he did so he hears the voice of God Moses God was there to bring an end to that forty years of privation and ignominy and seclusion he was there to give him another forty years of life and to begin it by commanding him to go forth and to go into the very corpse that he had escaped from willingly forty years before you see he says now so teach us to number our days now if we can see we do see in the word of God what

God was doing you know was first of all he was training his servant in all the skills and ability of diplomatic service we should say in our modern terms he was bringing him up in a court where he would have the advantage of learning and seeing how royal and state affairs were conducted he would be well versed in all the arts of diplomacy he was undoubtedly a man of great learning and God had equipped him in that forty years with knowledge and ability because God knew this in another forty years he was going to send this very man right back into the court of

[18:16] Pharaoh and he was to say to Pharaoh let my people go and he was to go into all that intrigue and intricate dealings of Moses with Pharaoh and you know as you read in the book of Exodus how involved and how what a strain that must have been and yet God had prepared this man for that very work he had furnished him with all the ability he had stored that up in the forty years that he was in the desert now the time comes when he can use that and he sends him back into the court of Pharaoh and he says to Pharaoh there's one thing my God demands of thee and I am his servant his ambassador and that is

God demands that my people shall be let go you know this people people of Israel were a part of the Egyptian nation they had increased in great numbers and they virtually were a race within a race but they were no small proportions they constituted virtually a sizable part of the nation it was therefore no easy thing to extricate these people from the rest of the nation but God had the man to do it and he sent him with the power his power to accomplish it now you know the last 40 years of Moses life as you know we're all involved in the vast calls and claims of the wilderness journey and all the burdens that he had to bear in carrying a people through a waste howling wilderness to the promised land the land that God had promised to their fathers and you see the difference in those three periods of Moses life and when he comes to the end of them this is what he says so teach me to number my days to number my days to know what the real meaning behind them is to see as we have tried to see this morning how the mighty wonderful hand of

God was shaping determining the course of Moses' life and so as he looks back he can see this but he needs God to teach him this that those days were all days of wonder where God was dealing with him for his own glory and Moses eternal good now I feel this you know this morning as we look back over our own lives how vital and highly significant this prayer is we may think well our lives seem to be a total muddle of things we hardly can sort out or sift things at all well if you feel like that there's no prayer that is more appropriate or desirable for you than this prayer of

Moses so teach us to number our days show us oh lord that we have not been left like a piece of flax on the shores to be tossed about by every returning tide and have nothing fixed or certain about our course but oh lord do teach us to see this that thou hast intervened and made us made our days of value and of importance and significance when we look back over this past year we look at it as a church and people here we've had some wonderful days wonderful days we are abundantly thankful to the lord because of the days that have been outstanding the lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad but we still need we still need to be taught by the lord the real value of these days to know whether they are indeed all part of the lord's wonderful unfolding of his goodness and his mercy now why is it that we need to be taught to number our days surely we've got enough wisdom native intelligence to be able to size up and sum up our lives our days good many people you know they think that they have no need of god in any respect whatever and least wise to be able to evaluate their days we know we've lived in these days we can we can sum them up we don't need god to teach us the truth is this that man is a fallen creature and when man fell he lost all the power to rightly understand first of all god and then his own way and his own life and therefore it is essential that we should be taught of god and you read in the word of god some who had special days wonderful days i think it was hezekiah who wrote the 118th psalm it doesn't give it under the name of hezekiah but so much of that psalm was in the language of hezekiah that i cannot but feel the possibility is there that he wrote the psalm what does he say this is the day the lord hath made we will rejoice and be glad in it this is the day that the lord hath made well that means to say the hezekiah was taught of the lord that a day in his life was an outstanding one which god had made and made to be used and to benefit his life and the life of his people yes we do need then

the lord to teach us and that's the second thing i want to speak about just briefly this morning what a profound wonderful fact it is that the lord doth teach his people even the disciples that were so close to the lord jesus they had to come to him and say to him lord teach us to pray well you would think almost that men like that would hardly need to pray a prayer of that kind to the lord jesus surely they were outstanding men they would be so close and so near to the lord jesus they would they would be almost above their fellow men in the art and knowledge of prayer but they came to him and they said this lord teach us how to pray teach us you know the lord jesus promised a very wonderful promise he took it from the old testament scriptures and he says this all thy children shall be taught of the lord how many parents have not prayed again and again that that might be fulfilled in their family all their children should be taught of the lord sometimes it looks as if it's going to be an impossibility the most unlikely thing that ever could take place and yet it comes around in a most wonderful way and manner god's times are not our times we would like to all arrange and fix things in our own little judgment and understanding but god does not deal with us like that he has his own way and he has his own time but here is the promise that is unaltered all thy children shall be taught of the lord and great shall be the peace of thy children love and belief in god and in christ how can two walk together and set their be agreed yes my friends it's a wonderful mercy to be taught of the lord this is the great need that we have it is so apparent as we look out into the world today the general trend of things in the world in the professing world in what we may call the christian world so called of course one of the great things that seems to be lacking in that world is the real teaching of god now there's one thing i pray for and pray for it constantly and that is this that the ministry here might be a teaching ministry that is to say though it's very frail and poor

[ 30 : 38 ] and weak i hope that the lord will make it to the people that come here a play a teaching ministry that they might be taught of the lord and taught the truth as it is in jesus now we were reading this morning what paul says in colossians about those days he warns the people there he says let no man judge you about these days he says like the sabbath day or the new moon and so on he says let no man judge you and he says let no man judge you these things are not all important they are only to perish with the using and he says this the reason why he says let no man judge you is because he says also in that wonderful chapter he says christ has died he has died for you and he has blotted out by his death the ordinances and everything that was against you well if you are harnessed with that great hope what does it matter about people who may judge you they will judge you of course but he says let no man judge you at least this is what he really means let no man affect you by their judgment if you have got christ if you have got that hope in his glorious redemption if you believe that he has blotted out your sins and carried them and nailed them to his own cross at calvary you've got something that may make you enable you to look the world in the face and whatever may be ranged against you in judgment you can condemn discard and disregard let no man judge you you may be sure they will they'll judge you on all kinds of issues on points on these details on as paul says here on the new moons the sabbath days they're only a shadow if people come along and say well you don't keep these things properly or rightly well let no man judge you you've got something far far greater you've got

Christ you've got his glorious salvation his redemption and having that what does it matter what men may think and what men may do so teach us to number our days i trust my friends we may be given help and strength to look back over this year and over further still in some cases to those outstanding days they'll never be erased you know they will remain with you till life shall end and you'll see them in glory as one of those great days on earth when the Lord taught you to number your days may God add his blessing amen