



Summer Song

Part 1 – Number Your Days

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We're going to jump in today with the very start of this series. It's my favorite Psalm; it's Psalm 90. It's the only Psalm written by Moses. If you have your Bible, I'm going to ask that you turn to Psalm 90. If you don't have a Bible, we will have it on the screen for you.

We are going to be talking today about the value of time. We're going to be talking about aging. How many of you are excited to start the summer talking about aging?

A couple of months ago – I think it was March – my dad was in the hospital for a few days. It was a Sunday afternoon and I went in to be with him. I'm sitting there with him, reading him his last rights and asking him where the accounts are and stuff. No... I wasn't doing that. He was going to be fine. But Jackie, who just sang that last song, and her son Jaren who is 6 ½ years old... The kid is going to be on stage at some point in his life because he walks into the room. He doesn't walk into the room; he busts into the room, walks right up to my dad's bed, and this is the first question he asks: "How old are you?" My dad tells him he is 67. Jaren responds "Oh..." Let me interpret a 6 ½ year old's mind for you *Your best days are behind you. This is probably it, isn't it?*

It was St. Patrick's Day, so I bought my dad St. Patrick's Day cookies from Sugar Leaf and Jaren, just making himself at home, reaches over and grabs one of the cookies and starts eating it. I'm just thinking he's probably thinking *You're never going to enjoy this, so I might as well jump into it.*

Whether you are 80 or 6 1/2, today's talk is important because we are going to look at our days, not just our years. A lot of times when we talk about time and aging, we think in terms of years. But today we are going to look at making the most of our time and making the most of our day. This message is called – straight from the scripture and we will see it in Verse 12 – *Number Your Days*.

I want to start with probably my favorite quote of all time on time. I've used this in so many messages and articles and stuff. I love this quote by A.W. Tozer. *Time is a resource...* so it's a commodity, as Benjamin Franklin put it. Just like you would take care of investment portfolios, you need to look at time in the same manor. It's a resource. Don't you love how I add to what pastors are saying? These guys are sages and I have to just keep telling you more of what they really meant when they said this. So let me just read it.

Time is a resource that is non-renewable and non-transferable. You cannot store it up, slow it up, hold it up, divide it up, or give it up. You can't hoard it up or save it for a rainy day. When it's lost, it is unrecoverable. When you kill time, remember that it has no resurrection.

Have you ever heard anyone say "Man I wish we had more time"? "We're wasting time." That's a mom right there, right? "We're wasting time." "Time sure flies." Here is the big lesson for today and here's how Amy and I are trying to recalibrate and reprioritize our lives. We know that God wants us to enjoy a life in which time is not the enemy. I love talking about time because we are all on the same page. Whether you have eight kids or no kids, whether you are married or single, you still have the same 24 hours in a day.

Parents with multiple kids are going "That's just not true. Don't you dare compare what I do with a single person because I give all of my time away. I have no time for myself." But you have the exact same amount of time. Today we are going to see that you are responsible for your time. You are the one that decides what to do with your time and you need to be taking time seriously. This is a great message to start summer as we all prepare to be lazy on the weekends, as we all head to the lake, and we all rest. We've even changed our church plan. It's now called Simple Summer and we kind of scale things back. Why? That's because everybody else is scaling things back. We are going to see the value of that as well. So God wants us to enjoy life.

We're going to jump right in to the first two verses of Psalm 90. What I love about Psalm 90 is it's what you would call a community lament. They are lamenting; the children of Israel are sorrowful about their days. They are looking at their days and they are saying "We've had some rough times. Life is difficult, life is painful." As you study through Exodus and you read the account of the children of Israel, you see there were plenty of times they were whining. When God preforms one of the greatest miracles of the Bible – parting the Red Sea – they cross over onto dry land and it swallows up the Egyptian army. When they get to the other side, they have a worship service. They are recognizing the fact of who God is and how he delivered them from bondage. They have this worship service, they know God is God and he has delivered them and he is their rescuer. They know that with a strong hand, he bought them out, but a few days later, they were hungry and it wasn't a few days removed from that worship service that they were already whining again about their condition. It was a matter of days. We're not talking weeks or months, but days later that they are whining.

So Verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 90 establish the Lord in our lives as that place of rest, that place you and I go to when the grind of life, when the pain of life, when the sorrow and the agony of life hits us. Who do we turn to when we feel whiny? It's not our spouse, not our children, not our parents, but where do we go when life is exhausting, when we feel we've wasted our time, when we look back over our life and we live with regrets? Who do we turn to?

Look at Verses 1 and 2. Again, this is written by Moses. Of 150 Psalms that we have, this is Psalm 90, the only one written by Moses. It's a lament that he's writing. When I see him as the author of this, I picture him... I don't just call him Moses; I call him Daddy Moses because he's the one leading all of these whiny children. He's the one leading them and I know it's the psalm of a parent...

Let's put this in a family perspective here. It's the psalm of a parent who is looking for a renewed sense of purpose. Does any parent relate to that? It's like you look back and you're like "Oh my goodness, we could have done a whole lot better with this child." "Our last born has a lot more hope than this one." "We learned a lot with this one, but now we have this one..." You think about how you spent your time with your children because it went so quickly and now you need that renewed sense of purpose. You are going to see that build up in 17 Verses of Psalm 90.

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Whatever our circumstance, whether we were free or in bondage, you are the one we turn to. You are the one we find rest in.

2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. "Everlasting to everlasting you are God" is very important to understand because that's going to contrast with Verses 3 through 12 as it looks at the mortality of man, as it looks at our condition compared to God. Everlasting to everlasting he is eternal.

Here is the big idea that we are going to get as we go through the next several verses. This is one of my favorite sayings as well. **The days go slow, but the years go fast.** And all the parents said... Amen. The days drag on at times. How many of you have had a day lately where you're thinking the day will never end. Then you look back and your thinking *Where did the years go? I was a kid last week.*

This week, I've been gathering up gray hair down this side of my beard that Amy thinks is pretty awesome. She thinks it's hot, so I just let it go. I trim around it. I left that gray; I want it to fill in. I pulled out the trimmer and I didn't have the guard set right. I started to trim and it shaved off a spot down to the skin, so I shaved it all off. I came out of the bathroom and Corynn was surprised. I go "Don't I look younger?" She goes "Uhhhhh..." So that was on Wednesday. It's starting to grow back and the gray is starting to come back in. I'm 41 years old and yesterday I was 20.

I went bluff jumping last night with my kids. Amy takes the boat and I dive off... I didn't dive off; I had to do it like the seals. I have to sit down on the side of the boat and turn around and fall back in. I used to dive off, but I have to be careful because I'm 41.

We get over to the bluff and the kids just scamper up it. In my mind, I could scamper up this thing. I put my hand down and the water is about that far above the rocks and I put this knee up and it hurt. The kids are already up there, yelling for me to hurry up. "Give me a second!" I can't figure out how to do it. I think it was just last year I was able to get right up there. And now it hurts so I have to turn around, pop myself up on the rock, spin my leg around... Does anybody else do this? I finally get up to the top and I'm out of breath. The kids are asking if I'm ready to jump. That'll be the easiest part of everything. All you do is jump. You walk over to the deal and you just jump. Then you come up to the top of the water and you're just floating, feeling like you just did a marathon. I just climbed up a mountain and jumped into the water and I'm wiped out.

Years ago, I had a friend... He was in his 70s when I was in my teens. We used to do landscaping together. His name was Howard. I would open the back of the truck and, at 17, I would run and jump

off the deal. Every time I did that, Howard would go “Oh, man, you are going to regret that one day. You need to take better care of your body.” But when you’re young, there is no sense of time.

But as you get middle-aged... I had to get rid of my favorite study Bible this week. It’s the ESV Study Bible. You’ve learned from it for years. You’ll get none of the notes out of that Bible anymore in my sermons because I can’t read the fine print. I have bifocals now, but I’m sitting there trying all kinds of angles to be able to read it. And it’s heavy too. We can’t even carry such a heavy load. All of that to say when did you turn 50? When did you turn 60? It was right after your 20th birthday, it was right after your 30th birthday. Some of you who have fewer years in front of you than you do behind and you are going “You have no idea; wait until you hit 70 and you’re not longer even reading; you’re listening to book tapes.” That day is coming for you as well. The days go slow... The years are fast; they speed by. Now look at that in the context of Psalm 90: 3 through 12.

3 You turn people back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, you mortals.” That’s one of my favorite words describing the human condition. We are mere mortals. **4 A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by...** Going back to the everlasting to everlasting. Eternal God is not bound by time like you and I, as mortals, are bound by time. **...or like a watch in the night. 5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—they are like the new grass of the morning: 6 In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.** Now it’s comparing the day and the year. Our time is quick. We looked at this last year with the eternal time line and our life is just this little red spot on it.

7 We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. 8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. This is Moses on behalf of the people lamenting over their days, lamenting over their sin, lamenting over their brokenness before God. **9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.**

10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty... I want make sure you know this is not a promise. He is just saying that typically you are going to get seventy years, eighty **if your strength endures.** So if you’ve done well and you have the strength and can climb a bluff, you can maybe make it to eighty. **...yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow...** They are anguish, they’re difficulty, they’re pain. There’s a challenge to this life in the seventy to eighty years that we have.

I have a friend who is going through a difficult, painful time now in the latter years of his life. Another friend of mine, recounting that, said that if you compare birth and death, we don’t get in this world or out of this world easy. It’s full of sorrow and trouble.

...for they quickly pass, and we fly away. 11 If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Then Verse 12 is where we are going to spend some time. So in light of all of this, God, you are the one we come to for rest in difficult times. You’re the one we come to in the grind of life. You’re everlasting to everlasting. **12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

That's what we want to spend some time doing this morning: numbering our days, making the most of our days, making the most of our time. We just want to give you some very practical ways and again more props to show you how we do that.

1. Turn each day into an adventure.

I want to share this very first one with you because it's been something Amy and I have... We have the sacred echo going on in our life right now. I shared this with you last fall. Margaret Feinberg wrote the book called *Sacred Echo*. She says it's just when God begins to speak to you and this message pops up everywhere. You read a verse in your devotions and then you go meet a friend and that friend tells you about a verse they read this morning and it's the same verse. It's just that moment. And then you go over to your parents' house and their cat calendar has the exact same verse written on it. Everywhere you turn, this message is hitting you. For Amy and me, the sacred echo lately has been this word called adventure. The idea is that our Christian faith is an adventure. God has us here for seventy or eighty years, not meant to live on my own, for myself, by myself, but to live out, making him known and bringing glory to him. How do we do that in this adventure?

One of the things we are taking very seriously is we want to accumulate experiences more than possessions. I read a study yesterday... Science is even proving this now. You and I prefer and find greater joy in experiences than we do in things. You've always kind of known that, but the science is now proving that. You buy a television and in a month, you kind of have disdain towards that television.

It's different with your experiences. The example they used in the study I read this week was Disney World. If you really think about it, actually being at Disney is no fun. It's crowds and long lines, standing on the surface of the sun. That's what Disney really is if you think about it. They said for most people, the actual walking through Disney, that experience... I've been there. I've stood there in line for an hour in 105 degree humidity with my family and Amy and I look at each other like *we've made a terrible mistake. What are we doing? Why would we spend our children's college fund on this? This doesn't make any sense.* But then when we leave, we're thinking it was awesome. When you get in the parking lot into the air conditioning...

They said we anticipate experiences and on the back end of experiences, we enjoy and reflect on them. In our minds, as mere mortals, we have a better perspective on the actual event. You have the same feeling when you go camping. You're sitting out there in your lawn chair in the heat wondering what you are doing. We're camping; it's what we should do. You talk better about camping after you're done camping or while you're shopping for an RV. You have a better perspective of experiences. Experiences mean more to us than stuff is the bottom line.

So when Amy and I get up each day, we think about how we can make this an adventure. So part of the sacred echo has been making sure we experience more than we buy. We'd rather purchase experiences than buy stuff. We're ready to throw all of our technology in Taney Como. Is anybody else with me on this? Remember how we used to burn the heavy metal CDs in youth group growing up? We should just throw our technology off the bridge one day into Taney Como just for fun.

We've been reading this book called *A Trip Around the Sun*. I highly encourage this book because if you want your faith to be an adventure, this is it. Whatever your business is tomorrow, instead of encountering somebody and wondering what you can get from this person or what you can sell this person, take the experience and make it an adventure, saying what can I learn from this person? That's what I love about a church. The stories out here and the experiences out here... We spent time with Jim Sedlacek this week. He's 78 years old. I learn more from him in two hours just asking questions. He's been coming to Branson since 1974. He started camping in Branson in 1974. He did that for six years on Table Rock and then he bought a place. He got out of the tent.

So when you get up each day, you ask the question: "Who am I going to meet today?" "Who am I going to learn something from today?" "What challenges are going to hit me today that I get to respond to?" Most of us get up with the grind. It's like the same ole, same ole, doing the exact same thing. I'm going to get in the same car with 163,000 miles on it, hope it gets me to work. I have my same dang Tupperware over here in my lunch box that I'm going to eat at lunch. Then I'm going to go home and mow the lawn, go to bed, and then get up and do it again.

How do you break out of that? Take everything that you're experiencing and make it an adventure. Whoever you're with and whatever you're doing, you are spending time asking the question "Lord, what are we doing today?" "What's going to happen today?" "Who are you sending across my path today?" You are going to find that you meet crazy people every single day. And you get to learn from them and you get to hear their experiences. You start out enjoying their adventure and then they join your adventure, but you can't have an adventure until you create something called margin.

2. Create space between your load and your limit.

In order to make the most of your time and to make the most of each day, you have to have space to enjoy it. If you have margin and you run into somebody at the grocery store, you are able to stop and talk and learn from them for a little bit. I want margin so when I go visit someone in the hospital, I can just hang out there for a little bit. When they come in and want to do a procedure, I can go down and get a cup of coffee and come back up and spend time just talking.

This is the problem. Most of us don't have this margin. You know what your limit is. Your limit is your physical limit, your relational limit, your emotional limit. They are all tied together, so you know when you need sleep, you know when you need to eat, and you know that when your physical limit gets reached. Your load hits your physical limit and now your emotional limit is affected because you get grouchy. So when your child is in bad need of a nap... You know that when your two year old is reaching their physical limit and you ignore that limit, you're going to regret it in about an hour because they are going to have a meltdown. That's how they are designed.

I always like to use a balloon to reference this. I always have to do things that wind me during a service, so here we go. Now the thing you need to know about a balloon is we all have the same size balloon. This balloon represents the time in a day that you have. Bigger families don't have bigger balloons. Smaller families or singles don't have smaller balloons. We all have the exact same balloon – 24 hours in a day.

But what we are great at is knowing this balloon has a limit. You can only put so much air in it and then it's going to pop. You and I are great at adding things into the balloon. That's easy because we say "Yes" to everything. Now what's really fun is when you're blowing this up by somebody. Look at how Pat is reacting to me putting too much air in this thing. That's how we should be responding every day when we keep saying "Yes" to stuff. Pat Kershaw just kicked me in the chin. Only Pat Kershaw has permission to do that at Woodland Hills Family Church. This overinflated balloon is freaking out this third row.

This is really what we do every single day. We add and add and add. When we get to this point, there is not one person in the family that says "Hey, maybe we should let some air out." No, we need to do more. And it's never going to be your kids. Last night, we're telling the kids it was time to go home and they were like "Five more minutes!" If I hear "Five more minutes" one more time in my house, I'm going to punch myself in the face. I'm so tired of hearing "Five more minutes." Because five minutes is another puff of air into the balloon. We can't make the most of each day if we cram everything we possibly can into that day. You become an unpleasant person.

Last year, I realized our balloon was to the point of popping and I started trimming back my life quite a bit. One elder came up to me and said "I just want you to know that in the last two months of you trimming things back, you've been a lot more pleasant individual to be around." The problem is when you keep putting more and more air in the balloon... You and I need to create more space between our load and our limit. Every day, if you are going to make the most of your day, you need to make sure that your load does not hit your limit.

3. Say "No" to time robbers.

Every time you say "No..." Doesn't that feel good? That feels good. Then, think about saying "No" to time robbers in a culture where animals and people as slaves were used until they dropped and then they just got new ones. God comes in and it's the fourth commandment and he says "Remember the Sabbath." That's no longer how we are going to treat the household. The Sabbath which is the longest of the Ten Commandments says now one day a week you are actually going to take the whole day off. The Sabbath is we say "No" to everything.

This is why Amy and I make sure we have a Sabbath. One day a week, we let our maid off, our butler off, our servants, our ox, our donkey... They are all off. They don't have to do anything. We have 11 chickens and we tell them "You don't have to lay today." The whole point is if you want to be productive in these six days, you'll be more productive if you establish this rhythm of rest, if you learn to say "No."

I'm getting so good at saying "No" that I need to be reminded that I probably should say "Yes" to a few more things. When I say "No," the quality of my relationships goes up. The quality of time spent with people in a grocery store goes up. The quality of time interacting with someone as you're getting gas and you're passing by someone you know in a parking lot... Margin allows you to stop and enjoy that moment right there and make the most of that moment. You have the margin to do this; you're not in a rush.

Marginless is being 30 minutes late to an appointment because you were 20 minutes late to the other appointment because you were 15 minutes late leaving home, and then you get caught in traffic and whose fault is it? It's traffic's fault. Margin says "This traffic ain't bothering me." Margin says "I've got a little extra time; I can handle this." That's the beauty of margin; it helps you make the most of the day.

4. Decide, rather than slide, your way through the day.

Does anybody here open up their email in the morning and there are like five people that have given you homework? I'm still shocked by this. I have a day planned and then someone says "Hey, would you do..." "I need you to write..." "I need you to say..." "It only needs to be 500 words." For me to write 500 words takes half a day. I'm going to say no to that right there. "Why would you say no to that opportunity?" It's because I want margin. So we are deciding what the most important thing is.

Part of the sacred echo for Amy right now is this idea of a home team. You should be spending 90% of your time with your home team – the people who are investing in your children, the people who are investing in your family, the people that you trust. But because we say "Yes" to everything and say "No" to nothing, we have so many relationships. We have thousands of friends on social media. We spread ourselves out there and the quality of our relationships has plummeted. We need to decide rather than slide into our relationships. We need to decide rather than slide into our daily schedule.

In ten years of ministry, I'm looking back at a lot of professional accomplishments that I've had and half of those I've just slid into. "I don't really enjoy that one thing." Amy's says "Let's start making decisions and then as opportunities come, if it fits, we'll decide on it. If it doesn't, we're not going to say "Yes" to it just because it's an opportunity and slide our way through it." That's what gets you to the place of marginless. That's what gets you to the place where there's nothing left and your balloon is about to pop. That's when it gets bad.

5. Refuse to feed regrets and ask Jesus to redeem your remaining days.

This is where we go from Verse 12 on. Teach us to number our days. How do we make the most of our days? How do we make the most of that, Lord, when we have so many regrets, when we can spend the day looking in the rearview mirror at everything we've done wrong and all the poor decisions that we've made? "Now I'm 40, 50, 60... My best days are behind me." That is not what we are going to read in the rest of this Psalm. In the rest of this Psalm it's "Lord, would you do something with the remaining days that I have? Would you help me with this heart of wisdom? Would you help me to know now how to move forward tomorrow?"

13 Relent, LORD! Uncle, Lord, we get it. ***How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants.***

14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love... And now every lament Psalm goes from this place of "I am hurting, the enemy is winning, God, you don't seem to care." Those are the three main parts of a lament. But it always comes back around to this confession of trust. "I know who you are. I know the life I have in you" and that's where we're going in the remaining verses.

14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.

16 May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. 17 May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.

May we learn from our regrets. We're not going to feed them. We're not going to live with those regrets. "Lord, redeem the days ahead. Make the most of these as I wake up tomorrow, may tomorrow be a brand new day. May this day be an adventure. God, what are we going to do together? How do I get to serve you? Who are you going to bring across my path that I have margin now in my life that I can pause and join the adventure with that person? Who can I invite onto my adventure?" This is when life gets good. God wants us to enjoy a life in which time is not the enemy.

So how do you really value time? If you really want to understand the value of a year, ask the student who failed a grade. If you want to realize the value of a month, ask the parents who delivered a premature baby. If you want to realize the value of an hour, ask the business man who missed the flight, causing him to miss a meeting, causing him not to get the next deal. If you want to realize the value of a minute, ask the man in a restaurant who had a heart attack and just so happened to be sitting near an EMT who was proficient in CPR. If you want to realize the value of a second, ask the family who just barely missed a head-on collision. If you want to realize the value of a millisecond, ask the Olympic silver medalist. That's the value of time. Am I making the most of time?

If you really want to realize the value of time, you must listen to country music. I can't explain it any clearer than that. The songs that we have... How about *Days Go By*, by Keith Urban. As I share these, I want you to join in; just sing. Sing out loud. This is Keith Urban.

I'm changing lanes, talking on the phone, driving way too fast. But somewhere in the race we run, we're coming undone. Days go by, I can feel them flying by like a hand out the window in the wind as the cars go by. It's all we've been given so we better start living right now because days go by. I love these two lines. *We think about tomorrow then it slips away.* We've been talking about the past. We haven't even talked about those that are constantly looking out there. Are we making the most of today? Right now, what adventure are we on right now? *We talk about forever, but we've only got today.*

One of my favorite songs is by Trace Adkins. You've heard it: *You're Gonna Miss This*.

She was staring out that window, of that SUV Complaining, saying I can't wait to turn 18. She said "I'll make my own money, and I'll make my own rules." Mamma put the car in park out there in front of the school. Then she kissed her head and said "I was just like you."

You're gonna miss this. You're gonna want this back. You're gonna wish these days hadn't gone by so fast. These Are Some Good Times. So take a good look around. You may not know it now, but you're gonna miss this.

Before she knows it she's a brand new bride in a one-bedroom apartment, and her daddy stops by. He tells her it's a nice place. She says "It'll do for now." Starts talking about babies and buying a house. Daddy shakes his head and says "Baby, just slow down."

You're gonna miss this. You're gonna want this back. You're gonna wish these days hadn't gone by so fast. These Are Some Good Times. So take a good look around. You may not know it now, but you're gonna miss this.

Five years later there's a plumber workin' on the water heater. Dog's barkin', phone's ringin' one kid's cryin', one kid's screamin'. She keeps apologizin'. He says "They don't bother me. I've got 2 babies of my own; one's 36, one's 23."

You're gonna miss this. You're gonna want this back. You're gonna wish these days hadn't gone by so fast. These Are Some Good Times. So take a good look around. You may not know it now, but you're gonna miss this.