

The Frailty of Life

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I have many scriptures which I intend to read, but not at this point in time. I want to read them as we go along. So, let's have another hymn. This time I want us to sing 3-4-9. 3-4-9 My soul, repeat his praise, whose mercies are so great, whose anger is so slow to rise, so ready to abate. Verse 4 Man's life is as the grass, or like the morning flower. If one sharp blast sweep o'er the field, it withers in an hour. But thy compassions, Lord, to endless years endure. A hymn by Isaac Watts, and based, I assume, on Psalm 103. 3-4-9 Well, we don't have to use our brains much to realize how short and fragile human life is.

[00:01:07] I have been thinking a little about this, but just before I was asked to speak here, I had attended two funerals, almost on successive days. One was a former boss who was age 71, and the other was someone who had been a Sunday school parent who was age 43. Seeing illness and decline in close family, and those we love, also reminds us of this.

And it's often the case, I find, that much of our prayer meetings are concerned with those who are unwell, or with loved ones of those who've passed away.

When we're young, time passes so slowly, doesn't it? [00:02:05] The life ahead seems so long, almost going on forever. But when we get older, it speeds up, and time passes so quickly. So what seems like a very long time, soon becomes a very short time.

Now, for man in general, death is the only certainty. In fact, it's the most appalling truth that cannot be prevented. Modern medicine, modern technology may delay it, but that's all. Only for a time. Now, we know it wasn't always like that. When God created man, once we read in the first chapters of Genesis, it was when the first man and woman sinned that their relationship with God was broken and death came in. [00:03:06] And of course, since we're all descended from Adam and Eve, death is visited upon us all. And it's something we have to recognise. And I appreciate that this is literally a morbid subject, but it's fundamental. And it's something that so many like to avoid thinking about. But we as believers in the Lord Jesus have no fear of death. But there are issues for us in relation to this truth. Now, of course, scripture comments on this. It comments in quite a few places on the human limitations of our short and frail lives. And to emphasise the truth, we're given pictures. Scripture gives us pictures. Some of the pictures used, some of the scriptural imagery, seems to emphasise the brevity of it all, how short it is. [00:04:13] There are other pictures that seem to emphasise the lack

of real substance to our lives, what impact our lives make. So, this is my topic. My topic is the brevity and frailty of life. And I'm thinking particularly of those scriptures where we're given pictures to emphasise the truth. And this afternoon, I want to see how these scriptures, how the Holy Spirit through the scriptures, brings up the topic, the context in which we find it. And I think there are things that the Lord wants us to learn in connection with this. I believe that as we look at this, we should find, and I think we will find, some interesting and instructive lessons and contrasts. [00:05:14] Now, the truth is used in the scripture in several different ways. We'll look at these. Now, of course, I won't refer to every relevant scripture, and no doubt you'll think when we've finished, he should have talked about this one, and he should have talked about that one. Okay? Forgive me.

Okay, now the first area I want to talk about is this. First of all, the brevity and frailty of life is used as the basis of an appeal to God.

Okay? The brevity and frailty of life is used as a basis of an appeal to God. [00:06:02] And to see this, we'll start in Job. Okay? Now, in Job, we see Job and his friends debating.

And unsurprisingly, the passing of life, the feebleness of man, is a topic that's touched on in their discussion. And Job brings forth several pictures to show his feelings about the speed of life's passing.

Now, I just want to touch on some of these ideas expressed in Job, not to dwell on them. So, Job is suffering so much, and then he's having to listen to the comments and accusations of his friends. Life has is the first of his friends, and Job, in answering what a life has says, comments on the speed of life's passing and its lack of substance.

[00:07:02] Turn to Job chapter 7, and I'm just going to pick up a couple of verses from here. Job 7, and verse 6.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

Oh, remember that my life is wind, mine eyes shall no more see good. Life passes quickly, swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and life is wind.

A weaver's shuttle moves backwards and forwards at great speed to create the cloth. A weaver's shuttle. The other picture here is wind. Now, many translations give breath rather than wind. I think that's probably more accurate. Life is but a breath. [00:08:01] Brief, insubstantial.

And Job feels he has grounds to complain to God about what's happening to him. Verse 11, a couple of verses down, end of the verse he says, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Now, interestingly, if we go on to the next chapter, where Bildad presents his case against Job, he also brings forward the brevity of life. Bildad bases his arguments on received wisdom.

What's been said before? Tradition. He doesn't seem to think through issues. He just generalizes from what's been said in the past. And his argument is, we've been here such a short time, we need to accept the accumulated experience of previous generations. [00:09:05] That's his argument. A sort of collective knowledge built up over generations. So Job chapter 8 and verse 8, this is Bildad talking, he says, For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow. Shall not

they teach thee and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? Our days on earth are but a shadow.

And what does the collective knowledge of previous generations tell Bildad? It says that those who forget God suffer in this life. Well it's a generalization.

It's often true, but certainly not always. And Job later on in the debate points that out. [00:10:03] So Bildad goes from this generalization to maintaining that Job must have sinned greatly in order to be suffering as he was. And then in the next chapter, Job replying to Bildad, he again sees life passing swiftly. He brings in three other pictures to illustrate. Chapter 9, verse 25.

He says, Now my days are swifter than a post or a runner.

They flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. So Job comes up with three more pictures to show the speed at which life passes on. With life moving on uncontrollably fast, we notice just a few verses further down, [00:11:04] he wants someone to come between him and God.

Verse 33, Neither is there any day's man betwixt us that might lay his hand upon both of us.

He's looking for a mediator.

He sees life passing so fast, he wants a mediator.

OK. Now I want to move on to chapter 14. Just one more from Job.

Beginning of chapter 14, he says, Man that is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such one [00:12:03] and bringest me into judgment with thee?

His argument here is that life is so short that God shouldn't intervene and cause him trouble. As I understand this passage, Job is blaming God for what has happened to him and considers it unfair. We have such a short time here, why doesn't God leave us alone? And although we won't read them for time's sake, we find further on, chapter 16, chapter 17, life's brevity is still on Job's mind.

But then after that, there seems to be a change. And Job's faith seems to be coming through more clearly. He gets the point in chapter 19 when he can declare, I know that my Redeemer lives.

And as his focus changes, so his obsession with life's brevity [00:13:01] and frailty, it just seems to fade.

The point I'm making here is that Job is using his recognition of human frailty and the brevity of life as a basis for appealing to God to stay his hand, to show some mercy.

This sort of thing, this sort of recognition, is used in the scriptures elsewhere in a similar sort of way. If we turn over to Psalm 89.

Psalm 89, it's a masculine of Ethan the Ezraite.

Ethan praises God, and then there's a reminder that God made his covenant with David, and it's a permanent covenant. His seed shall endure forever. [00:14:02] Then the tone of the psalm changes.

He says, Thou hast cast us off and abhorred. Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. And he briefly recounts the disasters that have befallen the king and his kingdom. Now, in 1 Kings 4, we see that Ethan the Ezraite was a contemporary of Solomon's. He's described as one of the great wise men, although Solomon himself, it says, was wiser even than he. So this would seem to fix when this was written.

Verse 46.

This is what Ethan writes. How long, Lord?

Will thou hide thyself forever? Shall thou wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is. Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? [00:15:03] Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses which thou swearest unto David in thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants.

The writer wants to see a change. How long before you cease this punishment, Lord? Why don't you answer us?

Why do you hide when we call?

They're suffering reproach as God's faithful people. Now, there is a clear prophetic aspect to this which we won't go into, but they're appealing to the Lord on the basis of the brevity of life and its frailty.

Okay, now let's move on. I want to move on to the second way in which I see the brevity of life as used in scripture. [00:16:02] And here the Holy Spirit uses it to emphasize other truths.

Okay? I'll show you what I mean.

Move over to Psalm 102.

Psalm 102 and verse 11.

And the psalmist says, My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shall endure forever, and thy remembrance unto all generations. Now, there's a lot we could take from this psalm and the context of these words, but for time's sake, I just want to pick up one point. The psalmist sees his days as declining like a shadow, [00:17:04] brief and insubstantial.

But he contrasts this with the Lord.

The Lord endures forever. So there's a clear contrast there between us and the Lord. Now, we know it, of course. Of course we know it. But it's something we need to remember, always remember. When we see and look at our own frail lives, we must remember that our Lord God and Savior is outside of time.

He's everlasting.

So we see this contrast between ourselves and the Lord. He's mortal. We're mortal. Sorry. He's immortal. A basic point that everything flows from that. Turn over to the next psalm.

Psalm 103.

[00:18:02] Now, I want to come back to this psalm later on. But at this point, I want to note the picture that David in this psalm gives us and the contrast. Verse 15.

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children.

His mercy extends from everlasting to everlasting. It's outside of our short time span.

[00:19:04] He is and always will be merciful.

God's mercy is upon those that fear him. So we see this picture of our lives like grass and flowers that grow up, flourish, then wither and fade.

And then the contrast.

The mercy or loving kindness, as some translations put it, of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. OK. I want to go to a third contrast now. Turn over to Isaiah 40. In Isaiah 40, a cry is heard.

Crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Lord and the glory of the Lord will be revealed. [00:20:01] It will be seen by all flesh. It will be seen by all flesh. It will be seen by all flesh. It will be seen by all flesh. Verse 3.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry.

And he said, What shall I cry?

All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, [00:21:02] but the Spirit of the Lord gloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.

So we see this picture of our lives like grass and flowers again that grow up and then wither and fade.

Then Isaiah presents a strong contrast. The grass and flowers quickly wither and fade but the word of the Lord, that lives forever. Now back in Psalm 103 we saw this picture of grass and frail flowers used to contrast our lives with the Lord's everlasting mercy.

Here in Isaiah we see the same picture to contrast our lives with something else that's everlasting.

And this time it's God's word. [00:22:01] And that's what we have to rely on, isn't it? A living and everlasting word. God's full, complete revelation has existed for over 1,900 years now. In that time very many generations have come and gone.

If we were to say that on average each generation lived about 30 years then that's 60 generations, over 60 generations.

People live, they die, and they are here no more. But God's word continues unchanged.

With the world's morality like shifting sands God's word doesn't change.

It gets translated of course but God's word doesn't change. And it's no wonder that God's word seems always to be under attack.

It is really quite extraordinary to think [00:23:02] that back in the Middle Ages the leaders of Christendom, yet so-called Christian leaders, banned God's word in anything other than Latin, a language that ordinary people couldn't understand. And men were burned at the stake for translating and distributing Bibles that ordinary people could understand.

Perhaps things may seem better nowadays. After all, the scriptures are available in very many languages and they can be easily obtained. But now it's the truth of the scriptures that's under attack. Satan convinces the world that the scriptures are no more than a myth. But God's word is God's word.

It's eternal. It's immutable. Now this contrast between our mortality and the immortality of scripture [00:24:04] appears several times.

OK, I want us to just look at another one quickly. 1 Peter 1.

So if we go to the New Testament see what Peter has to say about this. . Verse 23, 1 Peter 1.23.

Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever for all flesh is as grass [00:25:02] and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Peter draws a comparison between seeds. . A corruptible or perishable seed and an incorruptible seed that lasts. The corruptible seed to the basis of our mortal lives and the incorruptible. We are born again by the word of God. And then the contrast is extended into verse 24 between all flesh and the word of God. All living things are mortal their lives like the flower of the field are short the word of God lives forever. So we see this picture of our lives again [00:26:03] as in Psalm 103 and Isaiah 40 They are like grass and flowers that grow up and then wither and fall. And again as in Isaiah 40 the contrast here is with God's word that lives forever.

And that's what we have to rely on a living and abiding word and that's what provides us with new birth a new life The word itself is eternal and our lives coming from our new birth are incorruptible,

permanent, forever.

So what other truths [00:27:01] are we reminded of through mentioning our brief and frail lives?

Well there's one more that I want to look at. I need to turn back to 1 Chronicles 29 for this. 1 Chronicles 29 Near the end of his life David decided he wanted to build a house for God. He wasn't allowed to because he was a man of war but Solomon his son was to build it. David however organised the vast project including the funding it says that he himself gave generously and first all the leaders and then the people also offered willingly and generously.

And in 1 Chronicles 29 David praises the Lord in the congregation of Israel [00:28:02] and in his praise he recognises that what they have been able to give belongs to God anyway.

This is what he says 1 Chronicles 29 verse 13 Now therefore our God we thank thee and praise thy glorious name but who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort for all things come of thee and of thine own have we given thee for we are strangers before thee and sojourners as were all our fathers our days on earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding O Lord our God all this store that we've prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand [00:29:02] and is all thine own our days are a shadow he says a shadow something of no substance passing quickly that's the picture he uses here and David uses that fact to reinforce that it all belongs to God everything all belongs to him it all comes from him even what we give back to him if we like to call it that actually doesn't belong to us it's his everything belongs to him so what have we seen so far let's sort of pull it all together a bit firstly we saw that life's brevity is used as an appeal to God with examples from Job and Asaph secondly we saw this truth used to emphasise other truths [00:30:01] so we saw in Psalm 102 it emphasised that the Lord himself is eternal and then in Psalm 103 it emphasised that God's mercy is everlasting and then in Isaiah 40 and 1 Peter 1 we see it emphasises that God's word is everlasting now I'm going to come to my third section I want us to consider how life's brevity affects God, if I may put it like that what God does is linked in several references to his recognition of our limitations you'll see what I mean in a moment turn over to Psalm 78 [00:31:18] in Psalm 78 Asaph recounts the marvellous things that God did for his people particularly at the Exodus and in the wilderness journey as they get to their promised land and how time and again they were disobedient and rebellious and he notes that God punishes them and then generally when God punishes them then they sought him but in reality their hearts weren't really right with him that's what verses 35 to 37 tell us but, verse 38 But he, being full of compassion [00:32:03] forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not Yea, many a time turned he his anger away and did not stir up all his wrath for he remembered that they were but flesh a wind that passeth away and cometh not again He was merciful he forgave their iniquity many times he turned away his anger we see here he's merciful and he's patient and surely as we see not only his dealings with Israel we can think of the wilderness journey because it's documented so clearly there in the scriptures we can think of when they're in the land it's documented so clearly in the scriptures we can think of Israel subsequent to that or when we look at ourselves what do we see? [00:33:01] we see amazing patience on God's part why is God patient with us? well this gives us a reason God recognises that we are flesh a breath that passes and doesn't come again a breath, that's how short it is a breath, no substance and then it's gone and there's a sense in which the infinite God sees our lives like that because that's the picture he's using in the scriptures and because of our weakness, our frailty he is amazingly patient he is merciful, he forgives one of the distinctions between us humans and angels is our mortality, we grow old and we die they don't another distinction is that God is patient and merciful [00:34:01] towards us rebellious humans and graciously and mercifully provides salvation for us

through our Lord Jesus Christ so God is patient because of our frailty and the brevity of our lives now I want to go back to Psalm 103 where we were earlier for a second example of God reacting to this truth if you like verse 14, again I know we've read it, but we'll read it again verse 14 for, that's the Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust as for man, his days are as grass as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth [00:35:02] for the wind passeth over it and it is gone and the place thereof shall know it no more but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting I should have read verse 13, I apologise like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him for he knoweth our frame he remembereth that we are dust I should have read that as well in this wonderful psalm God is shown having mercy, grace and forgiveness and David blesses God for that and he tells us that the Lord pities us or has compassion on us compassion, that's what the word really means [00:36:03] he has compassion on us, he has real sympathy with us because he knows what we are we're dust as Adam was told after he'd sinned in Genesis 3 from dust you came, and to dust you will return so the picture he's giving us here in this psalm is of a father with a small child weak and pretty powerless yet the object of a father's compassion and love the Lord knows our frame he remembers what we are, he remembers we're dust he remembers what we're made of, he remembers our limitations and it's wonderful, isn't it, to experience the Lord's understanding and compassion and David then brings in the picture we noted earlier of flowers and grass to emphasise the shortness of our lives and our frailty [00:37:11] OK, now I want to come on to our fourth section now this is our last section, you'll be pleased to hear How should we respond?

How does the fact that our lives here are so brief and powerless affect us?

Does it have any implications for the way that we think the way we behave?

Now I'll say before I start, I appreciate that the lessons here are ones that I myself need to learn maybe others do too Let's start in James James chapter 4 [00:38:02] It's been a desire of man right from the fall to be autonomous to be independent of God and of course this has become particularly prominent in this age where in Britain and much of the Western world the God-fearing that there used to be, at least on the surface for many it went deeper has largely disappeared Acknowledging God, attending a place of worship these are very minority pursuits and most will openly state that they do not accept the personal God who we know much of the love of the hypothesis of evolution is that it gets rid of God and so in general [00:39:02] man believes there is no God he is without God and he, man, is therefore in control man wants to be in control he doesn't want to be beholden to any other being other than himself but of course man isn't in control he doesn't even know what will happen tomorrow because our lives are so short and insubstantial even tomorrow is uncertain we don't know the future therefore what James tells us in this passage I'm just about to read to us he says it's totally wrong to make arrogant assumptions James 4 verse 13 Go to now ye that say today or tomorrow we will go into such a city [00:40:02] and continue there for a year and buy and sell and get gain whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away for that ye ought to say if the Lord will we shall live and do this or that but now ye rejoice in your boastings all such rejoicing is evil what is our life? the picture that the Holy Spirit through James paints for us is of a vapour or a mist it's there for a little while and then it disappears that's all that life is no real substance so given that that's what our lives are like none of us can have any grounds at all for boasting James is writing against [00:41:03] pride and arrogant presumption a lack of acknowledgement of our dependence on God your life's uncertain and short he says so always remember you are dependent on God and in fact James here in verse 16 is describing this presumption as evil all such glorying is evil he says it's not wrong to plan for tomorrow of course the point is that our plans must acknowledge that we are in God's hands OK let's move on

as we've noticed a picture of our lives that the Holy Spirit presents several times is that of grass and flowers they grow up but soon fade and die and that's particularly true in hotter areas [00:42:01] in the Middle East this picture being used to show the shortness and frailty of our lives here today look good and healthy but in a very short time some get chopped down some just fade and die so we've seen this picture several times and James uses this picture as well go back to chapter 1 chapter 1 verse 10 But the rich in that he is made low because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat but that it withereth the grass and the flower thereof falleth and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth so also shall the rich man fade away [00:43:03] in his ways so James recounts how when the sun rises with its burning heat the grass withers and the flower fades and he uses that picture to remind us that what we have here the material things we focus on don't last he's talking particularly to the rich but the principles extend to us all we know that Paul writes in 1 Timothy that the love of money is the root of all evil this love drives us to sin we know we can't take our money or possessions with us but it can still so easily be a focus for much of our lives the more we concentrate on earthly possessions the more we've lost when our lives end we are reminded of that parable that the Lord told in Luke 12 about the man with his excellent crops [00:44:03] he decided he would build bigger barns to store it all so he could totally relax without a thought of God or thought of anyone but himself and tonight you will die God says to him he'll be gone and his possessions that he focused so much energy on will be left behind and the Lord draws a distinction between treasure on earth and treasure in heaven the lesson is obvious isn't it our lives here are brief the time when we will be with the Lord is eternal where are we storing our treasure Psalm 90 Psalm 90 in verse 9 [00:45:02] for all our days are passed away in thy wrath we spend our years as a tale that is told the days of our years are three score years and ten and if by reason of strength they be four score years yet it is their strength yet it is their strength labor and sorrow for it is soon cut off and we fly away verse 12 so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom Moses wrote this Moses in spite of the fact that he himself lived 120 years he placed us at 70 years as a normal life span it's soon cut off he says and we fly away earlier on in verse 4 he writes the thousand years in your sight are as yesterday when it's passed [00:46:02] God is outside of time and he notes that God is from verse 2 from everlasting to everlasting a better translation of verse 9 says we spend our years as a passing thought a passing thought that's all momentary, insubstantial what's the lesson? verse 12 so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom how important this is isn't it we must recognize our short and frail existences and make the most of our time teach us to number our days as we know we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to account for our lives and I'm sure that how we use our time will be something that does come out here [00:47:06] OK let's turn back to Psalm 39 Psalm 39 we will notice if we read through it we don't have time to read through it all but we notice that David is suffering the Lord's discipline and he feels it heavy upon him but he's careful not to complain particularly when the wicked are around he has to speak, he has to talk to the Lord verse 3 [00:48:08] at his best state is altogether vanity selah surely every man walketh in a vain show surely they're disquieted in vain he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them and now Lord what wait I for my hope is in thee hand breath my days are a hand breath mine ages as nothing before thee every man at his best state is altogether vanity that's how David describes life here contemplation of life's limits brevity and frailty so where do they drive David to? do they drive him to depression? [00:49:03] no, verse 7 they drive him to the Lord my hope is in thee so when we think about this truth when we think about it all where does it take us? surely it takes us to the Lord the one who is himself everlasting whose word is everlasting whose mercy is everlasting you know there have been those thinkers, philosophers who've been driven to suicide by the futility and pointlessness of a brief life without God and for those who haven't got a relationship with the everlasting God that's all there is it's just futile ok, one more scripture and then we'll close [00:50:03] we've noted that both James and Peter in the New Testament draw our attention to life's

brevity and frailty Paul also does let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 7 he writes we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us earthen vessels a reminder of the clay from which we are formed earthen vessels easily broken [00:51:01] let's go on to the end of the chapter verse 16 for which cause we faint not but though our outward man perisheth yet the inward man is renewed day by day for our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal yet outwardly we fade and perish inwardly the Lord renews us day by day and we look for those things which are unseen and eternal that's what our attitude should be to the brevity and frailty of life looking for those things that last now of course there is an attitude in the world [00:52:02] which is exemplified by Paul's quotation in 1 Corinthians 15 where he says if there is no resurrection then let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die for those of us who trust in the Lord it's completely different our brief lives are a gateway to something that is infinitely better being at home with the Lord forever and ever so it's no wonder that Paul could write to the Thessalonians that they turn to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait his Son for heaven and that's what we look forward to that's what's in store for us marvellous isn't it the Lord Jesus will return to take us to be with him and he's coming soon right please give me one more minute I just want to pull these thoughts together I see that the truth that human life is short and frail is used in at least four major ways [00:53:03] in the scriptures we glanced at firstly we see it used as an appeal to God and we saw some examples of those who suffered asking God to remember what human life is and they appealed to him on that basis then we saw the truth used by the Holy Spirit to emphasise other truths we saw life's brevity contrasted with God himself the eternal God the everlasting God we saw it contrasted with his everlasting mercy we saw it contrasted with his everlasting word and we also saw it used to remind us that everything belongs to him in the third section we saw life's brevity used to explain why God is patient and why he is compassionate towards us [00:54:01] and then we saw how we should react we are totally dependent on God and therefore any sort of arrogant pride is wrong we are warned against the focus on the accumulation of riches here and told to number our days we are here briefly we are responsible for how we use our time and resources and finally we saw that in 2 Corinthians how Paul viewed man's frailty although we are here but briefly and we are weak earthen vessels he says we are renewed spiritually day by day and we look to the things that are unseen those things that really last those things that really matter those are the things that are eternal where our Lord is and where we will be very soon [00:55:03] ok I'd like us to close with 316 number 316 verse 2 says our earthen vessels break the world itself grows old but Christ our precious dust will take and freshly mould he'll give these bodies vile a fashion like his own he'll bid the whole creation smile and hush it's grown 316