

Old Age...Psalm 71

There is something in life that everyone longs for, but no one wants... getting older. When young you want to be older, when you're older you want to be younger.

We live in a time that focuses so much on tomorrow & yesterday. But so little emphasis is ever put on today & eternity. The latter being nearly neglected entirely!

Today's Psalm is often used as a guide to aging well. Some say written David, Jeremiah, but we aren't told who wrote it. It was written by a person who is getting on in years, probably looking at his own expiration date coming soon.

Ever wonder, "what will I be like when I am old?" As we face the possibility of getting "old" we have to ask ourselves... "What should I be doing now to prepare for old age?"

The truth is, ***you will be then what you are becoming now. If you are not becoming a person of faith now, you will not be a person of faith then.***

It's not how you start the race but how you finish. ***If you aren't developing a walk with God now, you won't have one then.***

Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, ***you've got to start young*** - Theodore Roosevelt

This Psalm might be told from the perspective of an aged man of wisdom, experience... ***But it is what he is doing TODAY that intrigued me the most....***

Title, "The Continuing Well"

- "As you get older three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two"

- "The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age." - Lucille Ball

- "Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician"

- ***"At 20 we worry about what others think of us, at 40 we don't care, at 60 we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all!"***

- "Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened!" -

- "None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm" - Henry David Thoreau

- "Growing old has been the greatest surprise of my life" Billy Graham

- * "It is better to wear out than to rust out" - Bishop

- "I am old enough to see how little I have done in so much time, and how much I have to do in so little"

Studies show that of the **leaders in the Bible only 30% finished well**. Same study took prominent current leaders and found the same stat to be true. 30%!?

Going to get a first hand look at how we should live our lives today so we might finish well...by **Continuing Well!**

*** Hint... 7 times in NLT writer says he will **Praise God** 7 times writer says he will **Tell people** about Jesus 14 times speaking on God as refuge, Savior, and helper

First section of the Psalm reveals the close Relationship between the Lord and the author

1 **In you**, O Lord, do I take **refuge**;
let me never be put to shame!
2 In your righteousness **deliver me** and rescue me;
incline your ear to me, and save me!
3 Be to me a **rock of refuge**,
to which I may **continually come**;
you have given the **command to save me**,
for you are my **rock and my fortress**.

4 **Rescue me**, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
5 For **you**, O Lord, are my **hope**,
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
6 Upon you **I have leaned** from before my birth;
you are he who **took me from my mother's womb**.
...My praise is continually **of you**

You can almost hear the **language of love** the author writes with, sense the **years of closeness**...

Like when you have friends or a married couple that seem to know what the other is thinking, finish each other's sentences, & have a great bond (stuck like glue) from years of time spent together, tons of relational capital invested!

In you, O Lord, do I take **refuge (trust)** The trust here is more than **Confidence**... it's a tried and true, **relational trust** with the covenant Lord...

The Psalmist here is talking directly to his Lord, & we get to listen in (what a treat and gift the Psalms are!)

Isaiah 62

3 You keep him in **perfect peace**
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he **trusts in you**.

4 **Trust** in the Lord forever,
for the **Lord God is an everlasting rock**.

Because he trusts in Jesus, knows who He is and what He has done for him, he believes God will do the amazing...

“You will” statements...

1. You will... **Deliver me**, rescue me....in Your righteousness...takes trust to let someone take you through a fire to safety, this guy was in obvious trouble and believed God would...

2. You will...**Listen to me**, incline your ear to me, God is listening and the writer *wants* the Lord to listen. NOT only to his plea for help, but to listen to the **pulse of his heartbeat** like a doctor. Trusting in God means **we are willing to let the great physician listen** to our hearts, and give us the remedy, which is always Jesus.

3. You will...**Be my Strength**, Rock of habitation, the implication is that **God is a comfort**. Jesus as the true Returning Well of strength...**go to continually**.

Resort to **CONTINUALLY**, you get the sense here that this isn't the Psalmists first rodeo, he's been here before, and remembers all the times he turned to God & God was faithful... that's why he returns again and again, why he remains!. Jesus is the true Returning Well of strength... **we continually draw from**.

“You Have Given” statement...

you have given the **command to save me**,

God gave a command for salvation, to save humanity, this man individually, to be saved.

He also gave His only Son to pave the way back from darkness.....John 3.16

Continues in this relationship revealing conversation with...

5 You ARE statements...

You are my **ROCK**, my **HOPE**, my **TRUST**, **ASSURANCE** the ONE who held my head above the waters, **Giver of life**...

You are my...Rock & Fortress.... Different rock, this rock implies that of a **solid strong impenetrable wall**, not for comfort but for rock solid protection.... The Psalmist is creating a pattern in his heart to go to the **Continuing Well**

You are, my Hope, trust, assurance of good to come....

Hope puts full confidence in God, the Giver of Life, Believers can have hope for the future because of what God has done on the cross. Created things will always ultimately disappoint. The Giver of Life, never disappoints.

Vs 4 tells us he is going through persecution even in his old age...4 **Rescue me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.**

When young think when your old the problems of life go away, you'll get all your ducks in a row, retire, your golden years shine... fact check!....life's problems persist until the day we die.

Sometimes we think, I'm older now, wiser, I've been down this road before. I saw what my Father God got me through this before...I've got this, we take our lives into our own feeble hands... Getting old also, doesn't naturally make you wiser unless you make the Lord your habitation, your Rock, day to day while it is today!

6 Upon you **I have leaned** from before my birth;
you are he who **took me from my mother's** womb.

... Mom's may have a tough time with this vs! A reminder that the **Lord is the Creator of life itself!** He has leaned in on, rested on, relied on his whole life...and God had never come up short! So he continues to go back to this well of life, Christ!

The results of a life leaning on God...Praise. 1st of 7 praise mentions
...My praise is continually **of you**

A mouthful of praise

7 I have been as a **portent (wonder)** to many,
but you are my **strong refuge**.

8 **My mouth** is filled with **your praise**,
and with your glory all the day.

9 Do **not cast me off** in the **time of old age**;
Do **not forsake** me when **my strength** fails.

Wonder, portent, Hebrew, mofaith, sign, example maybe with a negative connotation. Why is the writer an sign of wonder? We don't know. Something in his life difficulty, strife,, hardship, circumstance? His answer isn't to complain, "Golden years should have been better than this, not what I planned for". "God, look at all I've done for you, and this is what I get?"

He **filled his mouth with praise & God's glory**. God's importance had worth... THAT was what this man valued , more than comfort, ease, pleasure, and popularity, **more than life itself**.

In his old age, regardless of his feebleness, his enemies, his aging body his mouth was filled with praise, 2nd "praise" mention.

Danger & Trouble never cease 10-13

10 For my enemies speak against me;
 And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together,
 11 Saying, "God has forsaken him;
 Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."

12 O God, do **not be far** from me;
 O my God, make haste **to help me!**
 13 Let them be confounded and consumed
 Who are adversaries of my life;
 Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor
 Who seek my hurt.

The trail was hot after the author, even in his old age... Enemies pursue us until the day we die.
 Self, sin, satan. They're their until the end....**but so is the Lord.**

Brought, raised & taught... to praise, share & tell

14 But I will **hope continually**,
 And will **praise You** yet more and more.

"When I cannot rejoice in what I have, I will look forward to what *shall* be mine, and will still rejoice."
 (Spurgeon)
 When all hope seems lost, all hope is found in Christ Jesus.

Hope, **true hope is found in Christ**, but hope is also a decision!
 Here is a man growing old in years, his body starting to show signs of failing, his emotions and mind maybe fading, perhaps even his spirit was in a difficult place, he seems to have these people after him...

Author decides on hope, remains in hope, not because he forced his will to do so, not because his circumstances improved, but because of who his hope is, it's Jesus. Who else has the words of life, the WORD is our HOPE, where else can we turn? Shall we walk away from Jesus and not continue well?

What do you do with hope & praise?...What do you do when you find a solution for the pollution found in our own souls? You do what you would do with an empty lifeboat on a sinking ship....invite others aboard, declare it, share it, shout!

15 My **mouth shall tell** of Your **righteousness**
 And Your **salvation** all the day,
 For I do not know their limits.
 16 I **will go** in the strength of the Lord God;

I will **make mention** of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

In His strength, in His will...You GO & tell people about it, make mention of His righteousness and salvation...! 1st & 2nd mention of 7 about sharing...

You tell people about how righteous God is (hope springs up) which reveals our unrighteousness (hope falls,...). We tell ppl about salvation in Christ, hope in Christ to come, His limitlessness (hope rises again!)

We are told to Go into all nations and make disciples of men. We put a lot Focus on the word @ CC, word makes disciples, followers of Christ.

17 O God, from my **youth you have taught me,**
and I **still proclaim** your wondrous deeds.

This “Christian thing” hasn’t gotten old, drab or boring. For many years God has been faithful to teach him, and **STILL I proclaim**. The engine is still rolling, there’s a **vitality to authentic Christianity** that doesn’t grow weary with age, that runs with horses rather than men... that ages better than a fine Italian wine!

If you’re sharing in the day what God reveals to you in the night, you can be sure He will keep teaching you. BUT if you’re putting that lamp under a basket, keeping all that God has done and all who God is to your little self...

You can expect there to be a loud silence echoing in your study time. God may be saying to you, “**I gave you a message of hope last night, a message to share, & you kept it locked up...**c’mon, go try it again, then I’ll give you something more after you are obedient the last gift I gave you”

What about when I get old and grey, can’t I just coast a while? Coasting always leads to stopping which leads to backsliding... They say it’s “an uphill battle” for a reason

18 So even to **old age and gray hairs,**
O God, do not forsake me,
until I **proclaim** your might to another (this) **generation,**
your power to **all those to come.**

What zeal and fervor this guy has, he’s old and grey and begging God to not hold back, not to forsake him... Why? Why not just lay back, enjoy the golden years? WHY not ask to go to heaven? He asks, give me **greater opportunity to share the gospel**, proclaim God’s righteousness, power and His salvation Jesus. **That’s how you continue well...to finish well!**

“I want to share with *this* generation”.

There are many reasons we aren't supposed to hit cruise control in our walk with God. One of them is the next generation, those coming up behind us that are a little younger (in years or faith).

What about them? Where will they be if there is no one to show and tell, declare and share? A life of faith is meant to be passed on to your descendants.

The Psalmist was desperately pleading with God to give him continued opportunity to share the gospel...reminds me of an old timer in the Bible who didn't call it quits when he got old...

Joshua 14, Caleb... **7** I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. **8** Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.**9** So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'

("Here goes the old timer with his reminiscing stories again!") They think Caleb is drawing up an old story from the old well...but what Caleb says next, what he asks for in his old age is amazing! The young whipper snappers must have had jaw drop!

10 And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. **11** As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. **12 Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."**

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Joshua **15.14** Caleb drove out the three **sons of Anak** from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

IF there was a guy who could sit back and rest on his laurels it's Caleb...

To 'rest on your laurels' means that you get lazy or complacent about what you could achieve because you're too busy basking in the memories of former glories....

That wasn't Caleb's approach, he could have taken the coastal beachside region for an inheritance. BUT he took the territory with giants in it, Anakim...and drove them out at 85 years young.

Caleb is a shining example of a person of true faith that continued well & finished well. Paul finished his race well by continuing well.... But none finished more well, than Christ who went to the cross, dies for our sins, rose from the dead, and gave us the promise of new life...

God is great, we share in His suffering, He is the resurrection

19 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the highest heavens.

You have done such wonderful things.

Who can compare with you, O God?

Nothing and no one is greater than the Lord Jesus in the Psalmists eyes, I hope in yours also!
May there be nothing held so highly in your life that it can even compare to the greatness of God!

20 **You have allowed** me to **suffer** much hardship,

but you will **restore** me to **life again**

and lift me up from the **depths** of the earth.

21 You will **restore** me to even greater honor

and comfort me once again.

The writer rightly credits his suffering... and hardships to God. God isn't the author of confusion or the giver of evil things, but the writer knows something, he knows by experience something we all need to know that would change our lives radically...

He knows that his life is firmly held in the palm of God's hand, his rock fortress, his rock comfort, his trust, hope, security, his strength and shield... there is no suffering meant from hell that could ever penetrate the armor of God where he remains. SO any hardship coming his way, our way, God has allowed ...and has under full control, so he/we continue with Jesus...

If we live in this true understanding, nothing can stop us in our tracks. No amount of hardship, trial, or pain could slow us down from God's will and equipping for our lives.

Rejoice in suffering, as a pillar of faith. We get Fellowship, Teaching of the Word, communion with Christ, prayer...but *rejoicing* in suffering? Is that even biblical?

COunt it all joy...

1 Peter 2.12 Dear friends, **don't be surprised at the fiery trials** you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13 Instead, be very glad—**for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering**, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

(Phil. 3:10-14)“That I may know him and the **power of his resurrection**, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death . . . **not** as though I had **already attained**, either were already perfect: but **I follow after**, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which things are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of Christ Jesus”

When you rejoice in suffering, there is no stopping God's message through you!

Oh there will be suffering...

but you will restore me to life again

and lift me up from the depths of the earth.

21 You will **restore me to even greater honor**

and comfort me once again.

We serve a God of restoration, He's into righting the wrongs of our own sin, others sin, sin in the world...He lifts us up from the depths of the earth, & darkest despair and restores our souls....
How could he do that?

This verse shadows a biblical truth, illustrates the resurrection of JC, Jesus died, was restored to life again from the depths of the earth, restored to even greater honor....

Because of the resurrection of Christ we can praise him, tell people about Him. We serve a living Savior! A risen Lord....

He didn't stop there, He breathed new life into those that would believe in Him & confess their sin to Him. He made new creations out of old cremations, our life was a heap of ashes, worthless and dust before He rose....

If you've taken Christ into your heart, but you're keeping Him locked up there...it's "time to let him out"

Let Him out with a shout, spoken from love, in love, for love....

Declare, share, and prepare those you love, those you hate, the next gen, all who come

A life **continuing in praise and sharing Jesus** with result in song and rejoicing, no matter what the circumstances bring!

22 **Then** I will praise you with music on the harp,

because **you are faithful to your promises**, O my God.

I will sing **praises** to you with a lyre,

O Holy One of Israel.

23 I will **shout for joy** and **sing your praises**,

for you have ransomed me.

24 I **will tell** about your righteous deeds

all day long,

for everyone who tried to hurt me

has been shamed and humiliated.

So as, you and I face the prospects of growing old, we need to ask ourselves, “What should I be **doing now**, how do I “Continue Well”. What should I do to prepare for old age?” The fact is, **you will be then what you are becoming now**. If you are not becoming a person of faith now, you will not be a person of faith then.

The psalm shows us, to put it simply, that

God’s way to grow old is to develop a walk with Him now, & Continue Well

God’s way for us to grow old is for us to develop a walk with Him now--a walk that involves a deep personal knowledge of God, a walk that includes the habits of trust, praise, and hope, and a walk that involves a lifestyle of ministry for God. Then, as long as we have life and breath, we can show and tell and sing of the greatness of our God to the next generation.

NO amount of suffering can stop the will of God, the Love of Christ in the heart of a believer who continues with Christ... Continue well, continue well continue well... and you’ll age with youth and vitality like Caleb & Christ! Rejoice....You get to age *with* Christ!