

When I am Old and Grayheaded

Sermon Delivered on September 8th, 2024
AM Service

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Text:

Psalm 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2: Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. 3: Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. 4: Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. 5: For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. 6: By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. 7: I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. 8: Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. 9: Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. 10: For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, 11: Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. 12: O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. 13: Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. 14: But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. 15: My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. 16: I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. 17: O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18: Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. 19: Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee! 20: Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. 21: Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. 22: I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. 23: My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. 24: My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Introduction

Although no author or event is specifically given in this psalm, I believe this psalm was written by David and was written towards the end of his life. One reason I believe this was written by David, is because of the phrases and ideas in this psalm very much resemble the other psalms which we are certain that were written by David. For instance, [verses 1 to 3 of Psalm 71](#) is quoted almost exactly from [verses 1 to 3 of Psalm 31](#), which is a psalm written by David. Also, specific phrases here are seen in [Psalms 22, 35, and 40](#), which again were written by David.

Our focus this morning is [verses 17 and 18](#) where David says, “O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.” What a testimony and what a prayer! Here we see a glimpse of the heart of David. No wonder even with all his flaws and failings, he is called **a man after God’s own heart**. We can learn much from David and so this morning, let us consider our text in three headings, namely, **David’s Experience in the Past, David’s Prayer for the Present, and David’s Desire for the Future**.

I - David’s Experience in the Past

[Psalm 71:17](#) O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

In this psalm, David contemplates on his life. At this point in his life, David is already advanced in age and as he thinks back about his experience, **he celebrates the fact that God has been his teacher from his youth**. God had guided and instructed him from his earliest years. Looking back on his life, **he can testify to the fact that the Lord has been there for him since his birth**.

[Psalm 71:5](#) For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. 6: **By thee have I been holden up from the womb:** thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. 7: I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. 8: Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.

This doesn’t mean that David didn’t have trouble. **He may be a man after God’s own heart and yet he had trouble and actually, he had many troubles**. It seems like he was always in trouble, especially in the latter part of his life. Being a king and even a man after God’s own heart did not exempt him from troubles. Some of his troubles were **self-inflicted** troubles, others were **enemy-inflicted** troubles but then again others were **simply because he lived in a fallen world** just like you and me. David endured many things in his life, such as facing and fighting the giant Goliath, hiding from King Saul who sought to kill him, losing the baby he had with Bathsheba, being despised by his wife Michal when he leaped and danced before the Lord, running away from his own son Absalom who sought to dethrone and even kill him, and many other afflictions.

Now that he is old, he still has trouble. **Old age doesn’t mean trouble goes away**. In fact, **with old age comes many troubles and challenges** as we shall see later. For those of us who are there we already discovered that troubles are present just as they are when we were young. David knew that. In fact, in this psalm we find David crying to God due to his present trouble.

[Psalm 71:1](#) In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2: Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. 3: Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. 4: Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

Psalm 71:9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. 10: For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, 11: Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. 12: O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. 13: Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

Psalm 71:20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles ...

But David looking back on his trouble-filled life, cannot remember a day when the Lord was not with Him. He cannot remember a day when the Lord failed him. He learned from his early life that **God is faithful**. He learned from his early life that **God is sufficient, and that God is worthy of praise**. That's David's experience in the past.

II - David's Prayer for the Present

Having acknowledged and celebrated God's goodness to him in his early life, David now prays, "Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not." This is similar prayer that he prays back in verse 9, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth."

David calls on God to be with him and to sustain him in his old age. Growing older is something everybody must face. It is a universal part of life. But how do you know you are old? Someone has said, you know you are growing old when: *"Your investment in health insurance is finally beginning to pay off. You quit trying to hold your stomach in, no matter who walks into the room. You finally get it all together and then you cannot remember where you put it. You try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you are not wearing any. You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions. Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work."*

But seriously, the Bible has much to say about old age.

Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head [gray hair] is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Here we read that old age is **not a degradation**, but rather **it is a promotion**. There is nothing shameful of being old. God affirms old age as a crown of glory. It's a time of reward. As someone has said, *"growing old is not a dreaded destiny, but rather a blessing and honor."*

Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength: and **the beauty of old men is the gray head**.

God speaks very positively about the elderly. Old age is a blessing and an honor and, according to the Bible, **the elderly people are to be regarded with respect**.

The Scripture often associates growing old with gaining wisdom.

Job 12:12 With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

Wisdom is found with the elderly and understanding comes with those who have lived a long time. The strength they have is the strength of wisdom. With age often comes wealth of experience and therefore wisdom.

But growing old has many challenges. The Scripture is also honest about it. For example, in [Ecclesiastes 12:2-7](#), King Solomon describes **some of the difficulties associated with growing old**. And he does it in a poetic way. Some of the difficulties he mentions are trembling arms and hands, weak legs and knees, deteriorating eyesight, loss of hearing, loss of teeth, loss of hair, difficulty sleeping, easily awakened, singing and music are less appreciated, afraid of height, and of terrors in the way. There is the fear of death, the passing of loved ones, friends, sickness, illness, maybe feeling useless, etc.

“Growing old is not for faint hearted!” A lot of the young could not handle it!

David is now an old man and as an old man, he cries to God in verse 9, [“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not.”](#) David is simply praying for God to be with him and to sustain him in his old age. He is concerned that he has enough strength to continue with what he has been doing. This brings us to the last heading which is ...

III - David's Desire for the Future

We have looked at David's experience in the past, and David's prayer in the present, now let's look at David's desire for the future.

[Psalm 71:17](#) O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. [18: Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.](#)

David calls on God to sustain him in his old age, **not for his own sake**, but **for the sake of the next generation and beyond**. He feels that there is something he must complete before he leaves earth. He is concerned that in his old age, his body and mind will hold out until he has passed on to the next generation what God has taught him from his youth.

David's great concern is not retirement. He does not ask God to strengthen him so that he can enjoy his time of retirement and go on a cruise or travel around the world. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with a cruise or travel around the world. But the question is: **What is it that you want in life more than anything else as you get older?** I am sure all of us wants to be healthy and strong when our time of retirement comes. But again, the question is **why do you want God to keep you healthy and strong?** I pray it's not for your own sake, but for the sake of your children and your children's children.

Oh, may we be like David in his passion in life. And what is it? He has a desire for the future and that is **to declare God's wondrous works; to declare the strength and power of God** to the next generation and to everyone that is to come after him. He has seen the marvelous works of God, he has tasted the strength and power of God in his life, and he wants the coming generation to see the marvelous works of God, and the strength and power of God in their life as well.

In December, I will be 65 years old, and more than anything else I want to make sure that everyone in my family knows the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to pass on to them the story of the marvelous works of God that I have seen, the strength and power of God that I have tasted in my own life. My burden is not just for my children, and my grandchildren and my immediate family, my burden is for every one of you who come to our Sunday gathering, members and non-members, to know the glory and the greatness of our God. That has been the driving burden of my life and ministry.

Back to David's prayer, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come."

Oh, how we need to pray that our children and our children's children will know who God is and what He is able to do. Why? Because difficult days are ahead of them. They are going to face trials as we do, and even greater and more intense trials.

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2: For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3: Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4: Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6: For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7: Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If our children and our children's children are going to endure and stand strong in these perilous times, they must know this great and glorious God who does wondrous things. In the words of Moses, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11)

Closing Exhortations

Psalm 71:17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18: Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

May this be our prayer and passion. A passion to make known the marvelous works of God and the greatness of God to the generations we are leaving behind. Oh, that God would give us a passion in our final years to spend ourselves to declare God's glory, power, and strength to those who will come after us.

May we all hear these words of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt 25:21)

Let me leave you with a promise from God in ...

Isaiah 46:3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: 4: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

God bless you all and Happy Grandparents Day!

AMEN!