

INNER PEACE #5

The problem of aging

“How Shall the Old Secure Their Hearts?”

Intro: I had a hard time deciding how to title this sermon. In keeping with past lesson I first I chose “the problem of aging”. Then I got to thinking, aging really isn’t a problem; if it is, it’s a high class problem. But there are surely things that go along with aging that are a problem.

R.M Cornelius in the Rotarian gave this description of the seven ages of man:

6 weeks--all systems go

6 years--all systems “No!”

16 years--all systems know

26 years--all systems glow

36 years--all systems owe

56 years--all systems status quo

76 years--all systems slow

Another unknown writer captures our imagination with this summary of the seven ages of man:

spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.

It’s the anticipation of what may happen or will happen that sometimes destroys our inner peace. And for some, even little things can have their effect. Some are concerned about gaining weight, losing hair, getting wrinkles, graying hair. However getting older raises more serious concerns that may interfere with our inward peace.

Will I have the health to take care of my parents?

Will I become a burden to my children?

Will I be lucid or will I become mentally debilitated?

Serious questions, these are, and real concerns in a world where people are living much longer.

So, how shall the old secure their hearts?

A Brief Look at Psalm 71 (The prayer of an aging man)

The concerns he experienced

He was getting older. His strength was failing. He had outlived his friends, there was none to protect him from enemies that now threatened. He prayed that God also would not forsake him in his time of adversity.

Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails. (Psalm 71:9)

And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me...(Psalm 71:18)

This godly man felt the pressing cares of age and he cast his soul upon God for His help.

O God, do not be far from me; O my God, hasten to my help! (Psalm 71:12)

The confidence he expressed

Not only did the old man cast his soul upon God, but he did so with confidence that God would be there for him! He envisioned God's help and protection in answer to his prayer. Why did this old man have such confidence in God?

He had a knowledge of God that comes through a lifetime of study and experience.

For Thou art my hope; O Lord God, Thou art my confidence from my youth. (Psalm 71:5)

O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth; and I still declare Thy wondrous deeds. (Psalm 71:17)

He could remember how God had brought him through many troubles!

*By Thee I have been sustained from my birth...(Psalm 71:6)
Thou, who hast shown me many troubles and distresses, wilt revive me again, and wilt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. (Psalm 71:20)*

He had faith that God would continue to deliver him!

Thou hast given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and my fortress. (Psalm 71:3)

I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, Thine alone. (Psalm 71:16)

The consequences he expected

That he would continue to praise God for His blessings upon him.

My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to Thee; and my soul, which Thou hast redeemed (Psalm 71:23).

That he would tell others of God's strength and grace.

*My mouth shall tell of Thy righteousness, And of Thy salvation all day long; For I do not know the sum of them. (Psalm 71:15)
And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Thy strength to this generation, Thy power to all who are to come. (Psalm 71:18)*

That his influence would increase.

I have become a marvel to many; For Thou art my strong refuge. (Psalm 71:7)

Mayest Thou increase my greatness, And turn to comfort me. (Psalm 71:21)

How Shall the Old Secure Their Hearts? (Some practical suggestions)

Keep learning & growing in faith

Avoid the tendency to quit studying. Become a more dedicated Bible student. I appreciate so many of your senior members who spend hours each week studying.

Stay connected to loved ones, friends, and brethren

As you get older, it's easy to withdraw and become disconnected. You don't feel like getting out or you sit and wait for the phone to ring. Stay connected, initiates calls to those you have an interest in.

Count your blessings daily and avoid complaining

Look each day for the little things that make life enjoyable and thank God for them. Train yourself not to complain but to notice the good around you!

Treat others with kindness rather than with insensitive frankness

Old age is not the time to become curt or rude to others who displease us. Be careful that you don't become a grumpy old man or woman who tells others off when you aren't happy about something. Show a little grace.

Keep serving others

Senior citizens are a great asset to the Lord's work in visiting the sick and shut-ins, in writing cards and notes to visitors.

Keep you eyes on the prize

Every day, no matter how difficult, brings us closer to our heavenly home. Don't become distracted from your life goal of going to heaven. Like Paul, keep your eye on the prize.

Conclusion: John Maxwell, leadership guru made an interesting observation about his own personal life. He had made a mission statement for the second half of his life.

What would yours be? What do you see for yourself? When we put our faith in God and make productive goals for ourselves, then we can truly experience inner peace even as we get older. I can tell you I've seen that peace in the faces of beloved mothers and fathers in Christ.