

Proclaiming God's Praises

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[0:00] Well, you remember we're looking at some of the problems of old age, and last several weeks we've been considering that some elderly people struggle with purposelessness.

! Once health goes, once some of the freedoms of independence goes, there can be this question, well, why am I alive? Why am I here? What are some of the remedies that we've seen?

How do we answer the problem of purposelessness in old age? Rhonda? Great, we see it as an opportunity to glorify God. What else?

Okay, so God does nothing by accident. He does nothing just on the spur of the moment. He has an eternal purpose for everything that he does. So there's an eternal purpose in this stage of my life.

And that gives meaning then, doesn't it, to every day that we live, even at the end of our lives.

If he's given us breath, it's with purpose. So we can know that there's a reason, even if we don't know what it is. Anything else that you found helpful in facing down purposelessness? Ed?

[1:18] Okay, excellent. We're seeing some of the specific ways that we glorify God in old age.

And we'll look more at that this morning. So we're learning that there's more than one way to glorify God.

You glorify God with the strength of your youth and with the strength and abilities, gifts God's given you. But even after your strength and vigor is gone, there's other ways that are just as pleasing, indeed, perhaps even more pleasing to God, such as the passive graces are just as glorifying to God as the active virtues of the Christian life.

And so, as it's been said, we learn to trust and we learn worriless trust. Do you know how glorifying it is to God to look on his elderly people and see them with worriless trust reclining on his breasts, trusting in him?

Joyful patience. How glorifying that is to the Lord in old age. Sweet submission to his will, whatever it be. These things are ways that we continue to carry out our purpose, which is whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

So that goes to the last day and breath of our life. Now, we want to draw this out further this morning. And to begin, let's turn back to that text in Psalm 92.

[2:46] We've been here before, but I want us to draw out one application that we'll trace out this morning from Psalm 92. Psalm 92 and verses 12 through 15.

Mark Aikens, could I ask you to read that for us, please? The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bear fruit in old age. They shall be fresh and flourishing. To declare that the Lord is upright, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

All right. Still bearing fruit in old age. Fresh and green. What did we see was the secret to their fruitfulness in old age?

Remember we said the full story is told in John chapter 15. How is it that people remain fruitful in old age? They're abiding in Christ. They're union with and communion with the fruitful vine, Christ.

[4:05] It's what makes them still bear fruit in old age. Now, some of the fruit then, being born in old age, we learn here, is the fruit of our lips.

They will still stay fresh and green, proclaiming. It is by proclamation that the aged are here held up as being fruitful.

So, our lips become part of the fruitfulness of old age. We serve the Lord Christ.

We may not be able to walk anymore. We may not be able to walk anymore. But if we can talk, that's another way that Christ can be served. We can drop in a word of biblical counsel.

We can say something for God. We can interrupt trivial talk with a word in season. Something that could profit the hearer. Whatever conversation we move into, do we raise the level or do we lower it?

[5:11] Or do we just go with the flow? With our lips, we can proclaim the praises of God. In order to do so, we've got to walk with this God, don't we?

We've got to keep our hearts full of who he is and what he's doing. And so that when we do open our mouths, we have something profitable to add to the conversation.

Isaiah 50 and verse 4 says, The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue. That's what we need, whether young or old. We need an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary.

Isn't that profitable conversation? To know the word that will sustain a weary brother or sister. He wakens me morning by morning. Wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

Now that's said of the servant of the Lord, the Lord Jesus. He had an instructed tongue, didn't he? And with his tongue, he sustains the weary. But where did he get that instructed tongue?

[6:19] Well, he wakens me morning by morning. Wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The instructed tongue comes from a listening ear. And so we must ever be those with listening ears, listening to the word of God, that we might then have this instructed tongue.

Now, what are they proclaiming about the Lord here? And what are the old people proclaiming about the Lord in verse 15? He is upright. What does that mean?

Pure. Holy. Righteous. Faithful. Just. Is that right?

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? So this is our God and that's what they proclaim. What else do they proclaim? He's my rock.

What does that mean? He's unmovable. What? Okay. And what else? A secure place. Unchangeable.

[7:26] Okay. There's a source of strength. A rock being often put for strength. There's an element of faithfulness to the rock that is unchanging.

Trustworthy. You can stand all your weight on that rock and it's not going to move. So he's trustworthy. And lastly is really just a negation of what he first said, that the Lord is upright.

There is no wickedness in him. They proclaim that as well. He is good. There's nothing evil about him. He's never done me wrong all my life.

That's what they say. The old people, they proclaim that. He's righteous. He's faithful. And he's never done me wrong. He's never tricked me. He's never deceived me.

Never had double dealings with me. I've never regretted trusting in him. So it's a God-centered message that they proclaim. But it's the message about God that comes through the life of an old person.

[8:38] Now, what is it that gives weight to an old person's testimony of God's goodness, righteousness, faithfulness, trustworthiness, unchangeableness? What is it that gives weight to their testimony?

Their age. Exactly. So here's a way that you can glorify God that young folk can't. Now, they can glorify God by proclaiming him.

Don't get me wrong. But hear me out. If you're wanting to read a good biography on a past president and you want to know the man, well, would you pick an author who knew him well over a lifetime or an author who only knew him for his four years in the White House?

Well, you would choose, unless you're just wanting to know about those four years, you'd want to know not only about the four years, but everything else about him. So you'd pick the lifelong friend. You'd pick the one that's known him over the long haul because you want to know him for who he is. Even so, an old person praising the Lord is the testimony of one who still holds to these conclusions about the Lord after a whole lifetime of trials and tribulations, being pushed beyond limits, having to fall upon the Lord and call on him and hold on to him.

[10:07] And at the end of it all, they're still proclaiming the Lord is upright. There is no evil, no wickedness in him. He is my rock. Well, you see, it's their very age that lends weight to their testimony.

It carries far more weight than a third grader who says, I found the Lord to be faithful all my life. Well, bless God, that's true. But there's more weight to the testimony of the one who is older.

Look at Psalm 37 for an example of this. Psalm 37. No young person can say this. 37.25. Who's got it?

And we'll read that for us, please. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children making bread. Okay, that's something no young person can say.

I was young and now I'm old. They can't say that. And so the testimony of God's faithfulness over the years, over the long haul, is the way that the aged are called to glorify God in a way that's peculiar to their age.

[11 : 19] And it lends weight to their proclamation. This is fruitfulness in old age. They still proclaim that. They're still saying God is good.

Their health is gone. But God is good. They're not able to drive anymore. But God is faithful. Their loved one has died.

But God is good. And they're nearing death. But he's never done me wrong. They can say that. Now, we wouldn't want the third grader to be silent on account of their youthfulness, would we?

Each have their place in the choir of voices proclaiming God's praises. But something would be wrong if the choir was like some church choirs that are made up of only young children.

Have you seen those? They have a sweet sound. And I don't have anything wrong with them. But I'm just saying, if that was the only choir singing praises to God was just the little children. What might it suggest?

[12 : 20] Okay. Exactly. You youngsters, you're all full of vigor and zeal. But when you get older, you'll see that God's really not that good. He's not all he's cracked up to be.

You go on praising him. You're naive. But when you get older, the trials come. You'll see that you really can't trust him. I say it may suggest that if only those praising the Lord were the young people.

And so you have a special obligation and privilege to glorify God in old age by saying, no, let me tell you. God is good.

God is faithful. He is still my rock. He's never done me wrong in all that I've endured in life. And so you have that peculiar opportunity to glorify him.

Look at Psalm 148. We're in the Psalms because we're talking about proclaiming God's praises.

And indeed, the Psalms do just that.

[13 : 22] And then Psalm 148 starts and ends with hallelujah. Praise Jehovah. We love that song, don't we? We enjoy singing, I believe, 105 from our hymnal.

And it's a roundup of all creation to add its voice to the choir. You heavenly hosts of angels, the sun, the moon, the stars, the sea monsters, the lightning, the hail, the snow, the clouds, the stormy winds, the mountains, the hills, fruitful trees, cedars, wild animals, and all cattle.

Small creatures, flying birds, kings of earth, princes, rulers. Everyone's being rounded up to praise the Lord. And included in this roundup are young men and maidens.

Verse 12. Old men and children. Or as we sing, aged men and children, small. And each has their part to play in this choir of praise to Jehovah.

The very last verse of the Psalter, Psalm 150 and verse 6 says, Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. And so as long as you have breath, however old you are, it is still your privilege.

[14 : 41] And one of the ways that you glorify God by praising Him, declaring how great and good God is. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna.

Back in, he spanned both the 1st and 2nd century from 70 AD to 155. And he glorified God by being willing to die for Him.

But just before he died, he glorified God by what he said about Him. And that's what we're talking about. They will still be fruitful and green, proclaiming that the Lord is upright.

So the Roman procouncil was trying to convince him to renounce Christ and to save his own life.

And he said, Swear and I will release you. Curse the Christ.

And to this, Polycarp gave his most famous response. Eighty and six years have I served him. And he hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?

[15 : 46] And he went to his death, proclaiming that the Lord is upright. There's no wickedness in him. He's my rock. I say that carries more weight at eighty and six years than a teenager.

So older people glorify God with the peculiar season of life that is upon you in old age. To say I have no regrets looking back of ever trusting in him.

Isn't that what the Bible claims? That whoever puts their trust in him will never be put to shame. Never be disappointed. And it's the privilege of an older person to be able to say that. That I personally have never been brought to shame for having trusted him. He's been a rock in my life. Now, to whom should you proclaim the uprightness and faithfulness and goodness of the Lord?

Who are some of the people in the life of an old person that need to hear this kind of thing? Raj? So the next generation.

[16:56] We'll get back to that later. Who else in the life of an older person? There? Does not old age bring you into contact with people that you otherwise wouldn't have seen?

Just because you're going to the doctor more often or to the hospital or in the nursing home. So there's a purpose for that. Lay hold of it.

Excellent. Anyone else? Dale? Each other. Other older people. Excellent. Very good.

Reminding one another of these things. Church family. Church family needs older people proclaiming the goodness of the Lord. Just for many of the same reasons that have been mentioned.

But it ministers to my heart to sit and hear older voices singing the praises of Jesus. Singing of his faithfulness. And to hear that testimony of old age.

[17:55] Church. So, yes, we need to be proclaiming. Turn to Psalm 71. Roger's already taken us there in his comment.

But notice the scriptures themselves take us here. That it is our special duty in old age to tell the next generation.

Psalm 71. Psalm 75. through 19. Someone read that, please. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long.

Though I know not its major, I will come and proclaim your mighty acts of sorrow, Lord. I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, until I declare your power to the next generation, your might, who all are to come.

[18:58] Okay. Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O Lord, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? So here we see that since my youth, O God, you've taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

And even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me. There's the young past, there's the present middle age, and Lord, even when I'm old and gray, don't forsake me until what?

Until I declare your praises, your power to the next generation. That's how the church continues on earth, one generation telling the next.

Apart from that, there wouldn't be a church on earth. It would fizzle out and die. But because one generation tells the next generation God's wondrous works of salvation, of his mighty deeds, and the Lord Jesus uses this message to bring others to faith in him.

And so the church goes on. So we have a story to tell. That's what they're saying. You have a story to tell to the next generation. The testimony of God's wondrous power in your life.

[20:10] The power of his grace in converting you. Everyone has that story who's a Christian, don't they? They can tell the next generation of the power of God that saved you.

You think, think of David telling his children and grandchildren about the works of the Lord. Sonny, come on up here on my lap and let me tell you about this giant Goliath.

You think that those grandchildren ever got tired of hearing that story? You think they ever tired of hearing the many deliverances that the Lord gave to David from King Saul who was seeking his life and just in the nick of time, deliverance from the Lord came and they must have been wide-eyed waiting for his next word.

You have a story as well. David had his stories to tell, but you do as well. They may not be as glamorous to you or to them, but you have a way to tell it in a way that it becomes glamorous to them as they look up to you as a grandpa, a grandmother.

And your word is golden to them because you spoil them. And so they just are all ears when you talk. So take that opportunity and tell them of the works of the Lord, what he's done for you.

[21:28] Draw alongside of one of the young people here in the church. Take an interest in them and seize the opportunity as you're drawing them out and listening to them to drop in important

truths.

Our conversion is no less wondrous than the crossing of the Red Sea. In fact, that's just the picture, the Old Testament type of the greater reality, which is God bringing us out of the bondage of our sin.

So if you think kids like to hear about the crossing of the Red Sea and redemption out of Egypt, what you have to tell them is even far more glorious.

It is not just saving you out of a little, you know, a few more years of toil in this life under a hard taskmaster. No, he saved us from eternal torments and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

So we have a story to tell to our rising generation. And so you have a testimony.

[22:35] Earlier, I believe it was Roger Wessner told us of the benefit, or maybe it was Bev, yeah, I think it was Bev, said that she had asked her aged mother in her old age, I think, different questions to draw out important information that otherwise would go to the grave with her.

And so that was a helpful thing. And I think it comes up right here. Write down your testimony. Write down some of the things that God's done for you in your life and pass that on to the next generation.

And let them hear from you. Archibald Alexander says, let the aged then tell to those that come after them the works of divine grace which they have witnessed or which their fathers have told them.

And so the history of God's works continue in the next generation. And it is one of the benefits of growing old is that you have often more time to spend with grandchildren.

Lay hold of those opportunities. That's part of the legacy that you're leaving. Your words to them. What did Grandpa say? In his last years with me.

[23:52] We sing that song based on, I think, this passage. Let children hear the mighty deeds that God performed of old. I think that's Psalm 76. And long after you're gone, those words will still be echoing in their ears.

Being dead, you will continue to proclaim the praises of your God through your memories. The memory of you, the very memory of you will stir up these words and this life that they saw in you. And the memory of the righteous is blessed. So, grandparents, you have a captive audience in your grandchildren. Lay hold of that and tell them of God's goodness and faithfulness.

We say first impressions are powerful, but so are last impressions. So are last impressions. How you glorify God with your last days will stick with your children and grandchildren.

We were recently at a funeral and heard what grandchildren were saying about their deceased grandpa. And it just made me think, what will my children and grandchildren, should God give them, be saying and thinking about me when I'm gone?

[25:05] What will they be remembering and repeating about you? That should give you some purpose at the end of your life, to pass on a legacy of proclamation and living for the glory of God, telling of the wonders that He's done.

You see, it's not a book on abstract theology that you're handing off to them. It's not just the attribute of God hanging there on a skyhook without any context.

Rather, it's the attributes of God as you've experienced them in His Word and in life. and you say, son, grandson, there was a time when granddad was down and out and I put my weight on the Lord and I cried and He heard me.

Let me tell you what the Lord's done for my soul. That's theology through the life and that's what will be remembered long after you're gone.

So that's the reason the psalmist wants to live on in old age. Even when I'm old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, until I declare Your power to the next generation, Your might to all who are to come.

[26:20] Look at Psalm 119 and the last, well, it's not the last verse, the second to the last verse, 175. Let me live that I may praise You.

Now, here's the reason that we want to live on any longer on this old, cursed earth. Why do you want to live another day? You know, we take care of our bodies even when we get older sometimes, we even take better care of our bodies and we become conscious that, boy, I need to exercise, I need to watch my diet, I need to cut this out and that out and we give all this care.

Why? So that we can live a little longer here on earth or we can have a little better quality of life here on earth. But why? Why do you want to live?

The psalmist says, let me live that I may praise You. So as you exercise, say that, Lord, let me live that I may praise You. As you diet, you take your herbs and vitamins, it's, Lord, let me live that I may praise You.

Never forget why it is that we're here and why it is we want to go on living here that we might praise Him. I remember as a young man growing up saying, I can't wait to be an old man.

[27:38] Some of you may conclude it was the rash words of youth and perhaps it was that maybe temporary insanity. I have to confess I haven't said those words as often lately.

But there was something about godliness in old men that I found attractive. The old men in my life glorified God in a way that I was saying as a young man, I can't wait till I'm like him.

A kind, gracious old man taking an interest in young people like I had them doing with me, laying out an example of Christian character and conduct and speaking words of life to me.

I found it attractive. and may the Lord give us grace in old age to be such to the younger generation. One of the temptations and sins of older people is a complaining spirit.

And you see, it kills the beauty of old age that I was just talking about and that I saw in older people that were good examples to me. A complaining spirit that's never content, nothing's ever quite good enough, they're so hard to please, always something to find fault with, touchy, peevish, grumpy, crotchety, irritable, angry, complaining old men and women.

[29:06] That is not a rarity, is it? Wasn't there a movie about some grouchy old man or something? I never saw it, but I saw it advertised it.

In other words, there must be that kind of people out there. Well, indeed, the books that I read on old age said that's one of the peculiar temptations and sins of old age to become complainers and whiners.

Of course, we can understand why they get this way. That's what the course that we've studied has shown, that many of the hardest trials in life come to us in old age. So there's plenty of things to complain about.

And if we're not finding grace in Christ, it's easy to turn sour, to grow cynical and bitter on life.

Everything's going wrong, my health, my finances, my family, my country. And we can start complaining of the days in which we live and praising the days of old.

Ecclesiastes tells us, don't do that. Don't say, why were the old days better than these? For it's not wise to ask such questions. You know, the old men were complaining in that day too, weren't they?

[30:14] There is grace in Jesus Christ for magnifying him in old age. And we do that by maintaining the spirit of thanksgiving. Why do you think thanksgiving is especially due from the age it?

This is the remedy for this complaining spirit, to maintain a spirit of thanksgiving. Why do you think it's especially incumbent upon older people to thank God?

All right, the years he's given you. You have more to thank him for, don't you? You have more mercies that have been piled on you in a whole lifetime than the young person.

So, we ought to be thankful. Look back over the long road and count your many blessings and name them one by one and thank God for his goodness, the goodness that saved you, the goodness that protected you, that kept you from falling, that preserved you in the way.

in every gospel privilege that you had growing up, every bit of gospel light, every effectual grace, spouses, families, opportunities of service.

[31:26] You go on and on. Though you're old, you can continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name, Hebrews chapter 13.

You know, you've been eating all your meals at his table for all these years. You know how many meals that is? Well, if you live to be 80 and eat three times a day, that's nearly 88,000 meals that you've received from him.

And so, if we pray, give us this day our daily bread, we have a lot to be thankful for, that for 80-some years or whatever your years, he has done that.

Praise and thanksgiving, then, overcome a spirit of complaining. Well, any testimonies that you would like to weigh in on here at the end of this lesson, questions, comments, proclaiming what we say is one way that we bear fruit in old age.

And obviously what we say only bears weight if our life has backed that up. There's old fools as well as wise old men, aren't there?

[32 : 41] So it's not just that we're old and therefore our words are weighty. There has to be a life to back that up. But this is how we glorify God, proclaiming the Lord is upright.

He is my rock. There's no wickedness in him. May he help us to do that today, young or old alike. All the voices are needed in the choir. We're dismissed.