

# The Pitfalls and Glories of Older Age (Selected Scriptures February 3, 2008)



When the task set before you is to preach on *The Pitfalls and Glories of Older Age* – the first question that cries to be answered is – where does Older Age start?

Mention “old” and you are at risk of offending a group that might not consider themselves “older”.



Let's face it – we all grow older. So, I am going to very arbitrarily say that first and foremost I plan to address those who are approaching or who are already in the retirement years – let's say 60 plus.

**But**, before 80% of you tune out – and before everyone under 30 wonders why they even bothered coming this morning – let me say this – whether you are 55, 45 or 15 – if you are *not* preparing your life **now** for its sunset years – when you get there – it will not be a time of glory – it will be a time of regrets and too many pitfalls.

Proverbs 16:31 tells us:

Grey hair is a crown of splendour; it is attained by a righteous life.

You gain the glories of older age by living righteously all your life.

We have all met those older saints who have an air of graciousness and a sense of eternity about them – the ones where we say to ourselves – when I am old – I am going to be like them.

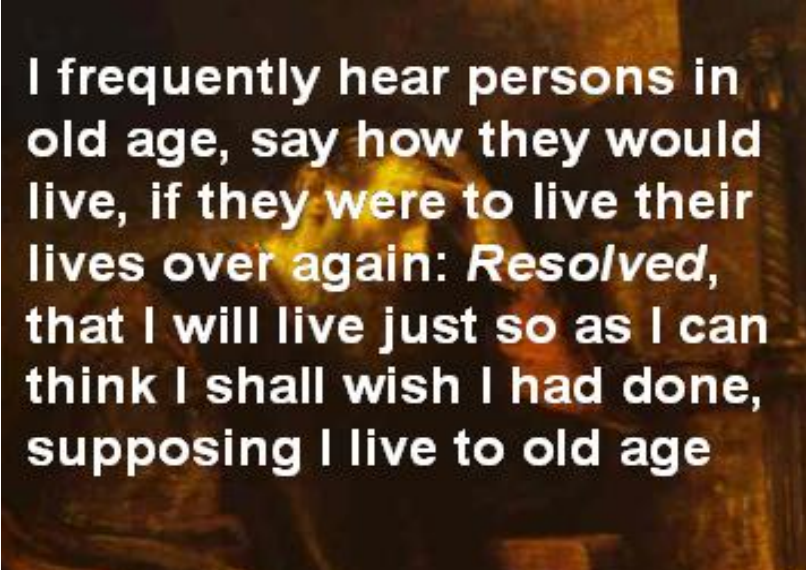
*And* we have all met those older saints who have an air of gracelessness and a sense that they are just worn out in the world – just waiting to die and hopefully make it to heaven – the ones where we say to ourselves – when I am old – there is no way I am going to be like them.

Let me say this – if you want to be a godly senior saint – then start living godly today. The grace of grey hair – comes from a lifetime preparing for heaven.

So if you are a teenager or a young couple or middle-aged – this is not a sermon to put in the – one day when I get there category. This is a sermon that should encourage you to live godly now – to set the habits now – so when the sunset years come – you will be the godly older man or woman everyone wants to be like.

When Jonathan Edwards was a very young man he began writing out a list of resolutions to live by. Most were written while he was a teenager. The last of his seventy resolutions was completed soon after his twentieth birthday.

I want to read out resolution # 52 which he wrote while still in his teens:



**I frequently hear persons in old age, say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: *Resolved*, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age**

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To those not yet at retiring age – to those of any age who think they are still young – this resolution sums up my point for you this morning.

Live in such a way that when you are older you will have no regrets. Live in such a way that the glories of old age are yours.

And for those who are already older – I want to say to you – that it is never too late to gain the glories of old age. Yes it would have been easier to work on them all your life – but by the power of the Holy Spirit – every glory can be attained and there is no habit or sin – which it is too late to deal with.

Because I actually want this sermon to be encouraging rather than bringing out too many feelings of regret, I am going to start with the pitfalls of older age and end with the glories of older age.

Do the hard ones first and end with the encouragements.

I thought long and hard this week about whether I would even mention the pitfalls of older age. I think some of them will seem pointed – and while I want to encourage the older saints to live godly – I don't want to discourage you.

So if some of these pitfalls do hit too close to home – take them as a spur rather than chastisement.

So what are these **pitfalls** of older age?



**First, thinking you do not need to earn respect**

There are two kinds of respect – respect that comes from your position and respect that is earned.

There is a level of respect we should have for our parents, the police, church elders, our civil leaders – because of the position they hold.

But – there is also a respect that is earned by how you conduct yourself in this position.

So it is with older age.

We **are** to respect the hoary head – but Paul also knows that the hoary head – the older saint still has to *earn* respect.

Listen to Titus 2:2-5 where Paul says:

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. **Then** they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Listen again. Teach the older men to be *worthy of respect* – by how they live – through temperance and self-control and faith and love and endurance.

Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live – *then* they have earned the right to teach the younger women.

Your life earns you the right and opportunity to influence the young.

When I was at *Grace Community Church* in the US – in all of the younger groups – youth, singles, young married couples – every homegroup sought out an older couple to be what was called – Senior Staff.

The Senior Staff become disciplers, confidants, sounding boards, encouragers. They opened their homes, they counselled, they taught.

These couples spent their time with the younger people of the church.

The relationships became very close. I still get emails from the couples involved. When we go to the US we still see those couples we were involved with.

But what struck me was the fact that the younger people desperately wanted Senior Staff in their lives – and the Older Saints desperately wanted to be asked to be involved.

The senior staff lived lives that attracted the youth. It was a wonderful example of how the church should be.

Let me speak frankly for a moment. When I came back from the US – the biggest difference I saw in the Australian churches was in the older generation.

I have met many wonderful older Christians here – we have some incredible examples in this church.

Just not enough.

I am not sure what happened – but it was almost as if someone had said – church leadership is for the middle-aged. When you retire – you aren't needed.

Too many older Christians stopped being vitally involved in the church.

Some felt the young should come to them. Some felt they had little to offer. Some felt their task was done.

It is one of the great tragedies of the church in this country.

At *Grace Community Church* – the mindset was cultivated that retirement frees you to serve. You don't have the financial pressures – you don't have the work pressures – you don't have the family pressures.

What you have is experience and time. Retirement merely meant moving from serving the church a few hours a week to serving many, many hours a week.

The oldest fellowship group – saints in their 70's and up met every Monday morning to pray for the church. They were involved in the ministries – the crèches, the kitchen, the volunteer ministries were staffed by some very elderly folk – but they loved it. You needed babysitting – they would come. They wrote to the missionaries. They made lunches for the staff.

I was on the pastoral staff there. The message never came – where can we be used. They looked for the ministries and tasks that were slipping through the cracks and just got to work.

The church always seemed to have elderly folk there – seven days a week.

When the youth saw their heart, their devotion – they wanted to sit at their feet.

I have spoken to many pastors in this country. As a generalisation, we don't have a good history of older saints in the church. Setting an example of how to persevere and serve till the Lord takes you home.

Showing the generations how to keep growing in grace and godliness.

All too often retirement seems to mean retiring not just from secular work – but from serving the church. All too often there seems to be a stagnation in spiritual growth.

Our older folk should be the most mature, godly, Christlike members of our churches. They have made the mistakes and been shaped by trials. They have seen the goodness of Christ.

They should have so much to pass on.

But in church after church – the elders and deacons are mainly middle aged men – who are so busy at work and with families.

Where are our hoary heads? – our godly saints? – those whose lives have shaped them and moulded them?

Those with the experience, the godliness, and the time to serve.

What I keep hearing is – they don't want to learn from me so I keep quiet. I leave it to the younger folk.

I say – who said your race is run – your time is done?

Who excused you from service?

Who says you have nothing to offer?

If you are a godly man or woman – they will beat your door down. I have seen it.

If your life is a fragrant aroma – younger Christians will want to learn from you and be like you.

When I returned from the States – I was thirty-one. I went looking for an older man to teach me to pray. I asked at pastor's fellowships and men's meetings.

Godly older prayer warriors are a rare beast. It should not be so.

I don't want this to sound wrong. But where are the older men and women at our prayer meetings? There are some there – but not the numbers I would expect.

Older saints – in general you don't have as many responsibilities as you once did. Many of you are retired. You may or may not be able to do much at work days – but you can pray. You can share your wisdom.

I know you can't make it to everything. But you do have the time to make it to some things. If you can't make it to prayer meetings – the men's, the before church – then don't ask me why the younger men don't beat a path to your door asking to be discipled.

Again, don't get me wrong – I don't want to paint a terrible picture – we do have many wonderful older saints – but there should be more older elders and deacons – more older women discipling younger women – we should have more older men and women of example.

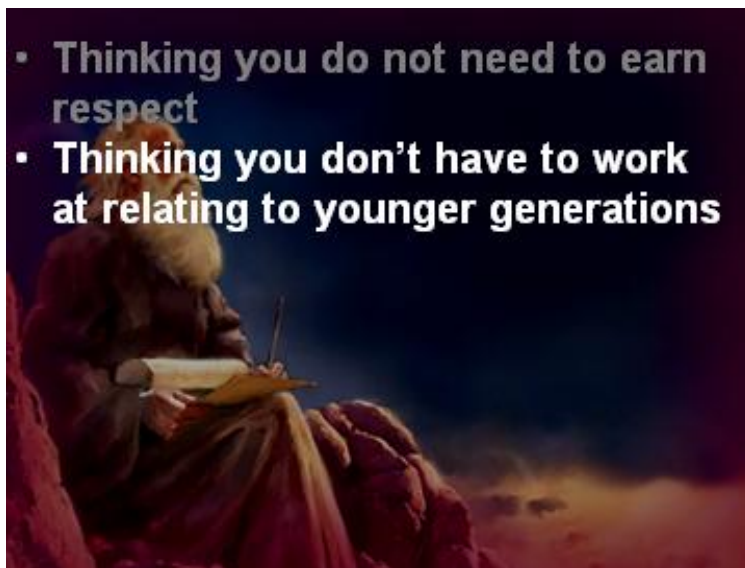
As Paul said – be imitators of me as I am of Christ.

Too many seem to think that the younger generation just doesn't respect our wisdom and experience.

I say – if you earn it – they will respect it. They will crave it.

Make sure they see you serving – and praying – and leading – and living for eternity – and they will come.

There is a second **pitfall** of older age:



### **Thinking you don't have to work at relating to younger generations**

One of the great difficulties in parenting is the so called generation gap.

As parents we struggle to relate to some areas of our children's lives. They don't like classics – like Abba – they like modern stuff that will never be classic.

They are into Myspace and SMS – some of us struggle to know how to send an email.

Personally, I can't believe they allow kids these days use calculators in Maths – it wasn't like that in my time.

It takes an effort to understand our children and relate to them. Paul urges as much.

Colossians 3:21:

Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

These same tensions are felt in the church.

In case you haven't noticed – there have always been generation gaps. Music is the classic place this has always been seen.



Go to Extreme Grace and listen to the music. Go to a homegroup with older saints and listen to the music.

There are truths that are trans-generational. There are preferences that vary from age to age and culture to culture.

If you want to impact a group – you had better work out what is biblical and what is preference. You had better not insist on your preference or you will not influence that generation.

Talk through the principles – give your point – discuss it – but don't make it an issue.

Let me give you an example.

Tim Brannagan is a missionary friend who told me about his first day in Liberia. Tim, Nancy and their two children arrived in Liberia after a long and exhausting flight. They were greeted at the airport by members of the local church and shown to the hut that would be their home for the next few years.

After lunch, Tim and Nancy looked out their window and were pleased to find that their home was only 500 meters from the beach. So they all got changed into shorts and shirts and headed to the beach for a swim. As they hit the beach, they realised that they were creating quite a stir. Everyone stopped. Everyone was looking at them.

At first Tim thought, "Oh they just haven't seen many white people before." But it wasn't a look of surprise on their faces, it was more a look of disgust.

Tim couldn't work out what was going on. In fact he felt that it should be him looking at them in disgust because from the moment that they had landed in Liberia he had not seen a woman who had any clothing on above the waist.

As they stood there feeling like pork chops at a Barmitzvah, they recognized a woman they had just met from the local church walking up to them. She stopped in front of Nancy. "Mrs. Brannagan, how could you bring such disgrace and shame on our Lord?" Nancy was stunned. "What have I done?" "Your legs Mrs. Brannagan, your legs – they are uncovered!"

In Liberia, it was fine for a woman to uncover her breasts but to uncover any part of her legs above the ankle was considered absolutely disgraceful. So here was Nancy being berated by a young woman naked above the waist because her knees were showing.

Tim told me that one of his biggest adjustments was to work out what was cultural, what was preference and what was Scriptural. If he took a stand on cultural or preference issues – he would lose the right to influence those people.

So it is in the generation gap at church.



Paul understood this. Read 1 Corinthians 8 to 10 and especially read Romans 14 and 15.

Remember what is going on in Romans 14 and 15. There were disagreements over preference issues – what foods were acceptable to eat – what days were sacred.

Issues that were *not* central to the gospel – but were preference issues.

What was Paul's advice? For the mature to let the less mature know they were wrong and to get with the program?

No! Romans 14:1

**Accept** him whose faith is weak, **without passing judgment** on disputable matters.

Romans 14:13:

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 14:17-19:

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Romans 14:22:

So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.

Paul makes it **very** clear we are not to cause divisions over these preference issues.

And in fact – Romans 15:1:

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

The stronger, more mature Christians have the maturity to understand this and make the sacrifice. They are to bear with these areas of difference – so they can influence the less mature.

In a very similar argument in 1 Corinthians 8-10 – Paul says this. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I

became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Paul swallowed his preferences in non-crucial areas in order to maintain his influence for the gospel.

This is crucial to understand if you are to influence the generations to come.

Older saints – the younger Christians **do** have some different preferences – and some of them you won't like.

Some of their music may not be as good. However, I suggest much of it is in fact fine. And I would add that some hymns are soppy sentimental drivel that don't say much.

And yes, teens are conditioned to hear the gospel in more of a visual way.

Yes – there are many communication differences.

This is nothing new. John Owen wrote *Sin and Temptation* to teach the teenagers of his day. Times have changed. In his day the written word was King.

Although the generation of fifty years ago was more word oriented than today – you still aren't in the league of Owen's day. Very few older saints I know have the capacity to read that book unedited.

As a society we are not as word orientated and focussed. Personally, I think this has been an ongoing loss for the last hundred years.

But the reality is that our society now uses other methods of communication – and we have to understand that or we will lose the ability to influence a generation.

If you chose not to go to some homegroups because of the music they play, the audio-visual they use – so be it. But realise you are cutting yourself off from the avenues of influence.

Listen again to Paul:

I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Put aside your preferences to establish relationships and pass on that wisdom you have accumulated.

If you stand on what you think is your better position and say – come and learn from me – you will be very lonely.

You will come across as crusty, divisive – and whatever great truths the Lord has taught you won't be passed on.

If you choose to criticise the young rather than work with them – unless you show them the crucial truths of Christ rather than the preferences you grew up with – you will drive them from the church.

An anonymous author gave this anecdotal story:

His name was Bill. He had wild hair, wore a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of university. He was brilliant. Somewhat esoteric and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending university.

Across the street from the campus was a well-dressed, very conservative church. They wanted to develop a ministry to the students, but were not sure how to go about it.

One day Bill decides to go there. He walks in with no shoes, jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair. The service has already started and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat. The church is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now people are looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything.

Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit and when he realises there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet. (Although perfectly acceptable behaviour at a college fellowship, trust me, this had never happened in this church before!) By now the people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick.

About this time, the minister realises that from way at the back of the church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill. Now the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-grey hair, a three-piece suit, and a pocket watch.

A godly man, very elegant, very dignified, very courtly. He walks with a cane and as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves, "You can't blame him for what he's going to do. How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand some college kid on the floor?"

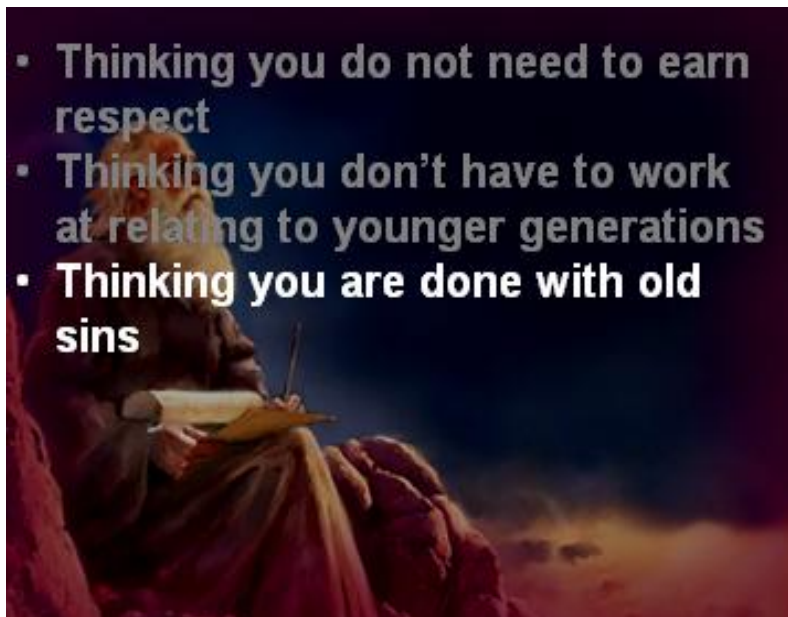
It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy. The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The people are thinking, "The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do."

And now they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill and worships with him so he won't be alone. Everyone chokes up with emotion.

When the minister gains control he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

We have some of the finest youth I know of. The older saints have some incredible life experiences. We have to find a way to connect them and share the glories of Christ.

There is a third **pitfall** of older age:



### **Thinking you are done with old sins**

I have had men tell me that they are looking forward to older age – the testosterone drops and they won't have to struggle so much with lust.

And I roll my eyes and think – you fool.

You are never done with sin. It dogs you till your last breath.

It is a lie of the devil that suggests old age insulates you from some sins.

Dudley told me of a godly elder he knew who left his wife and ran off with another woman – and he was in his 80s.

I think of a man who was acclaimed the best Reformed Baptist preacher in England – in his mid 60's – left his wife, left his church – to run off with a male intern in his 20s.

Look at Abraham – in his old age he repeated the sin of lying about who Sarah was – tell them you are my sister.

There are sins that dog us all our life.

Yes, age should bring a degree of godliness that helps us with our sins. But I say to you – the moment you relax your vigilance – you will fall. Proverbs 16:18:

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Do not slacken off. Satan is not done with you. Your sinful heart is not done with you. Fight for holiness till your last breath.

John Owen says this in his book *Sin and Temptation*:

Let us never reckon that the work of contending with our own heart is ever finished.<sup>1</sup>

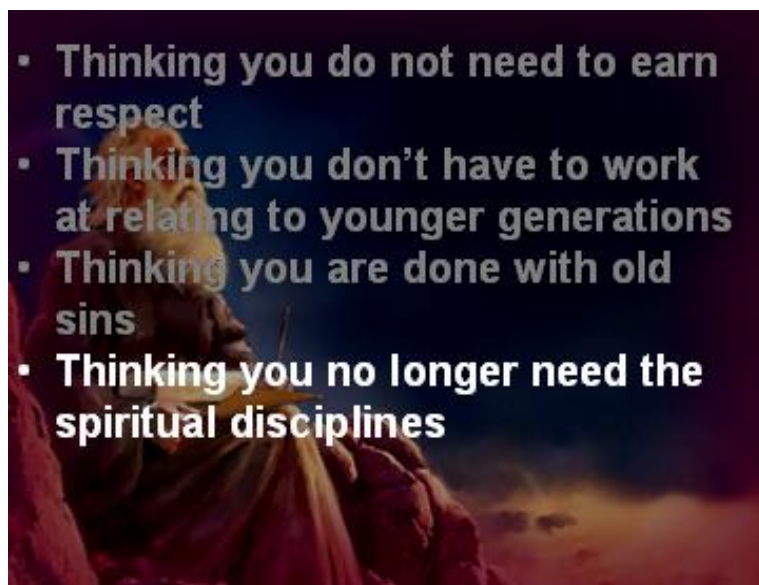
Owen also gave this advice:

If a man teach uprightly and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life than he built in the day of his doctrine.

You sin at the end of your days – that is what they will remember. It will undo all those good years.

Pray to God for strength for the day. Do not slacken your guard but double it.

There is a fourth **pitfall** of older age:



### **Thinking you no longer need the spiritual disciplines**

This pitfall is closely linked to the one before it.

I am greatly saddened by those older saints who slacken off their reading of the Word and prayer.

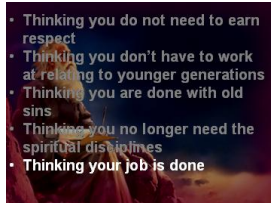
They were disciplined during work years – but retirement is a different story. Heaven is coming and will soon be a reality – so why read and pray as much?

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<sup>1</sup> John Owen, *Sin and Temptation*, (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1983), p. 11.

Old age is a time of trials – the greatest of all is the crossing of the final river. You need the spiritual power of the disciplines. You have time – you have no excuses left to slacken off in prayer and the word.

There is a fifth **pitfall** of older age:



### **Thinking your job is done**

Tell me one godly man or woman in Scripture who retired?

Charles Simeon, the pastor of Trinity Church, Cambridge, two hundred years ago learned a very painful lesson about God's attitude toward his "retirement." In 1807, after 25 years of ministry at Trinity Church, his health broke. He became weak and had to take an extended leave from his labour. Handley Moule recounts the fascinating story of what God was doing in Simeon's life:

The broken condition lasted with variations for thirteen years, till he was just sixty, and then it passed away quite suddenly and without any evident cause. He was on his last visit to Scotland ... in 1819, and found himself to his great surprise, just as he crossed the border, "almost as perceptibly renewed in strength as the woman was after she had touched the hem of our Lord's garment." He saw in this revival no miracle, in the common sense of the word, yet as a distinct providence.

He says that he had been promising himself, before he began to break down, a very active life up to sixty and then a Sabbath evening [retirement!]; and that now he seemed to hear his Master saying: "I laid you aside, because you entertained with satisfaction the thought of resting from your labour; but now you have arrived at the very period when you had promised yourself that satisfaction, and have determined instead to spend your strength for me to the latest hour of your life, I have doubled, trebled, quadrupled your strength, that you may execute your desire on a more extended plan."<sup>2</sup>

You still have work to do. You have children and grandchildren to encourage. You have neighbours to share with. You have younger Christians to disciple. You have a church to serve and pray for.

Listen to Paul. Philippians 1:21-24:

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I

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<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 1993 Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI, p. 108.

am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

He wanted to go home to be with the Lord – but he still had work to do – and while he lived – he would serve the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:6-7:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

As the time of his departure came – he could say – I never stopped serving, sharing, living for Christ. I fought the good fight, I finished the race, I kept the faith. I never stopped or slackened off for a moment.

That is a no regret life.

Reaching sixty and thinking you have done your work. Now you enjoy the fruits of your wealth – tour the world – spend the kid's inheritance – and wait to die.

That is a waste of the very period of your life when you have experience and time to make a real difference.

You know you are getting closer to eternity – you have work to do.

I am now forty-five. Recently I have been reminded of my own mortality.

In the past few months – one man who was a close friend – we lived at College together – we studied medicine together – I shared the gospel with him many times – after a second marriage break-up – he killed himself.

Another man – we also lived at College together – we studied medicine together – I have shared the gospel with him – he took a high powered motorcycle for a test drive and ended up in intensive care. He will be OK – he could have been dead.

Another man – we studied medicine together – I didn't know him well – I saw him in tears – his wife has metastatic cancer.

That is all recent. Add that to a growing list of those from my High School and University days who are already dead.

I am reminded anew of how near heaven is.

If that is happening to me at forty-five – those who are older must know your time is short and you must see far more family, friends and neighbours die.

I have known several Christians who have developed a terminal illness. One thing that happens is that they suddenly realise that they haven't lived for eternity. They haven't shared Christ.



They begin to share feverishly – brothers, aunts, nephews, work friends, neighbours – the people they kept thinking they would get around to sharing with.

Put all of this together. If you are older – you may well go to glory sooner rather than later and certainly you have more friends and acquaintances going to glory or going to where it is not glory. And even the most hardened older heart begins to think of death when those around them are dying.

We should all be sharing. We should all be proclaiming Christ. But if you are older – you have motivation – your departure is near – you have a receptive circle of friends – their mortality is upon them. You have work to do.

We have an *Introducing God* course coming up. Every time I wonder – where are the older saints and those they are bringing?

The course should have plenty of older saints and their friends. Instead it is mainly young people.

Don't you dare just wait to die – that is a wasted life. You of all people should be aware of your mortality and the mortality of your friends. They might laugh – they might scoff – but I tell you – many more than you think will listen. They are thinking about death.

Invite them.

Hear what Paul said to the Ephesian elders. Acts 20:25-27:

Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Wow!

I am innocent of the blood of all men. I have not hesitated to proclaim to ... the whole will of God.

Can you say that?

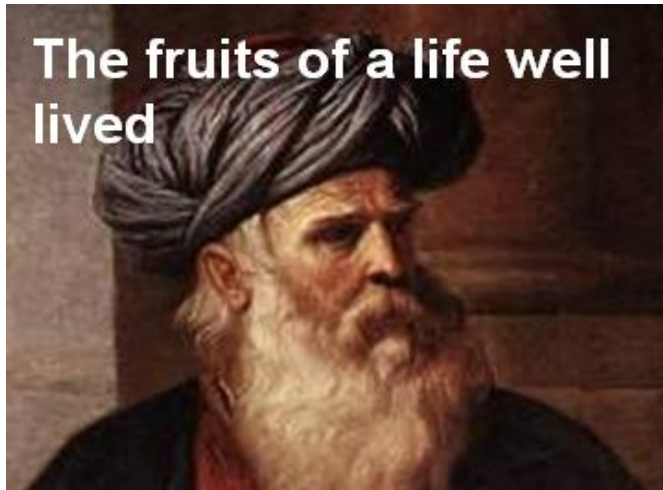
That is a no regret life – you still have work to do.

That brings us to the **glories** of older age.

Old age can be a difficult time. Arthritis and Alzheimers. Losing your spouse and lifelong friends. Facing death.

But there is a glory of old age.

The **glory** of older age is:



- The fruits of a life well lived

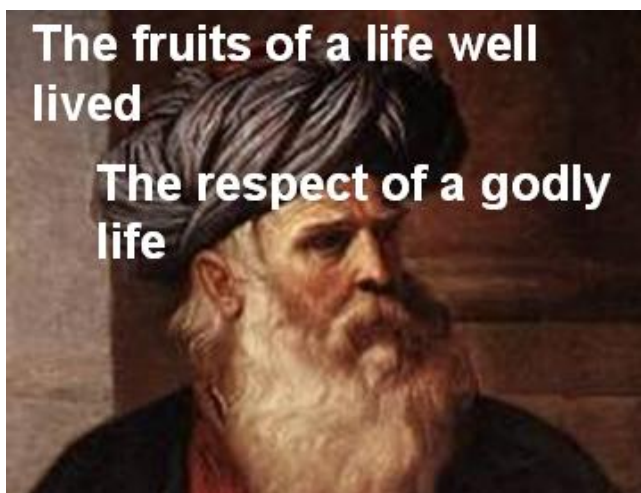
If you can say with Paul – to live is Christ and to die is gain – if that is how you live your life – then you will reach your sunset years and you will not say – I have wasted it.

If you set yourself to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength – then you have lived a mighty life.

What are the fruits of a life well lived?

They are threefold.

**First, the respect of a godly life**



Proverbs 20:29 says:

The glory of young men is their strength, grey hair the splendour of the old.

When you have lived godly. Persevered. Grown in grace.

When you are known as a man or woman of character.

When your wisdom has earned respect.

**Then** you will enjoy the respect of those who matter.

Proverbs 31:28 says of a godly mother:

Her children arise and call her blessed.

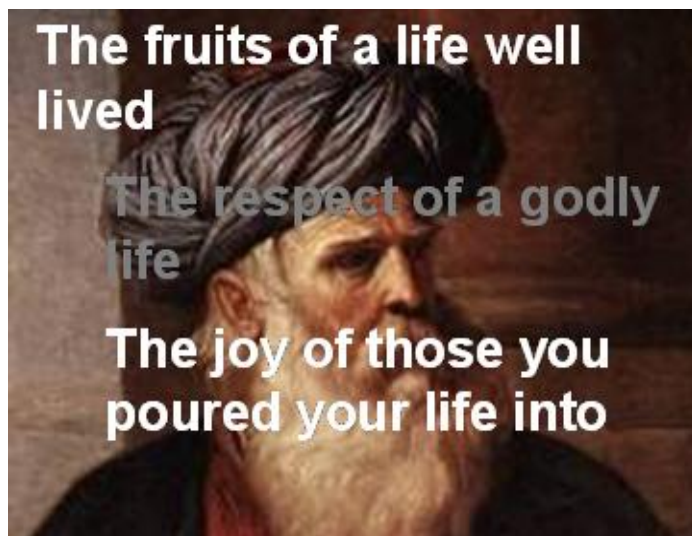
This is the glory of old age.

I am so thankful for my mother. My kids have often said to me – we are so blessed to have such a godly grandma. She is a real example of service and sacrifice and unconditional love.

With her diabetes and problems she could sit back and wait for eternity. She works so hard at serving and hospitality. She is so gracious.

She has earned our respect. She is a real example. My kids respect her, Dena and I respect her – not just for her age – but for who she is.

There is a **second** fruit of a life well lived:



### **The joy of those you poured your life into**

When all is said and done only one thing matters in this life – those you have poured your life into. Nothing else lasts.

Your house, your car, your stock portfolio, your job – gone. All trace of you – forgotten in two generations.

But those you led to Christ will live for eternity.

Your children and grandchildren. Proverbs 17:6:

Children's children are a crown to the aged.

You were entrusted with children to share with them the glories of Christ. To teach them to live for eternity. It is a glory of old age to know that your children know the Lord and will worship the Lord shoulder to shoulder with you for all eternity.

But it is not just flesh and blood children and grandchildren.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 Paul says:

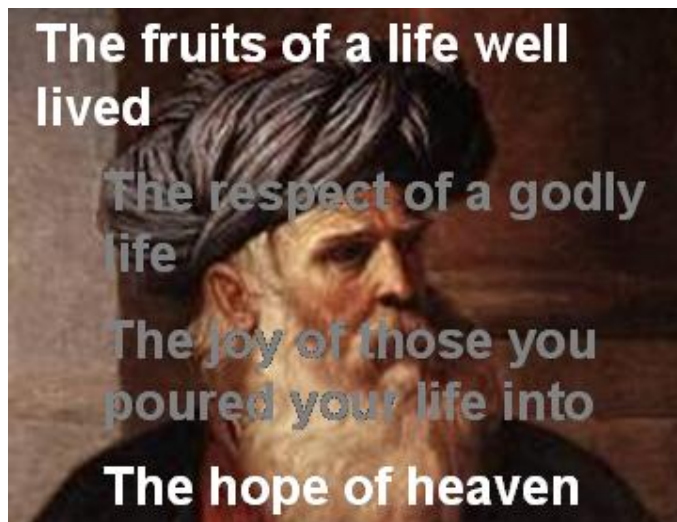
For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

Those you have led to the Lord. Those you have disciplined. They are what will last. They are what will sustain you in your twilight years.

Make sure you are building up this fruit.

Dying surrounded by family and loved ones who you will spend eternity with – this is a legacy of a life well lived.

Finally, there is a **third** fruit of a life well lived:



### **The hope of heaven**

When you have walked with the Lord throughout your life – he will be there at your death.

Listen again to 2 Timothy 4 – this time I will read verses 6-8:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **Now** there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which

the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

When you have lived well – you will die well. To live is Christ – to die is gain.

When you have lived well, you know that you will hear the words – well done good and faithful servant.

This is the glory of older age. This is the glory of a life well lived. This is why we are here.

We age in this world merely to enter our real home where we will never age again.

Old age merely brings us closer to home.

May this be the reward of every one of us.

May our youth strive to live in such a way this is their older age.

And may our older saints know that it is never too late to make sure you reap the rewards of a life well lived.