

Bearing Fruit in Old Age

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, “The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.” Psalms 92:12-15

I like the word “flourish”. It means something more than surviving. It means to prosper, to do very well, or to thrive. It means to be at the peak of success or development; to be in the prime. I noticed once that the Bible doesn't really have a plan for survival, for just barely making it. The promises speak more of flourishing. Overcoming is the word. As it is written in Romans 8: we are more than conquerors!

I also like the part about still bearing fruit in old age. To some of you, being fifty-something seems ancient. To others, it is still young! What it seems to us in our late fifties is that old age is near. Old age may seem scary and depressing to many, but in the Bible, old age is pictured as a time of fulfillment and blessing. Jackie and I are claiming such promises with urgency and expectancy!

Such as Psalms 37:25,26:

“I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.”

We do not yet see pensions and bank accounts stored up for our old age. But we do see Jesus who never forsakes us. We don't yet have a great monetary blessing in store to leave for our children. But we do have a great promise that says our children will be blessed!

You'll notice that these promises are for the "righteous". It was a long time before we could honestly receive the promises that are given to the righteous. We didn't feel righteous, and compared to the standard of Jesus, we were far below. Only when the conviction of imparted righteousness became real to us — the fact that we are righteous by virtue of Jesus' blood, and His righteousness is ours — then we could begin to claim the blessings promised to the righteous.

Have you taken your blood-bought righteousness as your own? Remember the hymn: *“...all other ground is sinking sand”!*

Getting old? ...the best is yet to come...

So, to be old and righteous is a good thing. In fact, in the Word it just gets better and better! Thank God the promises have no age limit! Thank God that the Word says that *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me ALL the days of my life...”*

Jackie and I are realizing that this is our plan for old age. It is a plan based on such promises. It is to continue to bear fruit for God. It is to stay fresh and very green. It is to be satisfied with the Lord's good things so that our youth is renewed like the eagle (Psalms 103:5). It is to have the spirit of Caleb, who asked for a mountain full of giants as His inheritance at age eighty-five. (Joshua 14:6-15)

Some look forward to the rocking chair. We look forward to new adventures with God. Some look forward to the joy of relaxing at the beach and let the younger generation take up the mantle. We look forward to standing beside the younger generation on the front lines of battle and cheering them on, trusting God to keep renewing our strength. Yes, we know that our bodies grow old, but the inner man is being renewed day by day! It seems to us that the best way to grow old is to stay young on the inside. The best way to stay young on the inside is to stay on the front lines of faith in God and loving others -- serving this generation in the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever known!

Where will you be when God unleashes the harvest that is yet to come? It could be a hundred times as large as what we presently see! We want to be in the middle of it, gathering in the harvest of souls, binding up their wounds, feeding them with the Word, and sending them out into the harvest as reapers!

We plan to do this until Jesus comes, or until our bodies are laid to rest in the ground!