

growing old with God

"the days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." psalms 90:10

i'm growing fonder of my staff
i'm growing dimmer in my eyes
i'm growing fainter in my laugh
i'm growing deeper in my sighs
i'm growing careless of my dress
i'm growing frugal of my gold
i'm growing wise; I'm growing--yes,--
i'm growing old

– john godfrey saxe

yes, i'm getting older. we all are. i was born just one year before israel was reborn, and i'm holding onto their promise: "assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." matt 24:34 if strength allows me eighty years, i too shall see the rapture.

but how are we all handling our aging? (you young ones, pay attention. we're all headed there.) do you just resign yourself to becoming obsolete, or will you shout His praises with your lapsing breath? if you become consumed by the thought of aging, you will be maladjusted to the Creator of time and lose the capacity for living. you are not running out of time; you are just getting closer to being called to the home office, a place without time. the question is not how

much time do you have left, but what will you do with the time you do have?

if you're already in old age and believe you aren't spiritually prepared, don't despair. God's grace and provisions are abundant and you can catch up. make growing spiritually your number one priority. put your emphasis on developing your soul, not on how your body is falling apart. our tomorrows are not guaranteed - for any. this is why we need to make the most of today, and every day, as we fulfill God's purpose, plan and will for our life.

just as time does not exist in heaven, neither does aging. there are no birthdays in heaven to mark the passing of years. the great news is that although we see the effects of aging on our bodies, time has no such effect on the soul. your soul is the invisible immortal part of you and it never ages. i heard a parishioner once say, "the soul doesn't age, it just matures." God gave your soul to you when you were conceived. when your body dies, your soul departs and lives on in a perfect resurrection body that also will never age.

the potential to worry about getting old and losing your independence is a threat to the successful spiritual life. aging scares people. if you let the problems of old age propel you into self-pity, then you will finish your life like a discarded automobile sitting in a junkyard rusting out. do you want to sit around feeling sorry for yourself because you can no longer operate the way you used to? or do you want to push through to the finish line?

finish your life for the purpose God gave you. toward the end of his life, as he was about to transition to be with the Lord, joshua called the israelites together and said to them: "if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." josh 24:15

joshua laid down a challenge. this is what you can do as you get older. you can lay down this challenge to yourself, to your friends and to your children and your grandchildren - to anyone who will listen.

no matter how old you are, and in spite of mounting difficulties, you need to press on, fulfilling God's plan. in fact, you are heading for your peak. the end is better than the beginning when you experience how God showers you with His grace. i have found that to be true in my waning years. i've grown more spiritually intimate with my Lord now than all my previous years combined, and i am so grateful. they say john was the youngest disciple, but i believe he was as young in his nineties as he was in his youth.

we have three enemies: the world (satan's cosmic system of human good and evil), the flesh (your sin nature) and the devil. as a christian in the "aging grace" phase of life, you can expect satan and the lures of his world will still try to deceive you, discourage you and defeat you. don't let them. be on the alert! hang on to God's faithfulness.

"even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs

I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." isa 46:4

robert browning couldn't have said it better. "grow old along with me! the best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made. our times are in His hand Who saith, 'a whole I planned, youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"