

"THEY SHALL STILL BEAR FRUIT IN OLD AGE"

Psalms 92:12-15

(thinking the other day about my garden and how some plants are still producing into the autumn season)

INTRODUCTION

- A. The goal for most people is a happy retirement. We plan & save for years to have free time to do what interests us
- B. Is "retirement" applicable to kingdom of God? Not necessarily wrong to retire from secular jobs, and physical infirmities hinder work, but can we "retire from Lord's work?"
- C. Psalms 92:12-15, describes righteous as palm trees and cedar trees flourishing in the house and courts of God
- D. This suggests a place of service for elderly in work of God; able to "bear fruit" and remain "fresh and flourishing"
- E. Have 5 members in 80's and 9 in 70's – so about 1/2 Members over 70
- F. Rather apparent God can and does use the elderly - so take a few moments to consider

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD'S USE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN BIBLE TIMES

- A. Moses and Aaron leading Israelites out of bondage at ages of 80 and 83 Ex 7:7 - already past normal life span Psa 90:10 (written by Moses) (55 equivalent today)
- B. Joshua and Caleb Joshua charged with conquest of Canaan, during last thirty years of 110 yrs Josh 24:29 Caleb - "give me this mountain" (eighty) Josh 14:10-12
- C. Daniel - served God from youth, over 70 yrs Dan 1:21
 1. Well over eighty when he was one of three governors over kingdom of Babylon Dan 6:1-3
 2. Was thrown into the lions' den - Dan 6:4-27
 3. Prospered in reigns of Darius and Cyrus Dan 6:28
 4. Received a series of visions - Dan 8-12
- D. Zacharias and Elizabeth parents of John Baptist "both well advanced in years" Lk 1:7 Yet he was serving in temple, and she gave birth to John!
- E. Paul the aged - refers to himself in Phile 9; yet at this time was busy writing letters (Eph, Col, Phi, Phe), even while in prison; traveling, visiting, encouraging churches, when he was released from prison
- F. Many others God used in "golden years" these illustrate how elderly can "still bear fruit in old age".

II. GOD STILL USES OLDER PEOPLE IN CHURCH TODAY

- A. There is always a need for "elders"
 1. Church overseen by elders Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5-9
 - a. Older men, capable of teaching and leading flock
 - b. Overseers are examples of flock 1Pet 5:1-4

2. Yet many men seem to retire from service in church about time they retire from secular work!
 - a. Just when useful to Lord, they are retiring!
 - b. If unqualified, then grow and develop necessary qualifications (if possible), and then serve?
 - c. Young men prepare themselves to preach in just couple of years, why can't older men do same

- B. Need for older women doing commands in Tit 2:3-5
 1. Sadly, many women stop teaching when they reach the age they are commanded to teach!
 2. Not qualified; then prepare yourself; commit to study and learn God's word
- C. All should be teachers 2Tim 2:24; Heb 5:12-14

III. MANY SERVICES ELDERLY CAN PROVIDE

- A. Hospitality and benevolence - some elderly financially able to do what younger can't Rom 12:13; 1Pet 4:9
- B. Edification & evangelism - time to study with others Matt 28:18-20; Eph 4:16
- C. Spend time in prayer 1Tim 5:5
- D. Most anyone can send cards, make phone calls

IV. ELDERLY "SHALL" BRING FORTH FRUIT Psa 92:14

- A. Be an example "show" that Lord is upright
- B. Teach next generation Psa 71:17-18; Psa 78:1-8

CONCLUSION

- A. "Those planted shall flourish" Psa 92:13 means every member must be of service to Him - then verse 14 "still" (continuance) bring forth fruit in old age
- B. May retire from secular jobs, but not our service to Lord!
 1. Certainly physical infirmities may limit what we can do
 2. But only death can stop us from doing what we can!
- C. Is problem really physical infirmities, or spiritual laziness; no we can't stop the aging process, but we can be renewed inwardly daily! 2Cor 4:16
- D. Problem may be related to our youth-oriented culture
 1. Wisdom and experience of elderly not respected
 2. Society too quick to put elderly "out to pasture"
- E. Other cultures reflect the scriptural norm
 1. Elderly revered - wisdom and experience appreciated
 2. Elderly continue in roles of influence and leadership, even to death
- F. Righteous can and should "still bear fruit in old age"
- G. Let's all be encouraged to re-examine our usefulness to the Lord and His church.
- H. Let attitude of "Paul, the aged" be your attitude Phil 3:12-15

(Mark A. Copeland - revised by jl)