

OLD AGE

ISAIAH 46:4 • TV-005B

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Isaiah 46:4

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

I have a very special message prepared for this telecast and I want you to sit down and listen to the entire message; will you do that?

I’m going to speak on the subject: **“OLD AGE.”**

Now, I have a large number of elderly people in our television audience. I receive mail from people who tell me they’re 75, 80, 85, even 90 years of age. And I want to bring a message on the subject: **“OLD AGE.”**

My scripture is taken from **Isaiah 46:4** in which the Lord says, *“And even to your old age I am God and even to your hoar (white) hairs will I carry you. I have made you and I will carry you and I will save you.”*

Now my friends, like in everything else, I’m sorry to say that in this 20th Century we are warped and twisted in our attitude toward old age. We’re twisted in our philosophy toward growing old.

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Most people over 45 of years are reluctant to tell their age. They act as if they're embarrassed because they're not children. They will not tell their ages and act as if they're embarrassed because they're not young.

And many times, when older people are in a gathering they are usually ignored. And if the older person speaks, a tolerant smile comes across the face of most of the people there until the old person is silent and then they pick up their conversation again. The counsel of the elderly is ignored.

And even in the churches this is true, sad to say this is true; everything today in the church is being directed toward whom we call or the group we call, "The young people." Even when a pastor is sought, a church is calling a pastor; what's the first question that most people ask; "Can he work with the young people?"

The downfall and this is it, of most churches, is the women have the young people do all the talking and wise, elderly, men, are silenced and ignored. Our philosophy is all wrong, the direction in which we're moving is all wrong.

We make jokes about getting old. We've been so brainwashed by this so-called, "Young philosophy" that even the elderly, I'm sorry to say, have accepted it. And most of them have crawled off into a shell of self-pity and inactivity.

The old people are withdrawn and silent; someone said, "they're really dead while they live." Instead of using their wisdom and using the experience that God has given them they have grown silent and they have withdrawn from the mainstream of life.

Mr. Charles Spurgeon was one of the greatest preachers who ever lived and who ever preached the Gospel; he pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle of London England for 39 years.

He preached to greater crowds than any man of his day. He published over 3,000 sermons in many, many, languages. He had an orphanage and a college for preachers. He was one of the greatest preachers who ever lived.

And he preached from the time he was 18 years of age. There was once when he was home at 23 years of age he was preaching in a church and he walked up to an old believer, one of the old men of the church, one of the elders in the church and he said to him; "Brother; there is no man in the whole church that I envy as much as I envy you."

And the old man looked at this young man, 22 years of age, this promising young preacher, pastored one of London's largest churches and he said, "Young man; you envy me? Why in the world would you envy me? I'm 87 years old. Why would you envy me?"

And Mr. Spurgeon said, "Old believer; I envy you for many reasons, the first of which is this; you are nearer the Father's home than I am. In a very short time you're going to see the Lord. In a very short time you're going to share His glory; in a very short time this weary journey of

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sin is going to be over for you while I'm still down here laboring in this veil of tears. You're going to be basking in the glory of God's smile. I envy you."

And he went on and said secondly; "Old man I envy you because the old believer can talk of experiences of grace while the young believer can only talk of the promises of grace. The old man can say with David, *"I have been young and now I'm old. And I've never seen the righteous forsaken. I've never seen God's seed begging bread."*

The old man can sing:

**"Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come
His grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home."**

The old man can sing:

**"When through fiery trials
My pathway shall lie
His grace all sufficient
Has been my supply."**

What does the young man know about this? "Why, I envy you." The old believer can talk of the experiences of grace. "My friend; I can only preach the promises of grace. I've never been there. I've never walked that road. I envy you."

And then he went on and said, "I envy you, my friend, because the old man can take out the counsel checks of mercy, the counsel checks of grace, and the promises of God and say, "I know these are true; I've cashed them. I've used them all."

The young man reads about these promises and he believes them and he hopes about them. But the old man knows firsthand of the redeemer's grace and the Redeemer's mercy and the Redeemer's love because day by day through this journey of tears and heartache he's cashed those checks.

And he's found God all sufficient, God who said, *"My grace is sufficient."* That old man knows it's so. God who said, *"I'll never leave you or forsake you;"* that old man knows it's so. God who said, *"I'm with you always, even to the end;"* he knows it's so. "I envy you."

You can stand and say to the young believer, "Let me tell you young man how God brought me to my knees in conviction and repentance. Let me tell you how God revealed my inability. Let me tell you how God revealed the substitute Jesus Christ to my heart. Let me tell you how His peace has been my portion and His blood have been my confidence through all these years. Let me tell you how."

"At the cross, at the cross

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**Where I first saw the light
And the burden of my heart rolled away
It was there by faith
I received my sight
And now I'm happy all the day."**

"And I'm still there at the cross. Let me tell you how good God was to me when I lost my job and had a family to support. Let me tell you how He never failed me, never left me. Let me tell you how God comforted me when I lost my dear companion of many years and faced those hours and weeks and months of loneliness."

"Let me tell you about God's sustaining grace when my child was killed. Let me tell you of the comfort in the days of sickness when I faced death's door. Oh yes; let me tell you His promises are sweet and they are true and they are steadfast."

What does the young man know about that? Oh, he believes it and he hopes and he reads about it but he can't talk about it. You can't tell what you don't know any more than you can come back from where you haven't been. "I envy you."

And then he went on and he said, "Old believer; I envy you because the old man who knows God's mercy in Christ, who knows God's mercy and grace in the substitute Jesus Christ, who knows something of the pardoning blood, of the ransoming blood, of the cleansing blood; that old man does not have the doubts about the doctrines of God's Word like young people have."

The old man needs no new Gospel. He doesn't want to hear about a new Gospel. Christ's Gospel has met his need and he's found it to be sufficient. The old man needs no new revelation; Christ has met his every need; Christ is sufficient.

The old man needs no proof of God's presence:

**"He's walked with God
And talked with God
Along life's narrow way
And the joys they share
As they travel there
None other has ever known."**

The old man is not driven and tossed with every wind of doctrine, every new messiah that comes along, every new leader that opens his mouth, every new revelation that's pushed off on the people.

**"His hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and His righteousness
He dares not trust the newest, sweetest, frame
But holy leans on Jesus' name."**

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He's found that rock to be sufficient. "Old man I envy you. I envy you because the old believer is not alarmed and he's not swayed by the loud claims of novices and new converts."

A new man comes on the scene boasting of new revelations and new experiences and new doctrines. The old man watches him carefully. And he's not swayed and he's not moved and he's not, "*Tossed about with every wind of new doctrine.*"

He's not driven there nor is he shaken when they fall. He's not shaken by the fall of loud professors. He's learned over the years, "*put no confidence in the flesh,*" his or anybody else's.

**"Should all the works that hell devise
Assail my soul with treacherous art
I'll call them all vanity of lies
And bind His sweet Gospel to my heart."**

"I envy you old man." You do not have the doubts and the fears. You're not alarmed or swayed. You're not, "*Driven by every wind of doctrine.*" Your feet through the years have been planted on the rock Christ Jesus and you shall not be moved.

"And I envy you because, old man, your failures have left you lest cock-sure of your strength and more dependent on God's grace." I find as people grown old in grace and old in faith and old in experience in walking with God, they become less confident of their strength and more dependent on God's grace.

And I find they have less confidence in their faithfulness and more confidence in His faithfulness. Yes, old believer, "I envy you."

I want to point out in the time we have left five things about old age, five beautiful things that are contained in the Word of God:

First of all: I'm going to talk about the memories of old age.

Secondly: I'm going to talk about the hope of old age.

Thirdly: And then the glory of old age.

Fourthly: And the blessedness of old age.

Fifthly: And then the duties which we have as we grow older.

First of all: The memories of old age!

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Listen to David. David wrote in **Psalm 143:5**: *“I remember the days of old; I meditate on them, on all God’s works. I meditate on the works of God’s hands. I remember the days of old.”*

You know, memory can be a punishing thing. Abraham said to the rich man in hell; *“Son, remember.”* Bad memory is a punishing thing when we remember things that are not pleasant. It’s a very punishing experience.

But the memories of the believer are precious. That’s what David’s talking about here. He’s an old man now. He’s talking about how he remembers the works of God. He said, *“I remember the days of old and I meditate on God’s works. I meditate on the works of God’s hands. I remember the days of old.”*

What do we remember? Well, we remember the joys of life, how many good sermons we’ve heard, how many beautiful songs we’ve sung:

**“There’s a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel’s veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”**

**“Shall we gather at the river?
Where bright angel’s feet have trod?
Gather with the saints up the river
That flows from the throne of God.”**

Remember? And then we remember the services we’ve attended, the fellowship with the believers that we have had. We remember how God has providentially led us through this life and met all of our needs.

We remember those sweet times of prayer and communion and fellowship with Christ. And as we remember these joys of life we look back and say:

**“Surely goodness and mercy
Have followed me
All the days of my life.”**

Yes they have, yes they have.

And then we remember the sorrows of life and they’re not unpleasant because looking at these sorrows now we can say our tears have been our teachers. And we have learned more about God’s mercy in the valley of tears than we ever learned on the mountain of joy.

Yes we did. God’s trials have deepened us. And God’s trials have taught us patience. And God’s trials have brought us to the place where we can love and forgive and show mercy.

And yes, we remember the sorrows of life and thank God for every one of them. In His good, merciful, providence He brought them into our lives. And He worked it all out for our good and His glory.

And we remember our sins and we grieve over them and we love Him the more. David said, *“My sins are ever before me.”* But my friend, *“To whom much is forgiven He’ll love much.”* Our sins are all under the blood and we love Him more and more; *“For His precious blood that cleanseth us from all sin:”*

**“Under the blood of Jesus
I’m safe in the shepherd’s fold
Under the blood of Jesus
I’m safe while the ages roll**

**Safe, though the worlds may crumble
Safe, though the stars grow dim
Under the blood of Jesus
I’m secure in Him.”**

That my friends are the memories of old age.

Secondly: The hope of old age.

The hope of old age; what can you say about that? Well, first of all, the hope of the old believer is so different from the hope of the young person. The old believer has few hopes in regard to the vanities of this world. There’s not much left here for him. His bags are packed. He’s going home. He has discovered that there’s nothing of any eternal value in this world. That’s what he’s discovered.

These are the last words of David, David who conquered kingdoms, David who wore crowns and jewels of gold, David who walked in king’s palaces, David who was the greatest ruler of his day.

David; these are his last words after all of it is over, David who tasted every sweet morsel that life could present, finally said; these are the last words of David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel: *“Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation, and all my desire.”*

That’s what it’s come down to; everything is in my relationship with God, in Christ. His covenant of mercy in which He chose me, His covenant of grace by which He called me, His covenant of redemption by which He redeemed me, and His covenant of intercession by which He is my Advocate. That’s it; that’s it; that’s the hope of old age.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:3**; *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us unto a living hope.”* There’s no living hope in this world; it’s a ditto. The flowers are all dead, the trees are dead. Everything about us is dead and we’re dying.

But God hath begotten us in Christ to a living hope, *“To an inheritance reserved in heaven.”* And the ground of this hope is Christ crucified:

**“All my hope on Christ is laid
All my help from Him I bring
He covers my defenseless head
With the shadow of His wing.”**

And the reason that the old believer can have hope is His confidence in God’s Word. The old believer has confidence in the Word of God. To the old believer the Word of God is not just a history book or a doctrinal book or a devotional book; it’s the living Word of God.

It’s become to him the words of life. He lives and breathes by the promises of that book. The Word of God to the old believer is not a source of information or a source of argument but it’s God Word.

It’s his breath and his life and his joy and his refuge. And the object of that hope is to be like Christ, to be like the Saviour. *“Beloved; now are we sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we’re going to be like Him. And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as God is pure.”*

“And if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved; we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” That’s the hope of the believer who has grown old.

What’s the glory of old age? Job said in **Job 19:25**: *“I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day on this earth and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I’m going to see the Lord, whom I shall see for myself and not another.”*

The glory of old age; do you know what it is? It’s graduation. A continued faith will receive a crown of glory. Paul said, *“The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight. I’ve kept the faith. Henceforth, there’s laid up for me (graduation), a crown of righteousness which the Lord God shall present to me in that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing.”*

That’s the glory of old age, graduation. I’m going to graduate someday. I’m going to finish this school of life, this school of sorrow, and this school of trial and I’m going to graduate.

“And there’s laid up for me a crown of righteousness because God loved me and gave himself for me,” not because of the works I’ve done and the sermons I’ve preached and the places I’ve gone in God’s name. When I’ve done everything God’s given me to do I’ve just done what I’m supposed to do. My hope is Christ.

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I don't preach rewards in heaven except this; "*Christ is our reward. And the last shall be first and the first shall be last.*" And the thief on the cross is as near to the throne as the apostle Peter.

What is the blessedness of old age? Our text said this; God said in our text: "*Even to your old age I am He. And even to white hairs I'll carry you and I'll save you.*" Do you know what the blessedness of old age is? Can there be any blessedness about old age when your 80 years old or 85? What is the blessedness?

I think it can be summed up in the words of Roland Hill. He was a very old preacher. And one day he was up preaching into a crowd of people and he stopped right in the middle of his message. This is what he said; "Young people; there's nothing like having your heart fixed. There's nothing like having your heart fixed. Oh Lord God, he said; my heart is fixed. I have been all these years seeking the Lord, now my heart is fixed."

"I am old. I have no doubt about God's elective grace. I have no doubt about the sacrifice of my Lord. I have no doubt about the intercessory work of my Advocate. I have no doubt about the resurrection of my Redeemer."

"I have no doubt about the coming of my King. If any man brings a new theory to me I'll say, away with it. I stand hard and fast on the grace of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. I thank God my heart is fixed."

"*Oh Lord I shall not be moved.*" Old Satan said, "My Lord was gone and would not hear my prayer." But praise the Lord the work is done and Christ the Redeemer is here. "*My heart is fixed.*"

That's the blessedness of old age, having a certain dwelling place, having peace in your heart through Christ, having rest and confidence in the Redeemer. And you can say, "*I shall not be moved.*" I don't want to be moved.

And then in closing, the duties of old age. Now God says to His people, "*And they shall bring forth fruit in their old age.*"

Now my friend; in the pastorate; I have been in the pastorate 29 years almost. I've been a pastor 29 years. And it's sad to say I have run upon some people who, when they get old and their hair gets white and their steps get a little slow and they get some wrinkles; they begin to get a little indifferent about the house of God and the worship of the Lord and the reading of God's Word, prayer, and these things.

But God says, "*That my people are going to bring forth fruit in old age.*" They're not going to be dead branches; "*They're going to bear fruit in their old age.*"

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There are certain things that are the fruits of old believers. First of all, we can bear testimony to those who will listen. Everybody won't listen but somebody will. We can bear fruit to those who listen about the grace of God.

I like to listen to elderly people talk, people of wisdom, people of many years, and people with experience. But I like to hear them talk about the Saviour, about the Lord, and about His grace, and about His goodness.

People will listen when old people talk wisely, not about themselves and their aches and pains, but about their Redeemer. Old person; listen to me, you've got some things to tell. You've got a journey that you've come through. You've got some experiences that ought to be related and in Christ.

And that's one of the fruits of old age; *"Thy people shall bring forth fruit in their old age."* The old aged; they're going to talk about God's grace and God's goodness.

And then we can set an example in conversation and behavior. The example of an experienced believer carries a lot of weight. I had a friend that was holding a meeting up in Olney, Illinois many years ago and the pastor was all disturbed about the Gospel that was being preached.

And his wife was the organist and she was disturbed, and all the deacons were disturbed. And they wanted to stop the meeting and fire the evangelist because he was going to disturb their little social church, their little social gathering, and tear up their organization.

And the pastor met with the deacons and all of them were in favor of firing the evangelist and running him out of town. He was just preaching God's Word.

But one old white-haired man stood up and he said, "Pastor; I'm going to tell you something, that man is preaching the Gospel. You never heard it. These deacons have never heard it but he's preaching the Gospel. He's God's servant and you better not touch him. Don't put your hands on God's servant."

And you know; that old man stood in the gap and the preacher, the evangelist, preached the next night, and they had a revival. The pastor was converted and so was his wife and seven of those deacons because of one old white-haired man dared to stand up in the face of adversity and speak for Christ.

Oh yea; a man of experience can carry a lot of weight. But his failure can do a lot of damage too; don't you forget that. A sour, old person is not a compliment to the grace of God.

And then we can comfort those who are traveling the road that we've already walked. If you've wept, you can weep with those that weep. If you've been tried, you can help those who are undergoing trials.

"When I can read my title clear

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To mansions in the sky
I'll bid farewell to every fear
And I'll wipe my weeping eye

Let cares like a wild deluge come
And storms of sorrow fall
May I but safely reach my home
My God, my Lord, my all."