

Sunday, June 15, 2025 pm

HOW OLD ARE YOU? (Lessons as we age) Genesis 47:8

In our text we find that Jacob is introduced to Pharaoh by Joseph. The story leading up to this was about 20 years in the making. From the betrayal of Joseph by his brothers selling him into slavery to his rise to prominence in the land of Egypt to his reuniting with his brothers, much “water has passed under the bridge.” Now Jacob (Israel) has been reunited with Joseph and soon thereafter he meet Pharaoh, one of the most powerful men on earth at that time. That brings us to our text, *Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How old are you?” And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are **one hundred and thirty years**; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and **they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.**” So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.* Genesis 47:7-10.

In this lesson, I want to focus on the question asked by Pharaoh, “How old are you?” and the answer of Israel, “I am 130 years old”. Even back then, that was “well advanced in years”. Tonight, I want to talk about being older. As we look at this congregation, it is no secret that we are a mature church. Even with recent events, the average age of this congregation is well into our 70s. And as we each reflect on our abilities, we might be questioning our effectiveness as we age. In this lesson, I want to remind us of some lessons directed for the elderly.

I. **The Bible has some things to say about the aged**

- a. **Proverbs 16:31** - The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness. (also 20:29)
- b. **Proverbs 17:6**, Children’s children are the crown of old men, And the glory of children is their father. The aged are often blessed to see their grandchildren.
- c. **2 Corinthians 4:16** – though the outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day.
- d. **Isaiah 46:3-4** – even in old age, God is still God.

II. **We are still useful**

- a. It has been said that **old age is often more about a state of mind** rather than the number of years. The truth is that age is viewed differently by people. Some look to old age with dread and fear and misery, while others view as a time of challenge being “young at heart”, with optimism, hope and anticipation. Some want to just fade away while others want to actively make the best of it. We have likely seen both attitudes, and some that are in-between. To some degree, most can CHOOSE the attitude they will have. But know this, whatever choice one makes WILL have a bearing on your quality of life, and likely that of others around you.
- b. **Not only are the elderly useful, but they are also needed!** There is definitely a place for the aged. And it is tragic when the aged are dismissed as outdated and irrelevant, especially in a church. That church will likely struggle with faithfulness.
- c. **Many Biblical characters were older** – Abraham & Sarah at 100 & 90 had Isaac (Gen. 25:7-8 – he died at 175), Noah built the ark approaching 600 years of age (Genesis 7:6); Moses at 80 started to deliver Israel from Egypt and for 40 years he led them through the wilderness (Exodus 7:7, Deuteronomy 34:7), Anna the prophetess in her 90s (Luke 2:36-37) when she saw the baby Jesus before departing life, Daniel as he continued to serve God and prophesy (spent about 70 years in captivity and

continued to serve a number of years beyond that); John the apostle as he wrote Revelation was aged as was Paul as he faced death (cf. Philemon 9, 2 Timothy 4:6-8), etc.

- d. **God does not judge us based upon our vigor.** The elderly may not move as fast, work as strongly or remember as clearly as they used to, but that is not how God views our lives. He looks at our faithfulness and our heart. Revelation 14:13 speaks of how those who die in the Lord are blessed.
- e. **Titus 2:1-4ff** – Paul gives instructions to older men and women. They are still expected to demonstrate godly attitudes and with such they can have a good impact upon others, including teaching the young.
- f. **Psalm 92:13-14** – *Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing.* When we examine the fruit we are called to bear (e.g., Galatians 5:22-23, etc.), it is not based upon age.
- g. **Psalm 71:18** – *Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.* Make the best where you are at right now. The psalmist desires to teach. And it describes a powerful ability of the elderly – to teach. A study of “elders” helps us understand the need for maturity in the leadership of a church.
- h. **The elderly can be a source of knowledge, both spiritually and about life.** They can also be a source of encouragement by their words and actions (especially attendance). Many, because they have established themselves, are able to financially support the Lord’s work generously. They can keep studying and praying for others, both the saved and lost. And they can wisely voice their concerns when they see things moving in the wrong direction. They can visit others and volunteer to help according to their ability. We can all be examples in the way we live. And SOME have the ability to mentor others to help secure the future of the church (like Paul did with Timothy).

III. Can the elderly relate to the young?

- a. I am reminded of Psalm 37:25, *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.* David is speaking when he is older and reminds us of a fact of life – at one time he too was young. It would do well for those who are younger (notice I did not say “young” – TT), to remember that the elderly have been around and likely have life experience and more time in God’s word (Yes, there are exceptions to this – Eccl. 4:13, *Better a poor and wise youth Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more.* Job 32:9, etc.).
- b. Paul related to Timothy though he was much younger (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12), yet he could send him out to do whatever work was needed with full confidence - Philippians 2:19-20. And he expected others to receive him as well.
- c. Granted there are some (both old and young) who not interested in trying to relate to another generation, but I am convinced that most are willing to give others a chance, BUT they want others to “meet them halfway”. I know that Christians MUST have this attitude regardless of age (Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Timothy 4:12 – youth, be an example; Ephesians 4:31-32, Galatians 5:14-15, etc.).

IV. The elderly are worthy of respect

- a. **Do the elderly want to deprive the young of enjoying life?** Most older people understand that youth is a time to play and more freely enjoy life before the difficult days come. They remember the “good old days”. And while some are bitter toward youth (again, you choose the disposition you want to have), most understand it. But they grieve at: 1) The lack of respect & 2) behavior that they KNOW to be evil and harmful. KNOWING their years are winding down, they are concerned about the direction a society is headed in, and perhaps that includes loved ones who are misbehaving. That is why it is so refreshing and encouraging to see youth that are respectful and dedicated to serving God.

- b. **The question is, are the young willing to try and relate to the elderly.** I see this as a bigger concern, even among brethren today.
- c. **Show respect** - Leviticus 19:32, *'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.* Job 32:6-7 – Elihu waited to speak respecting age.
- d. 1 Peter 5:5 – submit to your elders (while possibly directed to the elder of a congregation, it could also apply to the elderly).
- e. 1 Timothy 5:1-2 be careful before rebuking an elder, exhort him as a father.
- f. Incidentally, this includes parents as well. Proverbs 23:22, *Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.*

Often, because of limitations, the elderly feel useless. It is my hope that we know that we are NOT! In fact, we are here reminded how the elderly can still be useful.

I conclude with this passage, *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed..* Romans 13:11.

EVERYONE is needed, and that does not have an age restriction on it (Ephesians 4:16). What about you? Are you making the most of who you are right now? Think about it!