

Psalm 92

A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.

- 1 It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
- 2 proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
- 3 to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.
- 4 For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
- 5 How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!

(NIV)

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

or (NRSV)

- Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
- 14 They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be [c]fresh and [d]flourishing,
 - 15 To declare that the Lord is upright;

He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

I remember vividly the day I found the first grey hair on my head....I was 26. By the time I was bearing our third child, I had so many I started colouring my hair. I was 36.

What was wrong? Was it that hard to be a minister& a wife and mother?

Most likely that was not the reason at all- only genetics. When I once commented to my dad that I envied his 70 year old sister still her beautiful dark hair he said, oh- she's been gray since her thirties...

"Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life". Proverbs 16;31

No one in the western world thinks like that today... (. Certainly not in our cities, certainly not in Europe. It is no secret that Western Culture worships youth and youthfulness. Every one feels outer pressure to stay looking young. That pressure relented once I moved to a community of predominantly retirees. Annapolis Royal is an exception, once more!)

Old people are respected to the extent that we stay young- in body and in spirit.

Who do you think of, when you read a line like" They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green(or),full of sap..."

There are definitively some that come to mind..the amazing Rev.George Allen

who still leads Sunday evening devotions and singing(!) in the Croskill Court at 103 ? 104?

Most of us yearn for that, or at least to be like the couples we see on the photos that advertise retirement homes: grey haired but full of vitality and smiles. the retirement homes you and I know do they have residents that look fit like the ones on the ads?

The reality of ageing is not so golden.

Is it different for you and I who come to the “house of the Lord” every Sunday?

Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be [c]fresh and [d]flourishing,?

But our church communities have their equal share with the rest of society of humans who experience the not so golden side of ageing!

The tremors and the forgetfulness, the replaced knees and the difficulty hearing and seeing The dentures and the canes, The medical diagnosis of a condition given that sticks to us like a nametag; the lack of sleep in the early morning.... the worries about the future.

Is this biblical promise naive?

The bible knows that old age will try you, test you and can be dark, not golden:

“The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.” ps 90

Ecclesiastes12

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,"

The hands and arms which protect the body, as guards do a palace, shake in old age. The legs, like supporting pillars, weaken. The Grinders are the teeth and those who watch through the windows are the eyes.

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;"

“Doors”: Lips that do not have much to say. “Sound of the grinding” refers to little eating, when the sound of masticating is low. “Rise up” indicating light sleep; “daughters of music”: The ear and voice that once loved music.

The sounds that go with normal life will not be as loud and distinct as they had been, because the hearing is gone. This speaks, also, of a time when the person, who is aged, does not desire the music and parties that went with youth.

Also [when] they shall be afraid of [that which is] high, and fears [shall be] in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:"

Aged fearful of heights. They are not as sure of themselves, as they were in their youth. There is fear of falling and breaking something.

So what does it mean biblically, to be “full of sap” or fresh and green in old age ? Its not having a body that looks young and fit. bucket list, eating dessert first and wearing red hats -though all these things are fun and nice.

Being like a fruitful tree in old age, lush, green... It is a spiritual quality:

Abraham and Sarah....what is the story: picking

up their belongings and setting out on a life time;s journey at age 70, and birthing of a child way way past menopause what is said---their willingness to be open in old age, open to what is coming before them right there, and taking up the challenge with grace.

Anna and old Simeon in the New Testament: the story:

They spend their last chapter at the temple in Jerusalem

Simeon: Waiting, blessing, saying good bye in peace

Anna: Life at the temple another chapter: she was married and is now widowed: She has found a vocation as a prophetess – she is very old....

The description is worthy reading outside of Christmas season: Luke 2:21-38

"We who are old know that age is more than a disability. It is an intense and varied experience, almost beyond our capacity at times, but something to be carried high."
— American Psychologist Florida Scott-Maxwell in *The Measure of My Days*

As persons of faith we have an immense treasure and opportunity in the relationship with God....this relationship must and will evolve; it is our greatest resource...

Worship is such an important part of this relationship... Transforms us into what we are meant to be...

“The churches are full of old people” yes, that is true – because we know we need this relationship, and we need worship:

British “wise woman” and psychologist Helen Luke:

"Here are the proper occupations of old age: **prayer**, which is the quickening of the mind, the rooting of attention in the ground of being; **song**, which is the expression of spontaneous joy in the harmony of the chaos; the **telling of old tales**, which among all primitives was the supreme function of the old, who passed on the wisdom."

— in *Teach Us to Number Our Days*

This is exactly what happens in worship, could that' be the reason we have the biblical promise that we stay green...in the house of the Lord

if we don't consume worship but participate actively, get lost in prayer, praise.and story...

Singing...

Interpret Ps92 first part

An octogenarian told her friends with a radiant smile:

“I have new hearing aids! The most wonderful thing is, I can hear the birds! And there is so much beautiful birdsong in the morning!”

He takes time to enjoy the birdsong! She knows to practice joy!

Prayer:

“Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent”. Ps71:9

— catholic nun and prolific christian writer:

Joan Chittister in [The Gift of Years](#)

"Our moral obligation is to stay as well as we can, to remain active, to avoid abusing our bodies, to do the things that interest us and to enrich the lives of those around us. **Our spiritual obligation** is to age well; so that others who meet us may have the courage, the spiritual depth, to do the same. Abandoning life before life is over is not just resignation; it is not trying to reach for God on God's terms."

Journey of Inner renewal:

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.”

2.Cor”4”16

We can cultivate selflessness, and joy in the simple but most beautiful things:

Journey of Inner renewal:

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.”

2.Cor”4”16