

Aging Gracefully
(Psalm 71 and 92)

I recently returned from Texas after officiating at a wedding ceremony for one of our long time students. So many former students attended, many I haven't seen in years. They kept saying, "Pastor Pettit, you look so good!" Meaning what? "You're not doing too bad... for an OLD MAN!" (You know you're getting old when people keep telling you that.) You also know you're getting old when you go into antique stores and keep saying, "I remember this." Or, when you use valet parking - not because you mind the walk - but because you can't remember where you parked! Someone in Georgia recently told me he knew he was getting old because he could now hide his own Easter eggs. (I'm not quite there yet.)

I don't really mind aging - growing old - as long as I do so gracefully. I was reading through the Psalms this summer and when I got to Psalm 71 (then Psalm 92), I was reminded of the need to keep growing up while I continue to grow old. For that to happen, I must learn to "cooperate" with the seasons of life, make sure my "investments" are worthy of the effort, and continually praise God and give Him thanks.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 makes it clear that there are many different seasons in life - of warfare and peace, of prosperity and adversity, of weakness and strength, of youth and old age. People who age gracefully accept this reality and receive the changes as a call to be flexible and adaptive. There is a beauty and a delight about those persons who accept that life is not static or rigid - that it is not predictable and certainly not controllable. Each "season" presses us into deeper expressions of trust in our God and His grace which is sufficient for our unique needs in each of these seasons. Every seasonal change tills the soil of our lives so that new seed may be deposited resulting in God-ordered "fruit" in our old age (Ps 92:14).

People who age gracefully also have learned to make worthy investments. They have accepted that this world is "passing away" (I Jo 2:17) and recognized the need to be heavily invested in unchangeable reality. They come into old age with a "plus" on the balance sheet of life because they have faithfully laid up for themselves treasures in heaven, not just on earth (Matt 6:19-21). They have invested in the truth - what God says - building their houses of life on rock solid foundations. Not even death can shake such a foundation. They have invested in people, making eternal friends so that "when" the passing away fails (see Lk 16:9), they will have lived lives secured by love, for "love never fails" (I Co 13:8).

Finally, if you want to age gracefully praise God "continually" (Ps 71:6). Nothing awakens us to the realm of the Spirit like thanksgiving and praise in the "all things" of life. Such worship keeps appearances from superceding reality, keep body and soul from taking precedence over spirit, keeps the partial from masquerading as the whole. There is a power to positive "thanking" that lifts us up into the eternal stream of God's purposes, and invites us to be "...filled with His greatness and lost in His love." Genuine "soul music" flows from our very being (Ps 71:22-24), and our lives - even in old age - sing "My God how great Thou art!"



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GREETINGS



CALENDAR



Some of you will notice we've gone to a lighter weight of paper for our newsletter. After 14 years of "paying the price" for the heavier paper, we can no longer justify the "twice as much" cost. Please let us know if you any problems with folds, tears, etc. that create any problems for you.

On the other hand, we do want to thank each and every one of you for your financial support. We are so very blessed by your personal contributions to *One In Christ*. I am still amazed at God's mighty provisions through you in our third decade of this work. We love making the journey with each of you.

Many of us will celebrate our very precious national freedoms this month on July 4th. We will gather together and relax and party and eat without fear. Don't forget those who pay the price to make that happen.

I hope you appreciate daily the freedom that is ours in Christ, no matter the context. It is "for freedom that Christ set us free." We are free to be living and unique expressions of His one-of-a-kind life. Don't neglect such a gift. Don't abuse it by disregarding its intent. Live freely and fearlessly by inviting His free and fearless life to flow through you!

JULY

1,8,15,22,29 CCF
10 Alachua Study

AUGUST

4-8 Tyler, TX (903-561-9995)

SEPTEMBER

15-21 Chama, NM (386-418-0913)
28-30 Binghamton, NY (607-625-4612)

OCTOBER

5-6 Vero Beach, FL (772-563-0430)
17-19 Panama City, FL (850-348-3292)

♥ PRAISE & PRAYER ✝

♥ For our freedom

♥ For grace that keeps us flexible

✝ For those who serve to keep us free

✝ For making worthy investments - truth & people

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