

# **ARM Prison Outreach International**

## **"Ministers' Minute" ---- Volume IV Number 1**

### **Growing Older with God's Grace -- II Samuel 21:15-17**

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Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 37th email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message deals with our ways we can prepare for the limitations of aging. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it! If you would like to receive by email a short PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this sermon, just reply with your request.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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### **Growing Older with God's Grace -- II Samuel 21:15-17**

ITEM #1: Grandpa, were you on Noah's ark? "Why no, son." A long Pause... "Well, Grandpa, how come you didn't drown?"

ITEM #2: Grandpa and granddaughter were sitting talking when she asked, "Did God made you, Grandpa?" "Yes, God made me," the grandfather answered.

A few minutes later, the little girl asked him, "Did God make me too?" "Yes, He did," the older man answered.

For a few minutes, the little girl seemed to be studying her grandpa, as well as her own reflection in the mirror, while her grandfather wondered what was running through her mind. At last she spoke up.

**"You know, Grandpa," she said, "God's doing a lot better job lately."**

These days, older folks may not get the respect they should. Fact is, it's very likely that there are some older people whose help and encouragement have made a critical difference for the good in your life. You've probably told others how important they are to your life. While you still can, be sure to tell **them** as well.

So consider today's message a tribute to older saints... and a wise Word from the Lord on the topic of aging. Our text is II Sam 21:15-17

2 Sam 21:15 Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. 16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new, said he would kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

## **1. PREPARE FOR A REDUCTION IN YOUR PHYSICAL STAMINA. -- 15**

Did you notice that David got tired? "David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted." verse 15. Aging brings inevitable changes to our physical stamina. EVEN

DAVID, THE BOY WHO SLEW GOLIATH, THE YOUNG MILITARY MAN WHOSE EXPLOITS WERE LEGENDARY, EVENTUALLY CAME TO THE POINT WHEN HE TIRED QUICKLY.

HERE'S A LETTER FROM AN OLDER SAINT WHO ADMITS HER LIMITATIONS ..AND DOES IN A UNIQUE WAY...

Dear Son:

I have become a little older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly, I have become a frivolous old gal. I am seeing five gentlemen everyday. Will, John, Charlie, Arthur and Al. As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charlie Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur shows up and stays the rest of the day --his last name is Itis. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life. Oh yes, I'm also flirting with Al Zymer.

Love, Grandma

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh I do it all the time. No matter where I am, in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I ask myself, "Now, what am I here after?"

But seriously, we all are affected by physically wearing down. II Cor 4:16 says, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

Don't be alarmed if you have to budget your energy better, take a few more naps. Even King David knew that physical stamina would diminish as he aged.

## **2. PREPARE FOR YOUR ENEMY'S CONTINUOUS ATTACKS -- 16**

16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new, said he would kill David.

Goliath was gone, but his descendants persisted!

Paul was dogged by his enemies to his dying day.

Satan will not retire from tempting us .. and how tragic for those who have followed to years to tire of resisting temptation in their golden years. For such a circumstance was this scripture written: "**BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING FOR IN DUE SEASON, WE SHALL REAP IF WE FAINT NOT!**" GAL 6:9

SATAN WILL CONTINUE TO BE A ROARING LION THAT STALK ABOUT SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. (I Peter 5:8) Peter was up in years when he wrote that verse!

Don't let down your guard, don't think Satan will turn all his attention to the young, don't assume your enemies will slack off in their pursuit.

Mark 13:13: All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.  
Rev 2:10: ..... Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

### 3. PREPARE TO NEED MORE HELP FROM YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS - -17a

17a But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him.

David realized he needed God's help. He overcame the temptation of pride to resist help from his allies... and an ally named Abishai saved his life! Here is how David's humility was shown in the next chapter:

2 Sam 22:18 He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. 19 They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support.

Our ego often leads us to want to stay young and independent. A little of that can be good, but it's easy for that drive for independence to become a deadly kind of pride that resists what God intends for us to receive from others.

This word is for all of us, but especially for the older folks, especially the Depression era survivors: **DON'T BE AFRAID OR ASHAMED TO ASK FOR HELP!** There have been times when some wonderful Christian seniors have gone without something they really needed because, as they said, 'I DON'T WANT TO IMPOSE ON ANYONE.'

Beloved, listen. If you need the Lord's Supper .. a ride to the Dr. .. some help with a household chore ... or whatever... don't worry about imposing on your Church family. Call us. We'll find somebody to help you!

### 4. PREPARE TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR PARTICIPATION -- 17b

17b Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

David didn't abdicate the throne; he didn't bow out of the picture. **BUT HE MADE ADJUSTMENTS IN HOW HE SERVED THE LORD.**

Like Bible College professor that cuts way back on his traveling, but writes more articles and books. Like an expert carpenter who gives the heavier aspects of the job to his younger apprentices, **AS HE INSTRUCTS AND DEMONSTRATES THE SKILLS OF THE TRADE.** Don't quit, but adjust to get the most out of your abilities and skills while not trying more than is appropriate and reasonable.

I want to close with this tribute to all aging saints....

#### TO THE OLDER CHRISTIAN

You may be growing older  
And your step a mite bit slow,  
You may not move as fast as once,  
But, Oh, God loves you so.

You may think that you're not needed,  
That your work down here is through,  
But, listen, my dear old friend

God has a plan for you.

Your white hair shows the wisdom You've gathered through the years, Your patience stands for victories,

And proves you've conquered fears.

Your sweetness shows that Christ indwells His love in you abides As these virtues flow out from you,

You are blessing other lives.

Oh, don't ever be discouraged If others must wait on you, You've done your share of service,

Just let His light shine through.

So rejoice and live for Jesus, And to others His kindness show, You're still wanted and still needed,

You're still God's servant -- you know!

If you are outside of Christ, isn't it time for you to begin to be an aging saint? There are no other kinds of followers of Christ but AGING followers... don't grow any older before you come to claim HIM as Lord and Savior.

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"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B