

**Bearing Fruit in Old Age**  
**Psalm 92:14**  
**January 4th 2026**  
**Preacher: Pastor Roy Summers**

Shakespeare divided a human life into seven ages, from infant to schoolboy, all the way to soldier, old man and second childhood. But Scripture divides a human life into only two seasons, youth and old age.

Solomon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes in Ecclesiastes chapter 12;

*“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth..”* -what years are those days, Solomon? What are the “days of youth?” All the years... *“before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say I find no pleasure in them.”* Solomon goes on to list the ailments common to old age - diminished sight & hearing, trembling hands, grey hair, so on!

The years of youth are all days when we enjoy the good health that most often accompanies the first decades of human life. And old age are the years when the ailments common to old age beset us.

We tend to think in terms of numbers, with the state telling everyone they are “old” for sure when they hit retirement age of 67 or 68, but Scripture does not label someone “old” until the health ailments specific to old age come upon us. This biblical way, of thinking about youth and old enlarges the number of people which Scripture regards as “young.”

I can remember my godly mother, who enjoyed excellent health until she died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 77, saying to me in her seventies, “We must look after the old folks!” I remember thinking, “But aren’t you one of those “old folks!?” I can see now that she had a biblical view of old age—you’re old when you suffer from the ailments of old age—and I, back then, had an unbiblical “it’s a number” view of old age.

You ask why all this? Well it’s customary on the first Sunday of the New Year to speak about **time**; either retrospectively, the past year, to encourage gratitude, or about the future, to inspire hope.

But this year, we’re looking at time in a different way; last Sunday we considered how a follower of Jesus Christ should think about the season of life called “youth” and today we’re thinking about “old age.” The message Solomon gives to this now large group of “young” people is “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.”

Don’t push God away during this wonderful season of generally good health, vigour, strength, vivacity, energy, gusto, and zeal. There are so many enticing distractions and appealing causes which could easily draw you away from the Lord. Don’t let that happen! Remember him in the days of your youth:

- Speak to him in prayer every day and listen to him through his Word!
- Worship and glorify him in your life!
- Meet faithfully with his people every week
- Seek and do his will!
- Give him your time and money and abilities to build his kingdom!

That's God's Word to young people - of all ages! "Remember your Creator."

And what does the Lord say to saints who are now experiencing the ailments that so often afflict the latter decades of life? Here it is, here is God's Word for you, and look it's a promise:

*"They (God's people) will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming  
"The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."*

Elderly saint, God does not write you off, shunt you off onto some disused siding, he does not dismiss you, discount you, overlook, disregard, belittle or give up on you. The world may despise or ignore the elderly.

Apparently across the world, older folks appear in only 4% of all advertisements. In the UK its better with older folks feature in 23% ads—but that still means older folks are disregarded by the vast majority of advertisers!

But that's not how the Lord regards older saints. And by the Spirit of Christ who dwells within every older saint, they will stay fresh and green and bear fruit in old age!

### **The image the psalmist has in mind**

The image the psalmist has in mind is of a tree, which from *outward appearance*, may look gnarled and wrinkled, but in *actual fact* is still fresh and green on the inside, and proof? It's still bearing fruit!

When we read about this tree image, our minds turn to at least four Scriptures:

**John chapter 15** *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* (15:5)

**Psalm 1** The person who meditates on God's Word is like...

*"a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither, Whatever they do prospers."*

**Galatians 5:22-23**

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."*

## **2 Corinthians 4:16**

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”*

If we put together what the Scriptures teach about older saints we end up with this: **Looks are deceptive** — the tree may look gnarled and its branches twisted on the outside, but inside older saints are “fresh and green” (Ps92). **Older saints have an inner source of divine power** —Christ dwells within them (John 15), by his Spirit (Galatians 5), through the living word (Psalm 1). And that inner divine power **renews them** every day (2 Corinthians 4). So that **they still bear fruit**— which means, remember, always remember that fruit is not for the benefit of the tree, but for the good of those outside the tree who are nourished by it. (The purpose of fruit is not to make the tree pretty—but to sustain needy people around them.) Older saints may live useful lives!

If the word to younger saints was: Remember God in the days of your youth, love him, worship him, serve him, seek his will; the word to elderly saints is this:

1. Adopt a Biblical View of Old Age
2. Enjoy the blessings of Old Age
3. Seek to be fruitful in Old Age

### **1. Adopt a Biblical view of old age**

This point is for all of us. We must challenge the secular view of old age and retirement we are brought up with in the West: which runs something like this: human life divides into a “working season of life” and a “retirement season of life”

- You **work hard** during your youthful years, and **rest** during your later years
- You **make sacrifices** during your early years, its time to **indulge yourself** in the latter years

When I googled the question, “What are we meant to do in old age?” the suggestions I get back confirm this self-centred vision of old age: Sports, Yoga, visits to Museums and Stately Homes, A Day at the Races, Afternoon Tea, reading, puzzles, Day Trips, A Murder Mystery Tour, join a Men’s Shed, so on.

But when we consult God's Word about old age, we're given a different—and far more satisfying—picture of usefulness and service in old age:

- Moses begins his life's main work at the age of 80 and serves until he dies on the job, 120!
- *Daniel* starts his work as a prophet when he was young and covers the 70-year period of exile serving many Persian and Babylonian rulers in that time—he was likely an old man in his 80s when he was cast into the lion's den!
- When Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the temple, this is Luke chapter 2, *two older saints* encouraged the young couple: *Simeon* who was waiting for the Messiah and praised God at the sight of the baby and Anna who 1) worshipped at the temple day and night 2) was

still fasting 3) praying, 4) gave thanks for the child 5) went around telling everyone who was looking for God's Messiah!

- When an *older widow*, in the early church fell on hard times and was seeking financial help, the church leaders were commanded to check if she had the following items on her CV: "well known for her good deeds such as... showing hospitality, washing the feet of saints, helping those in trouble devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (1 Timothy 5:10) What is that implying? That a life filled with service not a life filled with idle pleasure was the expected norm for older saints.

### **Outside of Scripture: Amy Carmichael & Billy Graham**

- *Amy Carmichael* was a single missionary to India, during the last part of the 1800s, first half 1900s. She had a fall at the age of 63 which ended her missionary career. What did she do? Retire? No she continued to serve God's people, now by writing books:
- When did *Billy Graham* write his last book? At the age of 96. He couldn't preach at those great crusades any longer, of course not, but he didn't hang up his boots!

### **In this church family**

- We have wonderful examples of older saints in this church family who are serving God faithfully and sacrificially in old age. Keep going!

We must accept the fact that we will slow down in old, but we must reject the worldly view *that retirement and old age is about selfish indulgence and pleasure.*

Behind the world's impoverished vision of old age lurks the assumption, of course, that there is no heaven beyond the grave. So we must seek our own "heaven" at the end of this short life.

How differently God's people think! We're not looking forward to a brief "heaven" at the end of this life, we're looking forward to an eternity of joy in the new heavens and the new earth to come, which is our final, our real, our eternal home!

So let me ask you, What is **your view** of old age? Are you looking forward—and planning with a big fat pension pot—to a season of pleasure and fun, or are you preparing to serve God—yes at a diminished pace—all the days of your earthly life? We say we follow Jesus Christ, but often our thinking is profoundly affected by the world we live in, is it not?

## **2. Enjoy the blessings of Old Age**

Along with the limitations, there are many blessings of old age: just three:

**1. You have a loving community around you.** Many elderly folks are on their own, loneliness is a growing problem for the elderly in this country. "New evidence" I read on the "Age UK" website, "reveals the scale and health impacts of loneliness amongst older people."

But you have brothers and sisters in Christ—of all ages—around you. Take advantage of every opportunity to be with them! Make new opportunities—invite one another to your home for a meal or a coffee! You may not have flesh and blood family, but you have your spiritual eternal family around you. Count that blessing!

## **2. You are nearer to your eternal home!**

Blessing number two: you are closer to home, than the rest of us!

When Paul was in prison he was forced to think about his own death and this is what he wrote: “*I desire to depart and be with Christ which is better by far*” (Phil 1:23) Older saints, you are closer to that “better by far” than everyone else! What a blessing!

You have a church family around you, you are closer to home and blessing three:

## **3. You have been given special promises!**

The Lord makes special promises to older saints that are not made to younger ones.

*Even to your old age and grey hairs  
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.  
I have made you and I will carry you;  
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.* Isaiah 46:4

## **3. Bear fruit in old age**

What does the Psalmist mean, when he says:

“*They (God’s people) will still bear fruit in old age...*”

Let me list five ways an older saint can bear fruit, they are not exhaustive, work this out for yourself:

### **(1) Become more like Christ—the fruit of the Spirit**

Continue to grow in grace—the process of sanctification never comes to an end! No believer is perfected this life, there is always room to grow::

“*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” Galatians 5: 22-23

Before we came to Worcester both Yvonne and I spent many hours working among elderly folk out there in the world—in care homes and in a geriatric hospital ward. And our joint sober, sad, observation is this: without the Holy Spirit, no one grows old gracefully. The saying that folks “grow old gracefully” is a myth! With every passing year unbelievers become more cantankerous, more disagreeable, more sinful, more difficult to live with! (Romans 6:19)

But older saint, that should not be you! Since the Spirit of Christ dwells within you, make it your aim to bear the fruit of the Spirit and become more like Jesus every day!

**(2) Set a godly example to younger believers**

What a wonderful opportunity older saints have to set an example of joy and perseverance and godly living to younger believers! Make it your ambition to be able to say with the apostle Paul, “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

**(3) Use your wisdom to teach the young.** Russ put Job 12:12 on the notice sheet this week “*Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?*” When you are young you can possess knowledge but you can’t possess wisdom, because wisdom comes with time and experience.

Older saints you have experience to pass on to the young. That’s why Paul exhorts the older sisters to teach the younger sisters in Titus 2. How could you sensitively, wisely, get alongside a younger believer and pass on the wisdom you have acquired?

**(4) Continue to use your God-given gifts.** There is no cut-off age-limit for the spiritual gifts God distributes to his people, listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12.

And when you find the limitations of old age prevent you from serving in practical ways, get yourself promoted to the highest and most noble role in the whole church—a life of prayer, like the aged Anna of Luke 2.

**(5) Pray!**

After my Dad went home in 2004, I found his prayer folder. Some of you have seen this before, but not all of you: all the people and causes he prayed for each day. He could not preach or evangelise anymore, but he could pray. In fact he was so disciplined in his prayer life that when a good friend came to visit him one day, my father asked him to come back later because he hadn’t finished his praying for the day! Prayer had become his work!

Older saints—you could use the church directory—hopefully new one coming out soon—and perhaps pray one page per day? Take the monthly prayer sheet and pray for both congregations and the missionaries mentioned here? You work it out.

### **Conclusion**

- May we all reject the empty selfish vision of old age, so common in the world
- May older saints enjoy the unique blessings God promises to elder saints
- And may our older saints

*“still bear fruit in old age, staying fresh and green, proclaiming “The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.” Amen*