

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Overcoming the Fears of Aging

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Paul does not paint a pretty picture of the natural body at death. His three-word description is “corruption,” “dishonor,” and “weakness” (*I Corinthians 15:42-43*). At death, the body deteriorates to a lesser state like perishable fruit and vegetables turning mushy with mold. With circulating blood no longer flows, decomposition produces a vile, not pleasing odor. Succumbing to death, the body lacks its once vibrant strength.

As one ages, he or she can dwell on the realities of death, or look beyond them with confident hope. Not only can the Christian accept the truth surrounding death, but he or she can embrace the reality of one’s future body. By faith, the follower of Christ knows that if there is a “*natural body*,” there is also a “*spiritual body*” (*I Corinthians 15:44*).

This spiritual body will come forth from the grave when Jesus returns in the Resurrection to destroy the final enemy, death (*I Corinthians 15:24-26*) What was sown at death as corruptible, will be raised in “incorruption.” What was buried in dishonor, will be raised in “glory.” What went to the grave in weakness, shall be raised in “power” (*I Corinthians 15:42-43*). The aging

Christian can face death with the joy, not only of heaven, but rejoicing in the glorious body transporting the Christian’s soul to heaven’s entrance.

As we age, sobering thoughts surface above the mere acknowledgement of death. Will I have a painful death, or will I depart the body with ease? Experiencing the forced shutdown of Covid, the fear of dying alone without loved ones by your side could be a sad reality. Will I be able to retain my dignity, when others find me curled up in the fetal position, diapered, and soiled? Will my saved resources outlive me, or will they fly away in the next catastrophe? Will I be dependent on others for everything?

How do the aging deal with these fears? Should we apply Jesus’ teaching regarding anxiety about tomorrow? “*Do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*” (*Matthew 6:34*). Just put these future possibilities out of your head, and strengthen your faith now? Jesus is teaching us to have faith in God who promises to sustain us with the essentials for the body in this life: food and clothing. Today we can avoid distracting and doubtful anxieties

regarding food and clothing by seeking God’s kingdom first and His righteousness, believing that all “these things” – essentials to sustaining the body- will be added unto you (*Matthew 6:33*).

But when approaching death, how does my faith sustain me when my body shuts down to all food? Death is near, and when it is time to die in accordance to God’s plan, I know that I have no power to retain the spirit nor power over the day of my death (*Ecclesiastes 8:8*).

We can overcome the fears of aging by anchoring ourselves in God’s promises today. God declares, “*I will not leave you or forsake you*” (*Deuteronomy 31:6*) Therefore, we, with the inspired writer of Hebrews, can confidently say, “*The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?*” (*Hebrews 13:6*). Man may keep loved ones from being by my side when I die, but I will not be alone. God is with me!

Knowing we are living for the cause of Christ, we can “...take pleasure in weaknesses, injuries, necessities, persecutions and distresses” (*cf. 2 Corinthians 12:10*). As we age we can continue to say, “*I overflow with joy in all our afflictions*” (*2 Corinthians 7:4*).