

GROW YOUNGER WHILE GROWING OLDER

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-1

When was the last time you went to the doctor for a checkup? If you are past a certain age, these appointments are often a combination of good news and bad news. You might, for example, have good results on your blood work, but you might also have some nagging pain in your back. Those aches and pains are pretty much par for the course; they are reminders that we are all aging. The law of entropy which tells us that natural processes only run in one direction – and that is in a degrading direction – is applicable to our physical bodies. We are deteriorating creatures.

Yet for the Christian, there is a glorious paradox that comes with aging – one that causes a great measure of joy when you could be feeling an increasingly large measure of sorrow since you just cannot do all the things you were once able to do. The words of Paul from 2 Corinthians remind us that these are two simultaneous realities for the Christian.

The first reality is that of aging. That our outer person, our physical bodies, are on the downhill. They are degrading, and all the aches, pains, lapses of memory, and whatever else come along with it. Oh sure – we do all kinds of things to try and postpone or deny this is true. We might nip, we might tuck, we might style, and we might hide, but the truth is there staring us in the face.

It is as Paul would say just a few verses earlier – we are as jars of clay. Frail, fragile, and falling apart day by day.

This truth (and it is a truth) might lead us to depression. In some ways, we are fighting a losing battle and could live out the rest of our days in a depressed

state. But that brings us to the second reality Paul described in these verses. That is, that...

...even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day.

In other words, the inner life of the Christian breaks the universal law of entropy. While everything physical is in a constant state of decay, our inner selves are reversing the trend. Because of God's mercies that are new every morning, and because we are His children, in our inner selves we are growing younger – growing to look more and more like the true children of God even while our outer selves are growing older. Such is the grand and glorious paradox of Christian aging.

What does that mean for us?

1. It means that as Christians, we do not have to chase the ever-elusive promise of youth.
2. We do not have to fix our eyes on the vanity of the physical.
3. It means that we can still steward our bodies, but we cannot have our entire self-worth and value rest on them.
4. And it means we can rejoice even while the shoulders start to ache and the inevitable weight gain sets in.

We can do this if we don't focus on what is *seen* in the mirror, but on that which is *unseen*.

We can do this if we fix our eyes on Jesus, Who not only began our faith but is perfecting it in us.

We can do this if we believe that we are growing younger even as we are growing older.

We can do this!

Written by Michael Kelley

Would you like some to talk to about aging? Stephen Ministers are especially trained to come alongside you to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. Talking about the process of aging is one area they can be especially helpful. There are several ways to make arrangements to talk to a Stephen Minister.

(1) One way is to complete this confidential Stephen Ministry form. Bob Bohler or Deb Williams will then contact you.

OR

(2) Call directly: Pastor Bob Bohler (706-549-9284) or Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator Deb Williams (706-247-9000).