

Psalm 71:1-24

Though Psalm 71 does not have a formal title (superscription), there are good reasons why many, probably rightly, acknowledge David as its author. Not only is Psalm 71 written by a senior, but it reflects the concerns of the elderly.

Summary

Psalm 71 is profitable not only for seniors but for all weary souls who feel that their strength is diminishing or gone and struggle to maintain the life of joyful praise.

1. Old Age Problems vv. 9-11

Many people do not like the thought of growing old. Hence many look for the fountain of youth. According to David, however, the way to address the difficulties associated with old age is to seek help for them from the Lord.

The first problem about old age is weakness, including the loss of both strength and ability (**Psalm 71:9**).

A second problem common to the aged is loneliness.

Thirdly, in old age David faced a host of long-standing problems that have been with him for many years.

The real issue here is not David's weakness, isolation, or array of long-standing problems.

Rather, the issue is the threat that they pose to his joy and ability to live in praise to God.

2. Looking Back vv. 3; 5-7

David's first step in preserving himself from a self-pitying and praise-less life is to look back on the lessons of a lifetime of trusting in God.

Looking back, David is able to describe God in ways that will help him to continue to trust and praise the Lord.

Secondly, David looks on his life and sees himself as "a portent to many" (**71:7**).

A portent is normally thought of as something negative, in which case David was viewed with a general abhorrence because of the trials that he had suffered.

Portent also may have some positive sense, however, since David not only suffered great afflictions but gave public testimony to God's power to save those who believe. David was a forerunner of his great descendant, Jesus Christ (**Luke 2:34**).

3. Looking Forward vv. 14-21

Having looked back on his life for the lessons of faith, David now turns to the future with a renewed hope (**Psalm 71:14**). Even though he is old, David realizes that he will yet have more reasons to rejoice in giving praise to God.

Primary among David's remaining works was to bear testimony to the faithfulness and power of God (**Ps. 71:16-18**)

In order to give this testimony, David sees a new reason to go on living, praying for God to preserve his life "until I proclaim your might to another generation" (**71:18**). Whilst bearing testimony to God's faithfulness and power, David is reminded that a great future yet awaits him.

This should be the perspective of every Christian, young or old.

Whatever sorrows you may now be enduring and whatever trials may lie ahead for you, through faith in Christ "this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (**2 Cor. 4:17**).

4. Persistent Praise vv. 1-5; 21-24

David concludes Psalm 71 on the theme of renewed, eternal praise (**Psalm 71:22-24**).

Our calling in life, like David's, is to bear testimony to God's faithfulness and power through hearts that are joyfully lifted up in praise.

First, David highlights continuing in godly patterns that have previously sustained us.

Secondly, we will persist in praise as we anchor ourselves to great biblical truths.

Thirdly, David's entire psalm is a prayer for God's help in maintaining his joyful praise.

Fourthly, David's prayer points us forward to the future of our salvation in all of its consummate glory.

Having reminded believers that they are children of God and coheirs together with Christ, the apostle Paul concludes: **Rom. 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

David's prayer likewise offers a legacy of hope that belongs to all those who have turned to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 71:21 You will increase my greatness and comfort me again.