

There is a special group of people discussed in Scriptures in whom God takes a special interest; they are the aged or the elderly. There is nothing that thrills God more than when one of His people who have walked with Him for many years continues to maintain a trust and confidence and prayer life with Him.

**Psalm 71 is a Psalm written by one who was older in age.** He had walked with God for many years and was still interested in cultivating that walk with God. **This is a Psalm about finishing life well.** This is a Psalm that presents the idea that older people need to maintain a close walk with God in the twilight years of life because they are not immune to problems or pressures. Older people need to pray. Older people need to maintain faithfulness. Older people need to depend on God. Older people still have some struggles and some battles and they still need God's help.

Proverbs 20:29 says that there can be honor for an older person with gray hair and that is what this Psalm is all about.

**OLDER PEOPLE WHO HAVE WALKED WITH GOD FOR MANY YEARS STILL NEED TO DEPEND ON GOD AND STILL NEED TO WORSHIP GOD AND THOSE WHO DO WILL STILL SEE GOD DO SOME WONDERFUL THINGS FOR THEM.**

We have some great older people in this church, who are very faithful. But quite honestly there are some older people who can go anywhere but to church. There are some older people who can go to the store, go to dinner, go to doctors appointments, go to visit a friend, go to get prescriptions, but they cannot come to church. That kind of older person will never see God do much of anything. God delights in older people who continue to put Him first in their lives and He stands ready to help that type of person in many wonderful ways.

There are four parts to this Psalm:

**PART #1** – The faithful older saint prays to God and asks for His help. **71:1-4**

Let's just think about this key point. A faithful older saint continues to pray. He continues to talk to God and depend on God. There are two observations we want to make:

**Observation #1** - He acknowledges truth about God. **71:1**

The older person has lived life and he has learned that God is his refuge, his rock and his fortress (**71:1a, 3c**). The verb "I have taken refuge" is a perfect tense verb in Hebrew. The verb tense looks back on facts accomplished long ago in the past, which had effects to the present (Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 311). In other words, this older saint was thinking about the fact that he had taken refuge in God a long time ago and God had been and still was his rock and refuge.

What a wonderful thing to be able to look back through the years and see how God has cared for you. This is a lesson that younger people need to learn from one who is faithful and older. There are times when older people lose their memories. This man certainly did not lose it when it came to God. He was thinking and acknowledging great truth about God.

**Observation #2** - He makes His request to God. **71:2-4**

There are four requests this older saint made:

**(Request #1)** - The older saint requests God deliver and rescue him. **71:2a**

This reveals a significant point and that is older people still need help from the Lord. They do not reach a point in which they are not needing God's help and rescue.

**(Request #2)** - The older saint requests God listen to his prayer and save him. **71:2b**

This older saint realized he still needed to pray and he still needed God to listen to him. Just recently the world learned about the suicide of an entertainer who was in his mid 60's. News networks and talk shows have all tried to come up with their reasons for it. Let me give you one simple reason that you can dogmatically present about anyone who commits suicide, that person did not turn to God for help. That person did not get alone with God and ask God to save him.

**(Request #3)** - The older saint requests that God continually protect him. **71:3**

As we age we grow weaker. The hair turns gray, the teeth lose some of their strength, there is more need of naps. But at all times the older saint needs the protection of God. Elderly people who pray may expect that God stands ready to give them His personal protection.

**(Request #4)** - The older saint requests that God rescue him. **71:4**

It is obvious that this older saint still had some enemies. He was a righteous man who was not walking in the ways of the wicked. He was still standing for truth and he was no mambe pambe. He was an older warrior who needed God's help and rescue. He prayed for it and about it.

**PART #2** – The faithful older saint reminds God how he has trusted Him for many years.  
**71:5-11**

This is a wonderful section of Scripture written by one elderly. It is a marvelous grasp and perspective of life. There are five realities brought out here:

**Reality #1** - God had been this person's hope and confidence from his youth. **71:5**

Young people learn this lesson at a young age and it will take you well into your elderly years. God is your hope and you can put your confidence in Him.

Our hope is not in an education, or an occupation, or in a religion or in a relationship or an experience; our hope is in God. Figure that point out at a young age and it will take you far.

**Reality #2** - God had sustained him from his birth. **71:6**

This older saint realized God's hand was actually in his existence from birth. The fact is any baby can die before it is born, when it is born or shortly after it is born. Any baby that lives is sustained by God. This older saint realized that.

**Reality #3** - God had protected and strengthened him. **71:7**

There is no question that when God's hand is on someone, people marvel. One of the great illustrations of this is Jesus Christ. People marveled at the Nazarene carpenter who was the light of the world.

**Reality #4** - God had been his continual praise and glory. **71:8**

Older people can use their speech in a sweeter way or a meaner way. One of the great blessings of a church is to see older saints who are still studying, still worshipping and still praising God. What a blessing to hear older saints talk about the sovereignty of God and the glory of God.

**Reality #5** - God's presence was needed just as much in elderly years as in younger years.  
**71:9-11**

As we get older we lose many things, but one thing we never lose is our need for God's guidance, help and strength. There were people who had watched this faithful believer for many years and some of them were saying God had abandoned and forsaken him and there is no one to deliver him. There is no worse arrow from the quivers of hell than the one that says, "God has abandoned us." That is simply not true.

Elderly people who love the Lord can begin to feel all alone and they can begin to think in ways that are not right. What elderly people need to remember is that they are never alone. God is there with them.

**PART #3** – The faithful older saint asks God to hasten to help him. **71:12-13**

Notice he is still praying about enemies even in twilight years. Not all of them had gone away. He asks God to make his enemies ashamed and consumed, let them be covered with reproach and dishonor. This elderly saint still had some fire in him. He still had enemies who were sneaking around trying to get something on him, so he asks God to help him.

**PART #4** – The faithful older saint expresses to God his continual hope and praise. **71:14-24**

There are eleven verbal praise and hope realities that are brought out in these verses which are wonderful things for an older person to share.

**Reality #1** - He used his speech to testify of God's righteousness. **71:15a**

Now notice the testimony of one faithful is about God's righteousness, not our righteousness.

**Reality #2** - He used his speech to testify of God's salvation. **71:15b**

The testimony of one faithful is about God's salvation, not our works salvation.

**Reality #3** - He used his speech to testify of God's mighty deeds. **71:16b**

Many elderly people talk about what they have done, this faithful saint talked about what God had done.

**Reality #4** - He used his speech to testify of God's righteousness. **71:16c**

Mature people have a sound theological grasp of this point. They understand God's righteousness and are able to teach younger people about it.

**Reality #5** - He used his speech to declare God's wondrous deeds from his youth. **71:17**

One of the greatest things we will ever be able to do in the twilight years of our life will be to remember back and testify of the wonderful things we have seen God do in our lives.

**Reality #6** - He used his speech to declare God's strength even in old age. **71:18-19**

Older people may be frail people, but they also should be fruitful people. They can still talk and still witness and still declare truth about God's Word and God's work.

**Reality #7** - He used his speech to express the hope that God would revive him and exalt him. **71:20**

Older people need to continually ask God to revive them for the work of God. When you focus on the troubles and distresses of this world and life, it does wear you down. This elderly saint prayed to God and asked God to revive him and raise him up and use him.

**Reality #8** - He expressed the hope that God would increase his greatness and comfort. **71:21**

Notice this older saint did not try to increase his own greatness, he asked God to do it. God can greatly use older saints for His work, for His church, for His purposes. God can give tremendous comfort to one who is older.

**Reality #9** - He used music to express truth about God. **71:22**

One of the great testimonies of God is when we see older people who are still singing and still playing instruments. By the way, carefully observe that this older saint was concerned about communicating truth through his music.

**Reality #10** - He used his speech to express joyous praise to God. **71:23**

This older saint wanted to sing praises to God about how God had redeemed his soul.

**Reality #11** - He would continue to testify of God's righteousness all day long. **71:24**

Here is the key to a joyful life in the elderly years; keep the focus on God. Don't sit around thinking about yourself, or your failures or your problems, keep your focus on God.

This Psalm describes the kind of older saint we should all want to be because this is the kind of older saint that truly does bring glory to God.

#### **PARTING THOUGHTS:**

- 1. Older believers will still have some struggles and trials and these things may be used to draw one closer to God.**
- 2. Older believers are vital to the work of God.**
- 3. Older believers still need to depend on God.**
- 4. Older believers still need to learn and grow in God's Word.**
- 5. Younger people who commit their lives to the Lord will have a great advantage when they get older.**

**Someone once said the important thing is not that we add years to our life, but that we add life to our years. That comes with a focus on God.**