

**Ecclesiastes 12: 2-4; “The Keepers of the House”, Message # 80 in the series –
“Remember Your Creator”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
February 20th, 2022, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

It is very hard to believe, when we are younger, that we will ever grow old; that the time will come when the powers of our physical body, and even the perceptions of our mind and eyes will grow dim and eventually fail. And yet it is very true that with each of us, we shall, unless the Lord returns for us first in His Second Coming. Hebrews Chapter 9, verse 28 says, “And as it is appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment, even so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.” “To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

In these verses here, Solomon gives to us a pictorial description of what we are to expect when old age comes. We are to use this description as a motivation to “Remember our Creator in the days of our youth”, before these things happen. So in this message I want to take the first half of these descriptions of old age, verses 2-4, to look at them to understand them. And then in my next message to you we will look at the last ones given, verses 5 and 6, the next time I speak to you from this passage. 1st of all – Old age is a time when the higher powers of our being shall darken. And 2nd – Old age is a time when the body which is our house shall decay. May the Lord help me to draw suitable applications from each of these observations.

1st – Old age is a time when the higher powers of our being shall darken.

Verse 3 says, “While the sun and the light, the moon and the stars, are not darkened, and the clouds do not return after the rain...” The sun, the moon, and the stars are those heavenly bodies which give the earth light. That is what they were created for, by God, in the beginning. You can see this if you will turn with me over to Genesis Chapter 1, verse 14. “Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so.” “Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” “He made the stars also.” “God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.” “And God saw that it was good.”

These verses are speaking of the physical heavens and earth, of which man was the highest created thing in it. When God created man in the beginning, He created him upright. He created him after His own image and likeness with his mind filled with the light of life. Man was created to think and to reason; to have this light of life within himself, and to respond righteously to all that God would command him to do. He would have the power to ponder and to reflect upon God’s word to him; to do it as God spoke it to him. He would reflect the glory of God, like the moon reflects the Sun’s rays, and he would think specifically, in many particular ways, of how he could do what would please God the most, and what particular kind of obedience would satisfy God the best, and this all would be the Sun, the moon, and the stars of his particular personal universe.

The sun, the moon, and the stars were also given for signs and for seasons, for days and for years to be measured by. They were given to divide the light from the darkness. The mind of man and his faculties of reasoning and discernment were all given to him by God to be able to see what he needed to see and to do in relation to God and other men. They are his governing faculties. He was created by God in the beginning to be able to think and to see and to do things for God’s glory when all was well with his soul in the beginning of the world. We know from reading Genesis Chapter 3, however, that man fell from His original righteousness, and now he can no longer govern himself righteously, apart from the grace of Christ given to him in

salvation. In the garden of Eden, all was light and life with the first couple, until Satan came into the garden and deceived Eve. When sin entered in to man's being at the fall, then darkness entered with it so that all of man's higher powers and faculties were affected by it. If you will turn over to Isaiah Chapter 13, verse 9, and you will see this truth taught to us concerning a sinful society and nation; that is Babylon. All of her higher powers and governing authorities were punished for their sinfulness.

"Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it." "For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine." "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." "I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir." "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger."

What is being taught to us here is that long-term un-repentance of sin in society brings God's punishment and judgment, and in this case it meant that their king, their queen, and all of their noble men, ceased to be lights to them as a part of their punishment. That is what is meant by the sun, the moon, and the stars, in prophetic picture language here. Even so, the mind, the heart, and the affections of man have all been affected by sin so that they no longer are able to perform their office. But even though man fell from his beauty and glory in the garden, God's intention for his creature man was that He be restored through Jesus Christ our Lord. Since the great enemy to that restoration was sin, this was what Jesus Christ would come to deal with.

Turn with me over to Judges Chapter 5, verse 31. "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord!" "But let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength." How do sinners come to be those who love God and have the higher faculties of their being restored so that they can shine like the sun when it comes out in full strength? It is only through Jesus Christ our Lord. Turn with me over to John Chapter 8, verse 12. "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world.'" "He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." So Christ is the Sun of righteousness, it says here, and He shines into the darkness of the heart of the one whom God chooses unto salvation.

Look also over at John 9, verse 39. "And Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.'" Those who believe in Jesus have spiritual sight given them. The glorious faculty of spiritual sight, eyes, are given to them to see. Turn over to Matthew 5, verse 14. "You are the light of the world." "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house." So, here we see that in conversion to Christ, a lamp that is lit and it is placed in the soul. And you and I who believe are to let that light shine in such a way that it gives light to others.

Look also at Ecclesiastes 8, verse 1. "Who is like a wise man?" "And who knows the interpretation of a thing?" "A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face is changed." You can see here the changes which Christ's grace makes in the life of a person who was formerly only a sinner, can't you? Now he has found wisdom in his inmost being. Now, he is being transformed from the sadness which sin brings, to the joy and gladness which salvation brings. It causes his face to shine. Ask yourself now whether your face reflects the reality of Christ's grace which saves and transforms your soul. This will do you in good stead, even when the realities of old age set in, as we shall see in our 2nd point.

2nd – Old age is a time when the body which is our house shall decay.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and as it says in verse 2b – "before the clouds return after rain, and when the keepers of the house tremble,

and the strong men bow down; when the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows grow dim.” This phrase, “the clouds returning after rain”, refers to the older person having trial upon trial come upon him without really having time to regroup from the first trial. The physical body of a person is pictured here as a house. The “keepers of the house” are said to tremble. We must understand from this that even the strongest believer, physically, will eventually come to a time where their strength will begin to fail them.

This is why it is so very important that you have come to know the Lord when you are a youth. You have much time to learn His ways, and to consider His thoughts which are found in the Bible. As a believer you have come to know and to realize that God is your strength in every sense of that word. Let’s look at a few verses here to confirm this. 2nd Samuel 22, verse 32 – “For who is God, except the Lord?” “And who is a rock, except our God” “God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect.” “He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and set me on my high places.” “He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”

Now, you will notice that David said this while he was still a younger man. Even though he was very strong physically, he did not attribute any of his physical strength, or ability to do valiantly in the battle of war, to himself. He attributed it to God. Here is how you can remember your Creator in the days of your youth; by remembering that all the physical strength that you have comes from God, and it is He alone who can teach you the right way to use that strength wisely, and skillfully. Let me ask if you are a person who prays in this way? Do pray to use the strength which God has given to you, wisely? Do you see Him as the One who give you your strength and who makes your way perfect?

O what a precious lesson is here, not only for the young person, but for all of us! A person who walks in the flesh, walks in his own earthly wisdom and his own selfish power, but a person trusting in walks in the strength of the Lord His God. But even in the life of the finest believer, that physical strength that they are given will eventually at some time, begin to fade and fail. The keepers of the house, that is his arms with which he used to be able to pull back the bow of bronze, cannot pull it back any longer. The “strong men”, or the legs which before were so strong and swift are now bowed with age, and it is harder to walk.

Even eating becomes difficult because some of his teeth (the grinders) are missing. Those who “look through the windows grow dim”; that is the older person’s eyes grow dim and fail to be able to see things clearly. The “doors are shut in the streets”; that is, it is hard for the older person to be able to eat, to speak, and to have all the bodily processes function in the way that they normally had for so many years. It becomes hard to sleep when, “the sound of a bird” causes him to wake up. Even the joys of music are not what they used to be. Singing becomes difficult and even listening to good music from the daughters of song becomes hard to bear.

Turn with me over to 2nd Samuel Chapter 19, verse 31. Here we see King David being restored to his kingdom after the rebellion and attempted coup by his son Absalom had been put down. It says this: “And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan.” “Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old.” “And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man.” “And the king said to Barzillai, ‘Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem.’”

“But Barzillai said to the king, ‘How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?’ “I am today eighty years old.” “Can I discern between the good and bad?” “Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink?” “Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women?” “Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king?” You see, this is what old age had come to mean to this dear godly man. Many things were difficult and burdensome to him, but he would still be loyal to his king and friend David. This is

how it is with you and I who would be godly in our older years. Many things physically will become burdensome, but yet our loyalty will be to our King, our Lord Jesus Christ. Well then, how can we live joyfully and profitably to the glory of God in our old age? Turn over with me to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 4, verse 16. “Therefore we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” “For our light affliction, (that is what Paul calls old age here) which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.”

“For the things which are seen are temporary, the things which are not seen are eternal.” “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, (this physical human body) is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.” “For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, (that is to die physically) but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.” “Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” “So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.” “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

I hope that you can see from this dear believer, that the Christian life is not to be lived as though there is no hope. Paul says here – We do not lose heart. Even though the outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. Paul calls the pains of old age a momentary light affliction that is going to give way to an exceeding and eternal weight of glory when we die. We are looking at the things that are not seen; that is, we are looking towards heaven, the place where we are going, and Christ, our Wonderful Savior and Lord who we will meet there. Yes, we will groan at times now, in this body, in our Old Age. We see the corruption which sin and death bring. But, since we know the Lord, we can always be rejoicing in the sure and certain hope of eternal life. Because, we know that very good things are coming, The very best of things are surely coming, to every one of us who will hold fast our confession of Christ. May it be so with each of us.