

Discipleship 6

Giving It Back

1. Review
2. Introduction:
 - a. **Jokes:** Jeanne Calmert, at 120 years-old, was the oldest living human whose birth date could be authenticated. When asked to describe her vision for the future, she replied, “Very brief.” When a reporter asked what she liked best about being so old, she answered wryly: “Well, there’s no peer pressure.”
 - b. A young child asked a woman how old she was. She answered, “39 and holding.” The child thought for a moment and then asked this question: “And how old would you be if you let go?”
3. We are all growing older! Is anyone getting younger here?
 - a. Over the years, I have had conversations with seniors, who believe that they have done “their time” in the church and are content to wait out their last days in idleness. Others think they have nothing to offer.
 - b. They tell me, “Don’t ask me to help anymore...I’ve done my time.”
 - i. If that is how you sometimes feel, I would like you to tell that to Abraham and Sarah.
 - ii. Or tell that to Moses who was assigned to lead Israel out of Egypt at the young age of 80.
 - iii. Or tell it to Zechariah and Elizabeth..
 - iv. These folks were all too old to be used by the Lord...right?
 - v. I think that as we grow older, our responsibilities and burdens grow, not lessen.
 1. I think of Bill Hill who wasn’t willing to stop living until the Lord took him home. He disciplined others, met with many, encouraged folks...up to his last weeks here on earth. He wasn’t going to rust out! He had too much to give away before he was to go home with Jesus.
 - vi. I think that most of us don’t realize what God has given us which in turn affects what we give away. If you only knew the treasures God has given you, you would be far more generous with it!
 - vii. Oswald Chambers made it clear to what a treasure is: “When you meet a man or woman who puts Jesus Christ first, knit that one to your soul. Don’t let them get away! You need them. You need to sit at their feet and listen to every story they have to tell. You are to extract every truth from them that God has for you.”
4. Caleb’s testimony: Joshua 14:9-12 "*So that day Moses promised me, 'The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your special possession and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.' 10 'Now, as you can see, the LORD has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise – even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old. 11 I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. 12 So I'm asking you to give me the hill country that the LORD promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the Anakites living there in great, walled cities. But if the LORD is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the LORD said.'*"
 - a. I want to be like Caleb.
 - i. I want the last part of my race to be the best part of my race.
 - ii. I want to run with perseverance the race that is marked out for me.
 - iii. I want people to say, “He keeps getting better with time.”
 - iv. I want my ending years to be characterized by being fully and wholly energized by the Holy Spirit.
 - v. How about you?
 - vi. And I want to give away what God has given to me. Pray with me, “Lord, giver of life and love, open our eyes to the treasures you have given to us that we might also pass them on. In Jesus Name, amen.”

5. A few months ago, God spoke very clearly to me in my quiet time from a Psalm. It impacted me so greatly that I typed it out and hung it in my office.
 - a. *Psalm 71:18 "Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God. Let me proclaim your power to this new generation, your mighty miracles to all who come after me."*
 - b. Most people who come in my office see that and laugh at the "old and gray" part. I get to smile and tell them I have had grey hair since I was in my early forties! But the impetus behind the passage isn't so much about my age, but rather about what I will do with my advancing years. As I look at the hourglass of my life, I find that there are fewer grains of sand left in the hourglass today than there was when I was a young man. They are slipping away and I ask God, "what have I done with all the treasures you have given to me?"

6. Lets look at Psalm 71:18 in context and see what God is saying to us about discipling others:
 - a. (NLT) v16-19 *"I will tell everyone about your righteousness. All day long I will proclaim your saving power, for I am overwhelmed by how much you have done for me. 16 I will praise your mighty deeds, O Sovereign LORD. I will tell everyone that you alone are just and good. 17 O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood, and I have constantly told others about the wonderful things you do. 18 Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God. Let me proclaim your power to this new generation, your mighty miracles to all who come after me. 19 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the highest heavens. You have done such wonderful things. Who can compare with you, O God?"*
 - i. David recounts what God has done in the past: "You have taught me."
 - ii. He then describes the present: "To this day I declare your marvelous deeds."
 - iii. And he looks out into the future: "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me."
 - iv. His overriding concern is that he wants to live long enough to "declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come."
 - v. Do you see the stages of life here? He remembers his youth, then describes middle age and looks ahead to the golden years.
 - vi. There are a few things we need to understand about this:
 - b. **You must first know God before you can show Him to others:**
 - i. The word "declare" here is different than just "telling," it means to "testify" about what you have seen and experienced!
 - ii. It is pretty hard to tell someone about what God has done if you aren't walking with Him. So the starting place for a discipler or mentor is to be one who has an authentic walk with Jesus.
 1. Would most of us here say that King David had some "stories to tell" about what God did on his behalf? Of course!
 2. How about you? Do you have some stories to tell? I am seriously thinking of writing down some of the "mighty miracles" God has done in my life or allowed me to witness.
 - iii. Floriene Collins (If you don't know her, you gotta go visit and spend some time chatting with her) told Jennifer and I about God's provision and a \$5.00 bill.
 - c. **We need to live with urgency.**
 1. Old age does not provide an "out" for us, nor does gray hair disqualify us. Actually, it's just the opposite because the older we get the greater the urgency we should feel to intentionally impact the next generation.
 2. *The evangelist John Wesley served the Savior in his senior years. In his lifetime he rode 350,000 miles on horseback and preached some 40,000 different sermons. At the age of 83 he complained because he could only study for 15 hours a day. At the age of 86 he was concerned that he was becoming slothful because he was sleeping in until 5:00 a.m. At 87 he learned his eleventh foreign language. At 88 he was worried because he could only preach twice a day six days a week.*
 - a. That is living with urgency!

3. David is requesting that God would sustain him long enough so that he could leave a legacy for the next generation, to all who are to still to come?
 - a. He's not just thinking about himself or his ease.
 - b. He's determined to declare his faith to those who will follow him.
7. Are there any Caleb's here today? Any John Wesleys who don't want to put their lives on the shelf but want to make sure that they leave a legacy for the next generation?
 - a. **The most accurate translation:** There is a story about four preachers discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the American Revised Version best because it was closer to the original Hebrew and Greek. Still another liked a contemporary version because of its up to date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent for moment, then said, "I like my, mother's translation best." Surprised, the other three men said they didn't know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes," he replied. "She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw."
 - b. **We must not deny the next generation their inheritance.**
 - i. Folks, you have a legacy that needs to be shared. There are young Christians here in this church who need to hear what God has done in your life, who need to see your life in action, so they can know the power of God.
 - ii. When you skip out on Sunday evenings, you rob the young of their inheritance.
 - iii. When you decide you are "too old" to mentor someone, you bury your treasure.
 - iv. When you choose to spend your time by yourself instead of investing in another...you are disobeying the explicit instructions of God.
 - v. Titus (Paul tells him to get the older women to teach the younger).
 - vi. **One senior citizen has put it this way, "You know, as I got older I realized that I was beginning to come up with some answers to questions of life that so long had stumped me. And just about then I realized that nobody was asking me the questions."**
8. Close with quote from Charles Hadley Spurgeon "Though your joints are rather rusty, and your limbs can hardly bear you to the battlefield, yet limp to the conflict, for the lame to take the prey. He who helped you when you were but a youth and ruddy, will help you now though you are old and infirm, who knows what you may do yet? Oh, my honored brethren, revered for your years, show us your metal. Let the young ones see how victories are won...and let us see how he who is washed in the blood of Jesus would not hesitate to shed his own blood in the Redeemer's cause. Your zeal will stimulate us, your courage nerve us, and we, too, will be valiant for the Lord God of Israel. So may God's spirit work in you and in us. Amen." ("The Old Man's Sermon," www.spurgeon.org)