

**The Mature Life [Psalm 102]**  
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## INTRODUCTION

1. Since ours is a younger church, there are certain topics we don't usually engage with.
  - a. Tonight, I'd like to discuss something that happens to you daily, but you often ignore
  - b. I'd like to talk about the subject of aging.
    - 1) We live in a youth dominated culture, where people fear getting older.
    - 2) You now notice stars/starlets in their forties doctoring their look to stay youthful
2. And while Benjamin Button, the movie about the man living life backwards, seems interesting, even that script talked about how unavoidable the years become.
3. The seasons, specifically Epiphany, make us cognizant of our accumulated years.
  - a. These offer moments of frozen time through which we examine our past.
  - b. And that's why Christians love these stories surrounding Jesus' birth.
  - c. These stories—shepherds, angels, stables, wisemen—are part of the experience.
  - d. Of all XMAS narratives, there's one right after Jesus' birth preachers rarely preach.
    - 1) Usually we're ready to move on after XMAS so we all move on
    - 2) The story of Jesus dedication of the temple is found in the gospel of Luke:

## Luke 2:22-24

*"When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: a pair of doves or two young pigeons."*

1. This event occurred about forty days after the birth of Jesus, fulfilling two religious laws
  - a. The purification of Mary after childbirth and the presentation of Jesus before the Lord
2. We want to examine this in light of our studies of the Psalms.
  - a. A psalm often associated with tonight's narrative, written 1,000 years before Jesus.
  - b. Let's look at some selected verses within Psalm 102.

## VERSES 1-5

Hear my prayer, O LORD; let my cry come to you! <sup>2</sup>Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! <sup>3</sup>For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. <sup>4</sup>My heart is struck down like grass and has withered; I forget to eat my bread. <sup>5</sup>Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh.

1. Not all of this early description is limited to aging, but it is apparent in a later verse.
  - a. **Verse 12** reads that *"My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass."*
  - b. Read the rest of the descriptions in light of this, and it makes sense.
    - 1) This kind of cry/petition reflects a familiarity between the author and his God.
2. This is the kind of relationship forged over years.
  - a. It's something you often see with married people as they deal with each other.
    - 1) Twenty+ years of marriage has afforded Kelly and I this convenience.
    - 2) If you heard how we communicate with each other, you might wonder
    - 3) But are words between parties that understand each other are blunt.
  - b. Author speaks of illness and isolation, something that happens to many and will more
    - 1) It'll be fascinating to see what the future holds for old people.
    - 2) This time of year, we used to frequent nursing homes to see people.
    - 3) Christmas in a nursing home can be incredibly disheartening.
3. The story of Jesus' birth includes the engagement of an older man.

## Luke 2:25-27

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required."

- a. Simeon, a righteous man, was a righteous man who might also had been a priest.
  - 1) Like many in this day, he was waiting for Israel to regain its former status.
  - 2) For hundreds of years, the nation was not whole, a result of its turning from God

\*This isn't a modern parallel, as they were God's chosen people and didn't obey
- b. The people were awaiting a Messiah, a Savior, someone to make them whole again.
  - 1) Simeon was moved by the Spirit to go to the temple to see this call answered.

\*\*\*Let's continue by examining the words of the Psalmist.

## VERSES 12-17

<sup>12</sup>But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations.

<sup>13</sup>You will arise and have pity on Zion; it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come.<sup>14</sup>For your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust. <sup>15</sup>Nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory. <sup>16</sup>For the LORD builds up Zion; he appears in his glory;<sup>17</sup> he regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer.

1. When you're a crotchety old fogey, you'll have some gruff times to be sure.
  - a. But our devaluing of aging is shown through the lack of appreciation of wisdom.
    - 1) Sure, the older we get, often the less technologically adept we are.
    - 2) But it also brings out the results of experience: patience and grace.
  - b. Even though the psalmist pleads the Lord, the basis of his faith is God's previous acts.
    - 1) God will rise and deliver his people because it's in his way.
    - 2) Life proves us that even when we're beyond despair, God sees his people through
    - 3) This psalm is a prayer for God to move again, like he's done in the past.
2. Back to the narrative of the temple, Simeon understands this is one of those moments

## Luke 2:28-32

*"Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.'"*

- a. You see, here we have, not only wisdom inspired by the Spirit but by age.
  - 1) The older we get, usually the tamer we get.
  - 2) I get tired of young punks who want to throw down over every issue.
  - 3) Youth wants to fight over every issue, Maturity knows what comes with battle
- b. Simeon wasn't a youthful revolution, longing for the annihilation of the Romans.
  - 1) Instead, as he held baby Jesus, he saw the potential for world peace.
  - 2) Although it was Israel's waiting, he saw it as good news for all people.

\*\*\*Let's see this concept affirmed by what the psalmist himself wrote

## VERSES 18-22

<sup>18</sup>Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD: <sup>19</sup>that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, <sup>20</sup>to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die, <sup>21</sup>that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD, and in Jerusalem his praise,<sup>22</sup> when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

1. Friends, don't overlook what we just read. This is the story of Christmas from Psalm 102.
  - a. This was written for YOU three thousand years ago to understand the importance of this

- 1) VS19: God looked down from heaven and saw us prisoners with a death sentence.
  - 2) This is what you & I are: enslaved by sin, living a life of delusion that we can save us.
  - 3) The coming of the Messiah generates praise and amazement from us.
2. That's why I just love this verse from the narrative after hearing Simeon's words

### **Luke 2:33**

<sup>33</sup>The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

- a. That's what all parents think about their newborn babies.
  - 1) They think that everything their baby does is revolutionary.
  - 2) The hours and hours of videotape of babies that are never watched again . . .
- b. But here, the parents of Jesus had reasons to marvel at their child.
  - 1) A note about a current event that I feel must be stated:
  - 2) The veneration of **Mandela** simply cannot compare to that of Jesus.

\*\*\*Concluding this psalm, is an interesting conclusion.

### **VERSES 26-28**

<sup>26</sup>They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, <sup>27</sup>but you are the same, and your years have no end.<sup>28</sup>The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you.

1. The "you" referenced here, is directed to the Lord. The words of the aged rings true:
  - a. All people perish, but God will continue. Age teaches you this.
    - 1) Youth feels invincible, but we are moving towards death.
    - 2) The certainty can be summarized in two statements
      - a) God will remain when we're gone
      - b) Those who follow him sit secure in their eternal plights.
2. Looking at the future of Jesus' life, Simeon had some harsh words for his family.

### **Luke 2:34,35**

<sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup>so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

- a. Jesus' coming would cause a disruptive experience.
- b. Even peace comes with chaos.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. The story of the birth of Jesus with Simeon speaks to the aging process  
Youth and Age, Hope and realization
2. They are all realized in the birth of Christ.
3. During this winter season, we need to come to grips with where we are headed.
  - a. YOU WILL GET OLDER. YOUR TIME IS LIMITED.
  - b. PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE ONE WHO CONTROLS TIME AND IS WITHOUT LIMITS.