

Old and Gray, Fresh and Flourishing

Psalm 92 – righteous man is planted in the Lord's house – described as fresh and flourishing, still bearing fruit in old age. The place to bear this fruit is within the church. The church cannot function effectively without the wisdom resident in the older men.

The body of Christ is organic - The Body of Christ is divine life incarnate. It is the truest form of life. (John 1:1-4). Organic life consists of a set of highly specialized, highly interdependent functions, each of which is vital to the whole. The parts are not interchangeable. (Eph 4:7-16)

Spiritual Gifts Given For All- Paul addresses in 1 Cor. 12. They are given for the profit of all. Like marriage. Two become one flesh, one body - and in becoming one, you give up authority over your own body. (1 Cor 7:1-5) The gifts are distributed throughout the body by the precise placement of God. God placed each one where he pleased and, the body grows with the effecting working by which every part does its share.

The Glory of It All - If we do not comprehend the glory of our position in Christ's body – there is no point in attempting to understand our particular duties. We must see Christ, to see our place in the Father, in Him, to stir up our love and comprehension of Him, and in doing so, to also guide us in the way that He would have us serve Him. (Eph 3) We must remember what it was like to be outside the house of Israel in the time of Christ. Let us Gentiles remember how hopeless our ancestors' plight was. Matthew 15:21-28

Diversity – Individuals vs. Categories. When we look at the nature of spiritual gifts, it is valid to think of this normally in the sense of individuals. But, there is also a very real sense in which this is true of categories of people. Not only did God equip individuals uniquely, but He also has gifted categories of mankind differently – generally speaking. Men and women, old and young, etc.

Young and Old -Young and old men have different gifts. (Prov. 20:29) Young men are gifted with strength. And, the kingdom of God has a place for this glory. But old men are gifted with wisdom. Job 12: - Wisdom is with aged men, And with length of days, understanding.

Disaster of unbalanced strength We are courting disaster as a body if we seek to function on all strength and no wisdom. Example of Jeroboam – Solomon's son. Rejected counsel of elders – went with his peers. Divided kingdom resulted. 1 Kings 11:41 – 12:1-15

Does Not Presuppose Public Service You must serve the body with your wisdom. This does not presuppose that your service will be of a public nature. Jethro – Moses' Father in Law. His wisdom was essential in the establishment of the Israeli government in the wilderness. But his influence was very discrete. Exodus 18:13-27.

Circling back Around – Psalm 92:12-15 - The psalmist speaks of a righteous person – how he bears fruit. He does so by being planted in the house of the Lord. In the light of the New Testament, we do this by abiding in Christ. John 15. We must feed on Him. He is our life. To abide with Him is to obey His commandments. His commandment is to love one another. This is how we bear much fruit. This is how we glorify the Father. This is how we stay fresh and flourishing, even in old age.

Preached by Chris Butaud February 8, 2004