

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

22 June 2025

Come, Grow Old Along with Me

Text: "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging bread." Ps. 37:25

The stage of life we know as old age has been called "the sunset years."

And when is that age now?

I say it begins at 80.

How about you?

I would imagine that Wyatt would say that it begins much earlier.

It used to be about 50.

But I was still in great shape at 50.

So most of us are in our "sunset years."

Calling our decline the "sunset" years gives it a touch of class.

They say these can be very special years.

They are different for sure.

I imagine that whether they are good years or bad years depends on us and how we approach them.

Attitude is everything concerning most things in life.

What is your attitude about aging?

I had an aunt that could not stand the thought of being 80 years of age so she died at 79.

I do not mind the number of years that I am but I do not like the decline in my thinking and ability to get things done.

This time period can be a significant chapter in our human pilgrimage, a time for growth, learning, and greater maturity.

One way to look at it is: we must not be done yet for God has left us here.

A positive way is to say that we still have work to do for him so here we are.

Senior years are not a time to be put on a shelf and forgotten or stop being productive.

Our productivity might change but there are still many things we can do.

And we have life experience to help us do it.

Defining the sunset years.

The sunset years are not isolated from the rest of life.

We are becoming now what we will be at each stage of life.

If you pollute a stream at its source, then you pollute the whole stream.

But if you make it pure and sparkling at the source then you have the potential of keeping it useful throughout its flow.

Age is not a matter of the calendar.

Age is more than just chronology.

A cardiovascular surgeon has said, "Some of the patients I see are forty, but their vascular system is seventy. Others who are seventy have a vascular system with the elasticity of a person who is thirty-five or forty."

Some have concluded that we are as old as our arteries.

While this may be true medically, it is not the whole truth.

We are also as old as our attitudes.

In old age we can still be hopeful as we face the future.

General Douglas MacArthur wrote: "People grow old by deserting their ideas. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your

doubts; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fears, as young as your hope, as old as your despair.”

Age is a process from which none of us is exempt.

It is one for which all of us might as well learn to be grateful.

Some cultures honor age.

They have a tradition of honoring those who have gray hair, those who have wisdom that comes from experience.

But in our youth-oriented culture, it is the opposite.

The aging process keeps plastic surgeons in business.

A growing group.

There are more elderly among us than ever, and there are going to be more still.

There are good reasons for this, and we can rejoice in them.

In 1900 there were some 5 million Americans 60 years of age and above,

They made up 6 percent of the population of our country.

Life expectancy at that time was 47 years.

A woman could expect to live only two years after her oldest child left home.

Today the case is much different, with life expectancy being 76.9 years.

Aging problems

The coming of age brings with it crises, as does every stage of life.

One of these is economic.

Many men and women have worked toward retirement as a special chapter in life.

They have made financial preparations for it, only to discover that as they retire on a fixed income, the cost of living doesn't remain anywhere near fixed.

They are finding themselves in an economic pinch, greater than those still in the workforce.

Aging may also bring health problems.

However, we are seeing a great deal of improvement in this area.

Old age can also be a time of loneliness.

One lady said jokingly to her pastor, “I think I'll go and have my funeral now while I still have some friends around who can attend.”

Myths about aging.

Age, like every other stage of our human pilgrimage, has its problems.

But it also has great potential.

There are some myths about age that need to be exploded.

One is that senility is inevitable.

Senility may occur due to brain disease, but it is not automatic.

If we keep a good diet, exercise moderately, and keep mentally alert, there is no reason why senility needs to be expected.

Another myth that needs to be exploded is that as soon as change occurs in one's life-status or family situation, he or she ought to move to Florida.

A person ought to make that kind of change carefully and deliberately.

Benefits of age.

Age has its special resources. Economic resources, long-term relationships, family ties, and spiritual growth.

One of the joys of aging is to discover that your children are your friends.

One of your richest resources is a deep and growing faith.

The faith you had when you were twelve years old has grown through a variety of experiences across the years.

Age can be a time of great usefulness.

The elderly have accomplished some phenomenal things.

We tend to forget this.

In the area of politics, did you know that Winston Churchill was sixty-five when he was elected prime minister of Great Britain?

Conrad Adenauer was elected to head the government of West Germany and served for fourteen years, retiring at the age of eighty-seven.

Golda Meir was seventy-one when she became the prime minister of Israel.

We see this sort of thing in the business world as well.

At the age of sixty-five, living on social security, an eastern Kentucky restaurateur named Colonel Harland Sanders began a new career.

He made a tremendous fortune after he was retired.

These may be delightful exceptions.

They are certainly examples of enormous accomplishment during advanced years.

But these can be years of great productivity.

They may be the time for a second career, for learning a new language, for going back to school.

These years may afford the opportunity to do some things we wanted to do all along but for which we lacked the time or finances.

These can be years of great ministry.

Some of the most caring, supportive people in the church are those who are in this age category.

Many carry on a pastoral-type ministry to others.

Let these be years of great usefulness.

The difference is not in our arteries.

The difference is in our attitude.

Old age can be a time for self-giving, not selfishness.

"Come, grow old with me. The best is yet to be. The last of life, for which the first was made."

Old age offers opportunities for an exciting life and adventure.

It can be a most useful chapter.

It need not be a treadmill or a saga.

It can be a pilgrimage, open-ended, with purpose, direction, and significance.

Like the wine at Cana, who knows if the master has saved the best till the last?

Even the sunset and the darkness to follow need hold no ultimate dread for those who are in Christ.

Remember that every exit is also an entrance.

The best, by far the best, is yet to be!