

## The Older I Get ...

Scripture: Psalm 92:12 – 15 (p. 549) & John 20:24 – 29 (p. 115)

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Our scripture reading from Psalm 92 is one of my favorite pieces of scripture. It speaks to me especially since I turned 60! Hear those words again and see if they speak to you – *The righteous will spring up like a palm tree. They will grow strong like a cedar of Lebanon. Those who have been replanted in the Lord's house will spring up in the courtyards of our God. They will bear fruit even when old and gray. They will remain lush and fresh in order to proclaim: 'The Lord is righteous. He is my rock. There is nothing unrighteous in the Lord.*

The passage struck me and allowed me to remember times when I was like a palm tree spring up. When I was very young running around Park Avenue in Williamsport PA. Playing in the back yard with the neighborhood kids. Riding our bikes to the local swimming hole. Jumping off of the railroad bridge into the Susquehanna River. These memories bring a smile to my face – the fun of youth! Take a moment and remember when you were like a palm tree spring up – remember your youth!

(Pause)

I can also remember stand strong like a cedar of Lebanon. There are not many cedars of Lebanon left in the Holy Land, but I can remember having a youthful strength as I played basketball, football, and baseball. A youth full strength to climb trees and running up hills without losing my breath. Oh, it was great being youthful and strong! Take a moment and remember when you were strong like a cedar of Lebanon.

(Pause)

And I can finally remember being replanted in a new courtyard of this world where I bore fruit in three wonderful young boys. The joy my sons gave me as I watched them spring up like palm trees and become strong like cedars of Lebanon. Take a moment and remember when you were replanted in a new courtyard.

(Pause)

Each one of us have sprung up like a palm tree. Each one of us has been strong like a cedar in Lebanon. And each one of us have been planted in a new place in the courtyard of this world. Think of when you bore fruit.

At a store on our Boardwalk I saw a t-shirt that had this on the front – *The Older I Get, the Better I was!* I laughed at that t-shirt, in fact I laughed so loud that some other people who I did not know stopped and looked at the t-shirt and they laughed too! But does the t-shirt have a glaring truth for us?

The older we get, we notice changes in our bodies, changes in our families, changes in our country, and changes in our world. It has always been that way and it will remain that way always. But the good news is that even in old age we can be fresh and youthful. We can be vibrant and productive. How you may ask?

Older Christians can share their faith to the younger people. Older Christians can read their Bibles and gain knowledge that only comes from life experiences. They can pray daily and participate in worship and lead by example. So instead of being cranky and complaining, older Christians like us, can still produce fruit and show that God is our rock.

Stay close to Jesus who loves to be close to you. Praise God even when you do not feel like it. Look forward to the future God has in store for all of us who believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

And then the older we get in Jesus, the better we will become!

Let me share this story – The butterfly flitted in and out of a mother’s beautiful flower garden. A child saw the butterfly and she tried to catch it. Oh, she tried and tried. She longed to catch the butterfly. She raced around the backyard for some time. She gave up chasing the butterfly and she ran into the kitchen of her house and she grabbed a glass jar sitting on a shelf. She then made a hasty return to the backyard but she tripped and hit the concrete patio floor hard. The jar smashed under her wrist and left an ugly slash in her hand. Her mother took her immediately to the local hospital. It required 18 stitches to close. Today the scar crawls like a caterpillar across her wrist. The scars tells the story of both wounding and healing.

In our Gospel text from the Gospel of John, we have the Apostle Thomas who we often refer to as ‘Doubting Thomas’ and we see a scar story. When Jesus appeared to the disciples after his death without Thomas present, the disciples were amazed! Jesus brought his scars. When they told Thomas about Jesus’ appearance, Thomas did not believe them. Thomas wanted to see the nail marks in his hand and he wanted to see the holes in his side. Later Jesus appears again before the disciples with Thomas there. Jesus invites Thomas to put his finger on his hands to feel the nail scars and Jesus invites Thomas to put his hand into his side.

In order to demonstrate that He was the same Jesus, He rose from the dead with scars of His suffering still visible. The scars of Jesus prove Him to be the Savior and tell the story of our salvation. The pierced marks through His hands and feet show the scars of his suffering. The hole in his side reveals a story of pain inflicted, endured, and then healed for us. Jesus did it so that we might be restored to Him and made whole.

Have you ever considered the story told by Christ's scars? How do the Savior's scars promise healing for the wounds we have endured? And what wounds will you bring to Him today?

All these questions can find their answers on this table, the Christ Table.

Let us pray:

Eternal God, thank you for better days ahead for each of us. Thank you for the days of our past which made us who we are today. Each of us has good reasons to praise you O'Lord each and every day of our lives.

O'Jesus, how we love the story your scars tell us and the world. May we learn to love you more and more through the story of your scars. AMEN.