

- There are some things that you just don't see every day. One such thing was seeing 103 year Lucille Fleming throw out the first pitch at a Texas Rangers games last week. Maybe even crazier than the fact that she actually threw out the first pitch was the fact that she actually died earlier in the week! She made the comment that she just had to come back so she could make it to the game and throw out the pitch. It's just incredible to see a lady of such age do something like that. She is far from being the only old person to do something amazing, however. 73 year old Tamae Watanabe climbed Mt. Everest. Yuichiro Miura climbed Mt. Everest at 70....75.... and 80! He climbed it 3 times after the age of 70! But possibly, more impressive than any of those accomplishments is little Ms. Harriet Thompson. This 2 time cancer survivor ran a marathon, that is 26.2 miles, in 7 hours 24 minutes and 36 seconds.....at 92 years old! That is insane! These people certainly put a lot of stock into the saying that age really is just a number.
 - Speaking of marathons and running, the Bible actually has something to say about that. In **I Corinthians 9:24-27**, the Apostle Paul likens this life to a race that we are all running. One of the things about races, is that the longer you run, the tougher it gets and the more tired you become. This exact same thing is true about this life. The longer you are here, the more difficult things become and the more tired you become. Paul says that we need keep going and persevere in order to reach the prize and win the race. Paul also describes Christians as soldiers in multiple places like **II Timothy 2:3 & Ephesians 6:10-17**. The battle we face as Christian soldiers can very easily wear us down over time. Again, the longer we fight the more difficult it can become over time.
 - Recognizing the struggles and difficulties that come over the course of this race and battle of the Christian life and continuing our series on Glorifying God, I'd like to speak to and about **God's Senior Soldiers** this morning. We are very blessed here at Pleasant Plains to have a great variety of ages and experiences among our family. We have many young children. We have some older children. Some of us are still a little wet behind the ears with youth, and then some of us are maturing into parents. Others of us (those 36 and up) are just flat out old! *Congregational inside joke* But we also have some who are experienced parents. Some have grand babies. And then we have those Senior Soldiers. This lesson isn't just for them, however. This lesson is for us all because, Lord willing, one day we will all be Senior Soldiers in the Kingdom of God and we need to remember that we still have a crucial part to play with this mighty Kingdom. Let's talk about the important role Senior Soldiers play and how they can glorify God in their latter years. .
- I. Senior Soldiers have not been given a retirement plan by God in this life.**
- A. Sadly, some older Christians have the mindset that once they grow older and reach a certain age they don't have anything to offer the church any longer.
 - 1. They might grow discouraged because their abilities have diminished to a certain degree.
 - 2. Others might see this as their "Christian retirement" and they are no longer willing to serve in many or any ways even though they have the ability.
 - 3. Some might even have the mindset that they have put in their time and now they can just rest and relax.
 - B. Sadly, these thoughts and ideas could not be any farther from the truth.
 - 1. Our true rest isn't found in this life. It is not found on this earth.
 - 2. Our true rest is going to be found after this life in heaven. (**Heb. 4:1-11**)
 - 3. This means that we are not afforded a time to stop working and fighting for the Lord in this life. We must continue to work for our God and do everything we can to strengthen the Kingdom while He has blessed us with breath and ability to do so.
- II. Senior Soldiers have always been used to do great things by God.**
- A. God used Noah to save the righteous and replenish the earth.
 - 1. First off, Noah was 500 hundred when he had his 3 boys. (**Gen. 5:32**)
 - 2. Then God came to him and gave him this massive responsibility with he building of the ark, which was completed when Noah was 600. (**Gen. 6:22; 7:6**)
 - 3. After all of that was done, for the next 300 or so years, Noah was given the responsibility of rebuilding society.
 - 4. All of this was done before Noah died at 950 years old. (**Gen. 9:29**)
 - B. God used Abraham to begin a string of grand promises that would affect all of humanity.
 - 1. At the of 75, God came to Abraham and asked him to pack up his entire life and to go to a place that he had never been before. (**Gen. 12:1-4**)

2. God then blessed Abraham, now 100, and his wife with a child far past the years of child bearing. (**Gen. 17:1; 18:14; 21:1-3**)
 3. Around the age of 120, he displayed tremendous faith against near impossible odds for his God. (**Gen. 22**)
 4. Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175 and it is said that he was “satisfied with life”. (**Gen. 25:8**)
- C. God used Moses to free His people and lead them to the promised land.
1. Moses had given effort to help his people in his younger years, but nothing had come from it. (**Ex. 2:11-14; Acts 7:23-29**)
 2. Then it was around the time that he was 80, with much of his life behind him, that God called for him to come and deliver his people from captivity. (**Ex. 3; Acts 7:30-34**)
 3. Moses had many seemingly good and legitimate excuses for why he shouldn't be the one to go and save the people.
 - a) First off, Moses was OLD. This whole adventure seemed like something for a younger man to accomplish.
 - b) Then there was the fact that the people had already rejected his offer for help them once before.
 - c) He also had been gone for around 40 years! That was a long time to be away from your people and he didn't know if he could really do them any good.
 - d) And then finally we know about the fact that he was insecure and not confident in his own abilities.
 4. Even with all of these issues, Moses was able to be an extremely useful Senior Soldier for the Lord.

III. Senior Soldiers have great worth and responsibilities within the church, today.

- A. Some may not recognize it, but Senior soldiers hold great worth in the eyes of God.
1. One of their greatest assets is their wisdom that they have gained over the years. (*“Wisdom is with aged men, with long life is understanding.”* **Job 12:12**)
 2. Senior Soldiers seen and learned things over the years that those of us who are younger just haven't had the ability to see or learn.
 3. They have seen changes in society, the church, and in other arenas that have taught them many things.
 4. They have seen issues among the church and brethren that have taught them other things.
 5. These experiences, both good and bad, have given these Senior Soldiers much wisdom that can help even still today when other newer issues confront the church.
 6. They might not recognize it, but the wisdom of Senior Soldiers can greatly aide and benefit the church. Their outward bodies might be perishing, but their inner being is still being renewed. (**II Cor. 4:16**)
- B. This leads us to the fact that Senior Soldiers have a great responsibility to continue to teach and lead the church, even into their advanced years as long as they are physically and mentally able to do so.
1. Paul speaks specifically to the responsibilities of the Senior Soldiers in **Titus 2**.
 2. The focus is for all people to do those things that is fitting for “sound doctrine.” (**v.1**) These are the things that glorify God in what they do.
 3. The men Senior Soldiers are to continue to be godly men with strong character. (**v.2**)
 4. The women Senior Soldiers are to not just be godly in their behavior, but they are also to be examples and teachers to the younger women so that they might grown into that strong Christians, as well. (**vv.3-5**)
 5. Part of the service and work of our Senior Soldiers should include leadership within he church, whether that be as spiritual leadership as Shepherds or other business within the church as deacons. This makes complete sense when you consider the characteristics that are expected of those who serve within those capacities. (**I Timothy 3 & Titus 1**)
 6. Our God desires for His Senior Soldiers to be busy about His work in leading the church and sharing their extensive wisdom with the younger generations so that they might grow up to fulfill that role when their time comes.

Age certainly is just a number when you set your mind to that being the case. Sadly, many good Christians have fallen prey to the mindset that they are just be phased out of the church to a place where they are nothing but there. This should not be the case at all. Godly Senior Soldiers have a tremendous responsibilities to the people of our God to share their great wisdom so that the church might be built up. May God help them to fulfill this responsibility so that others may be bettered and that He might be glorified. May we all encourage those Senior Soldiers around us and mature in such a way that we might glorify God in our latter years and fulfill our roles as God's wise Senior Soldiers.