



grow. pray. study.

February 1, 2026 *Sickness, Aging and Death*

Scripture: John 11:25-26 (CEB), I Corinthians 15:54 (NRSV), and Proverbs 19:23 (CEB)

Weary Exiles Found Hope in God's Tireless Strength

MONDAY 2.2.26 Isaiah 40:27-31, 46:3-4

Today's readings likely came from a time when the Israelites were returning to their ruined land after decades in exile. * There were no "Babylon to Jerusalem" flights—Isaiah 40's references to "stumbling" and "walking" reflected the only way most exiles got home: a grueling journey on foot. The Israelites were weary and feared maybe God was too tired to care. These prophetic texts offered a deeper truth: God remains present with his people and never grows weary as we do.

- Have you ever felt like the Israelites in Isaiah 40:27: 'My way is hidden from the LORD, my God ignores my predicament'? Are there areas of your life that feel that way right now? In what ways can you reconnect with the Creator who "doesn't grow tired or weary" of caring about you? What helps you trust God's promise that "until you turn gray I will support you"? (Would you like to help God support older Christians? [Click here](#) to learn about Resurrection's Silver Link ministry.)
- Isaiah wrote, "His understanding is beyond human reach" (40:28). Our need to control and our challenge with "letting go" inevitably run into our inability to control time. Even the best health and fitness programs can't honestly promise to halt the aging process. The antidote to fear about aging, illness, or weariness? Remember that God's strength never fails. How can really trusting in a God who's vastly wiser than you are renew your strength?

Prayer: Lord God, when I'm worn out, you are still full of eternal energy. As I age, you remain the same creative, caring God you've always been. Help me increasingly learn to trust your timeless love. Amen.

* "Isaiah 40-55 consists of more self-contained and unified poetic sections associated with the end of the Babylonian exile and the hope that those who had been removed from Jerusalem would return and resettle." Patricia K. Tull, Introduction to Isaiah in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 1092 NT.

Gray Hair? Grow Strong, Bear Fruit Fearlessly

TUESDAY 2.3.26 Psalm 71:17-19; 92:12-15

We live in a culture that idolizes youth, spends vast sums hiding signs of aging, and uses phrases like 'out to pasture' to describe the elderly. Psalm 71:18 showed that long before today's hair coloring or anti-wrinkle creams, people feared that God would abandon them as they grew older. The psalmists offered a different vision: God doesn't despise age but calls us to serve with willing hearts at every stage of life.

- Whether you're 16 or 86, to what extent can you say with the psalmist, "You've taught me since my youth, God, and I'm still proclaiming your wondrous deeds!"? What people—from younger siblings or neighbors to grandchildren or great-grandchildren—can you influence by your example and words? Whatever your age, join the psalmist in resolving, 'Lord, I will help others remember nothing but your righteous deeds.'"
- Scholar John Goldingay observed that Psalm 71 uses "always" three times—more than any other psalm. In the past: "my praise has always been of you." In the present: I need you to be "a shelter to which I can always come." In the future: "I will hope always." * This "always" spans a whole lifetime, from youth through old age. Have our culture's messages about the "awfulness" of growing older led you to think less of yourself or others? At whatever age, how can you value people of any age as the psalmist's God did?

Prayer: O God, I'm so used to hearing (and saying) things like 'too old' or 'too green' that it's a joy to see that Scripture—and you—show no age bias. Free me from those biases so I can proclaim your deeds at every age. Amen.

*John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1: Psalms 1–72*. 2013, p. 221.

Elderly Prophets Recognized Jesus: Hope Never Ages

WEDNESDAY 2.4.26 Luke 2:25-38

We usually read this story at Christmas, but it carries a message about aging without fear. Here were Mary (likely in her early teens) and Joseph, bringing an infant to the Temple to dedicate to God. Who greeted them? Scholar N. T. Wright noted: "In this passage, we have the old man [Simeon] and woman [Anna], waiting their turn to die, worshiping God night and day and praying for the salvation of his people. Luke wants to draw readers of every age and stage of life into his picture." *

- Simeon hadn't let himself become a "cranky old man." Despite decades of waiting under Roman occupation and corrupt religious leadership, Simeon's hope remained fresh and eager. What keeps hope alive in your life when circumstances make God's work hard to see? How can you, at any age, nurture a hopeful sense of "eager anticipation" about what God is doing? What keeps hope alive when circumstances are hard?
- We don't know exactly, but Anna had probably been in the Temple constantly for 60 or more years. "Worship night and day" (verse 37) had apparently become her life. Worship, fasting, and prayer shaped anything else she did. How can your time spent worshiping God, praying, and studying the Bible shape what you do with the rest of your time? What would it look like for spiritual practices to fill you with the same confidence and eager anticipation they gave Anna and Simeon?

Prayer: O God, one of your names in the Bible is “Ancient of Days.” I’m thankful you are the Lord of all my days, from birth through old age. Like Simeon and Anna, keep me eagerly anticipating your work, aware of your presence with me. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., *Luke for Everyone* (New Testament for Everyone Book 4) (p. 27). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

Temporary Troubles Can't Crush Fearless, Eternal Hope

THURSDAY 2.5.26 2 Corinthians 4:6-10, 16-18

The apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians after a painful time when rival teachers had turned many Christians in Corinth against him. Later in the letter, he cataloged the many challenges he’d faced in carrying out God’s mission ([2 Corinthians 11:23-28](#)). Yet Paul didn’t let any of that destroy him. He saw his struggles as connected to Jesus’ death (verse 10), which seemed the worst defeat of all, yet became victory through resurrection.

- When did you last feel confused, harassed, or knocked down? What resources helped you avoid being crushed, depressed, or knocked out? Have you ever seen—in yourself or someone you know—the truth of Paul’s words: “Even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day”?
- We too often feel shame about illness or aging, seeing them as weakness or failure. But Paul faced those realities fearlessly. Scholar William Barclay wrote: “It is a notable fact that in all the gospel story Jesus never foretold his death without foretelling his Resurrection.... The things that are seen, the things of this world, have their day and cease to be; the things that are unseen, the things of heaven, last forever.” * How can God’s promise of eternity help you live beyond fear about this earthly life’s end?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, on the days when life feels dark and nothing seems to go right, help me not to be crushed or destroyed. Remind me always that, as Pastor Hamilton often reminds us, “the worst thing is never the last thing.” Because of your resurrection, I have eternal hope. Amen.

* William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Revised Edition). Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 202.

Death Has No Sting: Jesus Gives Fearless Hope

FRIDAY 2.6.26 Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, Revelation 21:3-5

The most extreme threat has always been, “I will kill you.” Roman officials puzzled over how little that threat terrified Jesus’ followers. By dying and rising again, Jesus had set them free from even the fear of death. In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul boldly asserted a divine victory so sweeping that death would be “swallowed up.” John Wesley quoted Paul and said, “Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: It is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt.” * The Bible ended with Revelation’s vision of a splendid world in which “death will be no more.”

- Jesus faced evil and death at their very worst—just read about his trial and crucifixion in any of the four gospels. Jesus defeated evil and death at their very worst—read on to the Easter story in any of those gospels. Early Christians staked their lives on the truth of Jesus’ victory over death. How can Jesus’ resurrection give you peace as you await God’s eternity, where “death will be no more”?
- Every Easter at Resurrection, you can count on hearing Pastor Hamilton say, “Each Easter sermon I’ve preached for the last thirty-five years—and most of the funeral services—end in the same way: People ask me, ‘Adam, you seem intelligent. Do you really believe this stuff? That Jesus rose from the dead? That we live after death with God in heaven?’ My answer is always the same: ‘I not only believe it, I’m counting on it.’” ** Does the idea of death cause you fear and anxiety? How can Jesus’ death and resurrection set you free from that fear?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you went where most of us most dread going—the realm of death—and emerged victorious! You offer me the choice to join you in that victory. I accept your offer of a life that lies beyond the power of death. Thanks be to God! Amen.

* From <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-137-on-the-resurrection-of-the-dead/>.

** Hamilton, Adam, *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times* (p. 221). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

Biblical Fear: Reverence, Not Terror, Gives Life

SATURDAY 2.7.26 Psalm 111:7-10, Proverbs 2:2-6, 2 Corinthians 7:1

This sermon series has called us to live above and beyond many of our most common fears. We've learned human therapeutic tools that work alongside our trust in God to point us toward an unafraid life. Yet the Bible fully endorsed one kind of "fear": "the fear of the Lord." Psalms, Proverbs, and the apostle Paul all praised that kind of "fear." Of course, we must understand what the phrase meant. Pastor Adam Hamilton explained: "In scripture, fear of the Lord is not primarily terror evoked by an angry God. It is reverence, respect, and awe inspired by a God who is all-powerful and who not only created heaven and earth but continues to exercise dominion over them." *

- Scholar Nancy deClaissé-Walford wrote: "While we tend to associate the word 'fear' with a 'hair standing on end' or 'fight or flight' feeling, 'the fear of the LORD' is better understood as reverent awe. Indeed, the Lord is 'fearsome,' but not in the sense that some want to run away from or escape from God's presence. Rather, we are called to approach the Lord with a sense of awe while in the presence of the holy." * Think of standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon, holding a newborn baby, or seeing the northern lights... moments of breathtaking awe that make you feel small yet deeply connected to something magnificent. That's closer to "fear of the Lord" than cowering terror. When have you experienced this kind of reverent awe? How does it draw you closer to God rather than pushing you away? In what ways has "fear of the Lord"—reverent awe—made you wiser about how to live?

Prayer: O God, let me never lose a sense of awe at the privilege you offer me to accept your love and to walk through my life in your presence. You are mighty beyond comprehension, yet you invite me into relationship. I choose you as my Lord and guide. Amen.

* Hamilton, Adam, *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times* (p. 225). Harmony/Rodale/Convergent. Kindle Edition.

** Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, study note on Proverbs 1:7 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 1007 OT.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

To **Donald Lockett** following the death of **Jerry Lockett** (Parent), who passed away on **1/1/2026**.

To **Jim Lucy** following the death of **Barbara Lucy** (Spouse), who passed away on **1/12/2026**.

To **Aiden Sherrill** following the death of **Linda McGuckin** (Grandparent), who passed away on **1/15/2026**.

To **Craig Young** following the death of **Marty Young** (Mother), who passed away on **1/18/2026**.

To **Virginia Blasiar** following the death of **David Blasiar** (Spouse), who passed away on **1/19/2026**.

To **Maggie Long** following the death of **Roger Long** (Spouse), who passed away **1/22/2026**.

To **Toni Watkins** following the death of **Brian Watkins** (Spouse), who passed away **1/23/2026**.

To **Cheri Griffith** following the death of **Bobbie Ann Oehme** (Parent), who passed away **1/23/2026**.

To **Linda York** following the death of **Randy York** (Spouse), who passed away **1/28/2026**.

