

## Continual Proclamation

Listen to me, talking your head off,” said Angelique, pushing her dessert plate aside.

The 53-year-old had come to see her former coworker, Mrs. Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell had lost her husband about two years ago. She had recently been released from the hospital following a fall. She had early signs of Parkinson’s. Her two sons lived out of town, but she had one granddaughter who lived in a neighboring state and regularly checked on her. Still, when Angelique heard about Mrs. Mitchell being hospitalized, she decided it was time for another visit.

Mrs. Mitchell had given Angelique wise counsel many times when they worked together. Among other things, the older woman helped Angelique navigate the politics of their school system. Angelique wanted to be of help to her friend now, and here she was going on and on about the trials and tribulations of her adult children.

“How are you doing, really?” asked Angelique.

“My God continues to bless me and keep me,” said the 81-year-old. “He woke me up this morning, in my right mind. I can’t thank Him enough.”

Angelique smiled. Mrs. Mitchell was still loving God. She thought her love may have waned and said so.

“Oh goodness no, child!” declared Mrs. Mitchell. “I know him as a Savior and a keeper. He is the only one you can put your hope in. You need to call on God for yourself and your children.”

**1.** *Why does God want us to teach generations other than our own about the good news that is in Christ Jesus?*

**2.** *In what ways does your church fulfill this calling from God?*

**3.** *Do you participate in teaching or outreach ministries? If not, why not?*

## Continual Hope

*Psalm 71:12-14, KJV*

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

*Psalm 71:12-14, NIV*

<sup>12</sup>Do not be far from me, my God;

come quickly, God, to help me.

<sup>13</sup>May my accusers perish in shame;

may those who want to harm me

be covered with scorn and disgrace.

<sup>14</sup>As for me, I will always have hope;

I will praise you more and more.

Whether our afflictions come with aging or some other trial, if we are not careful, we can feel as if God is far from us. However, nothing could be further from the truth. As the psalmist made clear, help from our loving and gracious God is only a prayer away. Always, our heart's desire will be for Him to come to us "quickly" (vs. 12). But this is a matter of perspective, for though our circumstance may lead us to believe that the Lord is far away, the reality is that He is always with us.

There is no greater reason to rejoice than knowing that our God is with us. And we are assured of His presence through consistent prayer and time with Him, which in turn produces thankfulness in our hearts, no matter the circumstances. This can be hard at times, especially when facing false "accusers" (vs. 13).

False accusations can be painful in at least two ways. First, if believed, lies can tarnish the opinions others may have of us. Second, these false accusations can negatively impact the view others may have of our God. So the psalmist prayed that his accusers would be brought to "scorn and disgrace" (vs. 13). When that happens, others will see them for who they are and will not believe their lies.

Because we know that the Lord is always with us and will take up our cause against those who falsely accuse us, we also know that He is our only hope in this life and in the life to come. Unlike our false accusers, it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). Therefore, we who put our trust in the Lord “have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (vs. 19a). And because our hope is sure in the Lord, out of gratitude and love, our praise can pour out of abundant hearts.

Additionally, we can lead the younger generation in doing the same. Considering the hope we have in the Lord, it is so important to help the next generation understand the hope and love that is also theirs if they come to Him in faith.

**4.** *Why did the psalmist want the Lord to come to him quickly?*

**5.** *What did the psalmist desire for his adversaries and false accusers?*

**6.** *Knowing that the Lord will help, what can we always have?*

## Courageous Hope

*Psalm 71:15-18, KJV*

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my

*Psalm 71:15-18, NIV*

<sup>15</sup>My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long— though I know not how to relate them all.

<sup>16</sup>I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.

<sup>17</sup>Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your

youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

marvelous deeds.

<sup>18</sup>Even when I am old and gray,  
do not forsake me, my God,  
till I declare your power to the next generation,  
your mighty acts to all who are to come.

The key to having the full assurance of our great hope in the Lord is to recall regularly the wondrous works He has already accomplished in our lives. That can encourage and see us through the dark times of life. And when we get on the other side of a trial or ordeal, we can look back at it and see how He led us through it, as well. Such was the case of the psalmist, who was ready to proclaim “all day long” (vs. 15) what the Lord had done for Him.

The psalmist’s challenge was that he did not know how he could name all the righteous and saving acts of God because he could not count them all. However, whether young or well-seasoned, healthy or ailing, we have every reason to rejoice and praise the Lord. And may our rejoicing be in such a manner that it also instructs and encourages “the next generation” (vs. 18) to come. When future generations see the “power” of the Lord, they are more apt to pass on God’s truth to the generations after them.

Sometimes we may think that when we become “old and gray,” God forgets us or we have nothing to pass along to those coming behind. We should pray as the psalmist did, “Do not forsake me, my God.” He will hear us and remind us that He is still with us at all times.

**7. What should our mouths proclaim?**

**8. How long should we proclaim it?**

**9. To whom should we proclaim it?**

## Comforting Hope

*Psalm 71:19-21, KJV*

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

*Psalm 71:19-21, NIV*

<sup>19</sup>Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things.

Who is like you, God?

<sup>20</sup>Though you have made me see troubles,

many and bitter,

you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth

you will again bring me up.

<sup>21</sup>You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.

There is no limit to the righteousness of God. And no matter how bad the troubles of life may be, we can know that our He is with us. Though our troubles may be “many and bitter” (vs. 20), we can know that God will strengthen us in this life. And when the time comes that our bodies are placed in the “depths of the earth,” our hope is still in the Lord, who is like no other and has always “done great things” (vs. 19).

There is also no greater comfort, especially for the aged, than knowing that God’s love and hope have been proclaimed and received by those who will carry on for Christ after we are gone. God will “honor” those who honor Him. What the psalmist meant when he said God will “restore my life again” is not clear, but a good life lived for Him lasts as it affects generations after us.

**10.** *How far does the righteousness of God reach?*

**11.** *What did the psalmist see and experience at the hand of God?*

**12.** *What promise of restoration and increase did the psalmist hope for?*

## Share Your Faith

“Even youths grow tired and weary,” said Isaiah, “but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:30-31). We who love the Lord can and should nurture that “hope in the Lord” in our young people. To see them “soar on wings like eagles” and “run and not grow weary” and “walk and not be faint” should inspire each of us to tell them about Jesus’ love and compassion for them and how He atoned for their sins and redeemed them for God’s heavenly kingdom.

When Paul and Barnabas went on their first missionary journey together, others accompanied them, including Barnabas’s young cousin, John Mark. For whatever reason, Paul did not want Mark to join them on their next mission, which caused a split between Paul and Barnabas (see Acts 15:36-41). Many years later, Paul and Mark must have reconciled, for while he was in prison, he told Timothy to “get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Tim. 4:11).

Thankfully, the senior Paul did not give up on his younger colleague in their ministry. Paul’s patience, forgiveness, and self-reflection regarding Mark probably helped him in being a mentor to Timothy.

Jesus Himself viewed younger people with deep affection when He said to His followers, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14).

**13.** *What could you do to tell other generations about Jesus?*

**14.** *What difficulties arise when you share the Gospel with young people? How does the Lord help you overcome these difficulties?*

**15.** *Do youth who love the Lord inspire you with your own faith in Jesus? Explain your answer.*

## Enlightening Future Generations

In Psalm 71, the psalmist seeks the aid of God both for himself against his enemies and for future generations to whom he vows to proclaim the marvelous awesomeness of the Lord. It is a declaration of hope that can be realized only in the Lord God, and it's a message He calls us to teach to future generations about the hope we have in Christ.

► *Write here the names younger people with whom you could share the Gospel this coming week. Be ready to tell next week what happened when you presented your faith in the Lord with a youth if such an incident occurred.*

### KEY VERSE

But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. —Psalm 71:14, KJV

As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. —Psalm 71:14, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of July 15 through July 21

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross devotionals* on these passages.)

**Mon.** 2 Timothy 3:10-17—Equipped for Every Good Work.

**Tues.** Matthew 4:1-11—Resist Temptation.

**Wed** Proverbs 30:1-9—Every Word of God Proves True.

**Thurs.** Colossians 3:12-17—Let Christ's Word Abound in You.

**Fri.** James 1:19-27—Doers of the Word.

**Sat.** Psalm 119:57-72—Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes.

**Sun.** Psalm 119:73-80—Hope in God's Word.