

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 ◻ Read Psalm 71:1-13

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the psalmist put in the Lord (v1)? What does he ask not to happen? What four things does he ask the Lord to do for him in v2? What does he ask God to be for him in v3a? What does he say that God is to him in v3d? What does the psalmist say he will do in v3b? What does he say God has given in v3c? What does he ask God to do for him in v4? What three things does he call his attacker? What is the Lord Yahweh to the psalmist (v5)? Since when? What had God done for him, since when (v6a-b)? How does the psalmist respond (v6c)? How have people responded to the psalmist's distress (v7a)? But what is God to him (v7b)? With what two things will his mouth be filled (v8)? What does he ask God not to do (v9a)? When? What else to do (v9b)? When? Who else are doing what to the psalmist (v10a)? What are they doing to him (v10b)? What are they doing with each other? What do those enemies say has happened to the psalmist (v11a)? What do they think they are therefore free to do (v11b)? What does the psalmist ask God not to do in v12a? What does he ask God to do (v12b)? What does he ask God to do to the enemies in v13a? In v13c? What two ways does he describe him (v13b, d)?

How do older believers pray when under serious threat and attack? Psalm 71:1-13 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **those who have learned, by both doctrine and experience, that the Lord is their strong refuge resort to Him all the more in old age.**

There is no superscript for this Psalm. As is often the case, this is because it continues the thought or theme from the previous Psalm (70). The psalmist is under attack and crying out to God not only that He would deliver him (v2, 4, 12) and be his refuge (v3, 5), but also that He would put to shame the enemy (v13). Putting the enemy to shame in v13 dovetails with the psalmist's plea for himself in v1.

Trouble in old age. The difference here is that the psalmist is now elderly (v9). It is his time of old age, when his strength is failing. But it is earthly-minded to think that the believer is at greater disadvantage now than before. For God has not declined with age. God's strength is not diminished. The refuge, help, and deliverance of the believer is as strong as ever.

Help from the womb. One way to remember that our former youth was not our strength is to follow that line of thinking a little further back than our early twenties or late teens. The holy logic here is that when he was in the womb (v6a, more literally), the Lord was making him to stand—so that he was only brought out of the belly when the Lord did it (v6b).

Remember when you were young and strong? Then remember instead when you were younger and even more helpless than now! In particular, remember who your God is. At that time, He was the God who saves you through no actions of your own. But over time, you learned that He is pleased to deliver by inclining His ear to our cries (v2). And, you learned that He is pleased to deliver through our continual turning to Him (v3).

But He was delivering you before you learned to cry and before you learned to turn. The crying and turning themselves were things that His grace taught your heart to do!

Praise in youth, old age—continually. This brings us at last to the purpose of all this sustaining and delivering: displaying the Lord's praiseworthiness. And the purpose of all this teaching our mouths to cry and hearts to turn: teaching the same mouths and hearts to praise.

What is the outcome of being sustained even from the womb (v6a-b)? "My praise is continually of You" (v6c). What is the desired outcome of deliverance from the current situation (v7)? "Let my mouth be filled with Your praise, Your glory all the day" (v8).

Suddenly, we have a new understanding of the troubles (and even attacks) in old age: they are the backdrop for new displays of continued faithfulness and thus the provocation for renewed response of thankful praise. The attackers' temporary success will turn to being confounded and consumed.

What troubles/attacks are you under? What life-long experience since the womb does this continue? What habits and practices in your life show a right response? How long should this continue?

Sample prayer: Lord, You sustained us from our mothers' wombs! All our lives long, You have inclined Your ear to our pleas for help; incline Your ear now to the praise of our mouths. You taught our hearts to turn to You continually for help. Now, teach our hearts to keep turning to You in praise, in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP71B "Do Not Forsake Me in Old Age" or TPH71 "In You, Lord, I Take Refuge"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 71 our portion today is versus 1 through 13. These are words. In you, O Yahweh, I put my trust. Let me never be put to shame deliver me in your righteousness, and cause me to escape be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually you have given the commandment to save me for you are my rock and my fortress deliver me.

Oh my god. Out of the hand of the wicked out of the hand of the unrighteousness and cruel. Man for you or my help O Lord Yahweh you are my trust from my youth. By you I have been upheld from birth. You are he who took me out of my mother's womb?

My prayers shall be continually of you. I have become as a wonder to many, but you are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with your praise and with your glory. All the day Do not cast me off and time of old age, Do not forsake me when my strength fails For my enemies speak against me and those who lie in wait for

my life, to counsel together, saying God has forsaken and pursue and taken for there is none to deliver him.

Oh God, do not be far from me. Oh my god. Make haste to help me. Let them be confounded and consumed. Who are adversaries of my life? Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my heart.

So for the reading of God's inspired and denarent word, the psalmist is under attack and he's praying that those who are attacking him would be put to shame that desires and confidence and attempts designs. And actions would all be frustrated and turned on their head and come back upon them, it's the same theme, then that we saw in Psalm 70.

If you have your Bible open, you can see verse 2 and 3. Let them be ashamed and confused to seek my life with them. Be turned back and confused to desire. My hurt. Let them be turned back because of their train and the Holy Spirit. And the way that he has caused the our Salters to be put together,

And the Holy Spirit in the way that he has caused our Salters. To be put together has often and on this, where there's a superscript for one psalm, and then the next Psalm on the same theme, does not have the superscript because it is on the same theme. So we're still in a situation where he is under attack and praying that he would be able that he would be delivered so that he may praise the Lord but especially that his attackers would be put to shame.

Now some of the details in this Psalm are new. Obviously, it's a much longer psalm than Psalm 70. And one of the things that we'll see today, are we have already heard as we read and then we'll see again in two weeks time when we finish up. The psalm is that this is coming to him in the time of his old age.

Now, when we are old, and we are less capable, even our minds don't work. Like they used to, and our bodies don't work. Like they used to. And those who were our peers, those who knew us and respected us, Many of them have departed from this world. And there's a new generation that Often does not think.

Think of us, old age can be a frightening time and the weak time. But if it was never other people whom you were hoping, would remember you? And if it was never your own mental, or physical, or even spiritual ability, that was your strength than old age, would not be a time of weakness.

And so God gives us trouble in old age to turn us, back to himself. He's in trouble. And yet he is crying out. Verse 9. Do not cast me off. In the time of old age, do not forsake me when my strength fails, the Lord is his strength, even an old age.

And as he as he is thinking that as he is praying, that he remembers back past when he was younger in his maybe late, teens, and early twenties. When his mental and physical powers were at their peak, and we have an illusion of strength. At that time, an illusion of being able to depend our own strength because we're fools.

And we often look around in comparison to others and we say, I'm pretty strong and able right now. I'm pretty intelligent and quick with my mind right now, by comparison, to all these people. And so we draw a false confidence by comparing to others. Even as, for instance, the Jews in Romans chapter 2.

As an example, for all of our fleshyness and spiritual pride will draw false confidence. Not about physical strength and mental ability, but even spiritual goodness and piety by comparison to others. And what a dreadful thing, it is to have this pride in comparison to others that is married to being confident in self and not feeling are neediness of God.

And one of the things that they find if they do not remember their Creator in the day of their youth, is that when old age comes and things, start breaking down like we read at the end of Ecclesiastes. Those are the evil days in which there is no pleasure.

But if we do remember our Creator, then we find that we have strength and life and vitality. Even in old age, he is all are our life and strength and hope in this in a physical sense in this world and in a spiritual sense as well. So he remembers all the way back to, he pushes back his memory past the stronger days, today's in which he was even weaker than he is.

Now, look at verse 5, you are my hope. O Lord Yahweh. You are my trust from my youth and then he puts us back. Further in verse 6. By you I have been upheld from birth. You are he who took me out of my mother's womb. Remember how completely helpless We began and the Lord was our strength.

The Lord was our help. He oversaw all things for our good at that point. And so if we remember that we begin in utter helplessness and yet the Lord was caring for us and holding us up and guiding us as it were even. You are? You dug me out of my mother's womb, That will be a great help to us in old age.

Now, most of you or not, utterly helpless babies, or in the weakness of old age. You are in a season of Great Danger, the illusion of strength and wisdom. One of the things that troubles me much, when I interact with someone who's in their late, teens or early twenties, in the churches is There are some who have learned by God's grace, and mercy to them, applying His word, applying the gospel, to them, to be full of how good Christ is.

How strong Christ is how sweet Christ is. How faithful Christ is They see him? Even at that age, as the one who has been all of their hope and all of their help from birth. Praise God. That's true. In some cases, but in many, more cases, something happens as they are coming into their own getting ready to make their way in the world.

And that is, they are full of all the things that they see in themselves or that they want to do, or they think they can. Do you hear very little of the praise of Christ as the hit as the one who is sustaining them and their helplessness and foolishness and sinfulness?

And often especially in. If it doesn't get corrected quickly in the early and mid twenties, there's a great arrogance and it's so dangerous. And one of the things that it will lead to as a ordinary consequence in. God's providence is great discouragement. When you reach middle age and realize that you're heading before the, the weakness of old age and that you are unable to accomplish much in this world that would not be immediately.

Overtured and destroyed, just like Proverbs warned. You just like Ecclesiastes, warned you and people have a midlife crisis and then They come to old age and the time has gone. And the life has been that been spent and the results are unsatisfactory, and the ability is gone and those are the evil days.

So it shouldn't be surprising. That the same thing. That is the solution for what the world calls calls, the terrible twos and the same thing that is the solution for the, what the world calls, the rebelliousness of the teenage years. And the same thing that is the solution for the, the, what the world calls, the midlife crisis and the same thing that the solution that is the solution for what the world dreads in the feebleness of old age.

Is the thing that is the solution to what the world loves in the arrogance of the late teens and early twenties because of the humanistic mindset that rejoices in the greatness of man and denies the glory of God, the solution to all those things is to know that God alone is good.

God alone is powerful. God alone is right. Just God as accomplishing all of his holy will. He is taking care of us. And so there's this humility that we need in looking

back, and the humility that we need about ourselves in the present that will result in hope and security, and comfort and joy in old age.

But you don't have to wait until old age, four. Of course, God is all of those things to one who hopes in him even now. And if he is the only good and great and glorious one, that means you'll be responding with him to him with praise. And how wonderful is the praise that you will have if the Lord spares you, and you were in this world a very long time.

And you praised him when you were as young as Sophia and you praised him for all of his goodness, and all of his power. And you praised him, when you were a little bit older, like the rest of you and you praised him when you want to be in your late teens and early 20s into your 30s.

You praised him when you were moms and my age, you will have a spent, a lifetime of praising him. And then you can be like Polycarp who at the end when trying to get him under threat of his life to spare himself and the weakness of his old age, you can imagine how an elderly person might have been frightened of what they were going to do with him.

He had no reason to be frightened the God. Whom he had known as his Savior, for over 80 years. Was still his God and His strength, and his hope and His joy. And all he wanted to do is praise him and they urged him to deny him and they gave him the opportunity to praise him before an arena full of people.

And testify that the Lord had done him good, his whole lifelong and that he would not certainly would not deny him. Now some of the Lord grant to us to make good use of when our enemies seem strong and the situation seems hard and it is beyond our ability because that is always the case.

It's not something that becomes the case in our old age and we should be grateful when we're in situations that seem to that are over our heads and threaten to drown us or suffocate us because it's throwing us back. Upon our God. Who alone is our strength and our goodness?

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the Psalm. We thank you for your wisdom and the seasons of life through which you bring us, and how it begins with the helplessness and the womb. And at birth, we pray Lord that you'd give us humility about ourselves but more than that that you would make us full of how great and glorious.

You are that you are our rock and our fortress. Our hope we pray that you would fill our mouths with your praise and your glory all the day. So that when we come into seasons of attack, you will have prepared our hearts and minds. And we pray that in seasons of difficulty and attack, you would remind us of that, which we should have known the whole time and that you would make us to bless your name for an opportunity to be humbled.

And to remember again your faithfulness and your goodness and your strength and your glory, we praise you for these in Jesus name. Amen.