

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, August 18, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“I’m the ‘Old Man’ Now”

READING: Psalm 71:1-9, 12 – In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me. Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother’s womb. I will ever praise you. I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me.

When Dad died last month, it occurred to me that I couldn’t think of a Kischnick male who is older than I am. My Grandpa Kischnick had three brothers, and they’re all gone. Dad was the oldest of the male cousins, and he had outlived them all. Not one of them had a son older than me, so I am the old man on the Kischnick side of the family.

In my mother’s family, the Mossner’s, I had two male cousins older than me, but sadly both of them are already deceased. When my Uncle Rudy died several years ago, I became the eldest male on that side of the family. (My cousin, Ruth Sullivan, is older than me by several years, so there’s that.)

I teased my brothers and my nephews when we were all together out at the farm. I told them I was now the “pater familias.” I told them that not so many centuries ago they would all have been expected to come visit me and to kiss my ring. They had a whole different take on that idea, and much laughter ensued! They just said I was now the old man with emphasis on “the old.”

As I reflected on my new status, I couldn’t help but be saddened by all the losses this represented: two grandfathers I loved and respected, all the great-uncles whom I saw frequently at church and at family get-togethers, all my uncles, cousins Ralph and Bill, and, of course, Dad. How quickly we go from being one of the kids to being, “the Old Man.”

Psalm 71 shows us King David in his old age. He has lived through countless adventures, survived tremendous dangers, had fame and fortune and power. He has been surrounded by enemies, within and without. He has written soaring and memorable psalms, been a man after God’s own heart, and fallen to low depths a number of times. Now he is an old man with health concerns and a sense that time is catching up with him. He has a collection of sons, and a number of them would like to be his successor. Absalom had even tried to hurry

the process along. How quickly the years have passed. He went from fighting giants to being “a portent to many,” a portent of the changes that will come soon: a new king and a new era.

But to his credit David does what David has always done: he turns to his God and relies on God’s strength and protection. He goes to “the rock of refuge” on whom he has relied “since birth.” He trusts that God will walk the rest of the journey with him; that God’s blessing and favor are still with him. He seeks his protection from wicked and cruel men. He makes it his goal to praise and worship the Lord as has been his habit all his life long. “Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone,” he pleads. That translates to, “I need you more than ever!”

So, I am “the Old Man” now. That’s ok. I’ll wear the crown for a while. I’ll do what David did and put my trust in the Lord. Our time here is fleeting. When we were children, time seemed to drag. Once Thanksgiving had come, it seemed as though Christmas would NEVER get here. Now when October 1, arrives we think, “It’s almost Christmas!” Everything changes save for one: The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is our Rock of Refuge, our constant hope, and the one who helps us. And, hey, at least none of my youngers is plotting to take my throne! Praise be to the Lord our God. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):