How To Grow Old Gracefully
Genesis 25: 7- 8

7 Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years.

8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man full of years; and he was gathered to his people

Introduction

Remember when it was virtually unheard of for someone to live to be 100 Years Old? My father-in-law attended the Tideland Electric Annual Membership Meeting a little over a week ago and that night they recognized three Tideland customers in the audience who were over 100 years old.

Several years ago, the late comedian, George Carlin, wrote this humorous piece on what it’s like to grow old.

He writes, “Do you realize the only time in our lives when we actually like getting old is when we’re kids? If you’re less than 10 years old, you’re so excited about getting older you actually count in “fractions.” “How old are you son?” “I’m four and a half.” You’re never 36 and a half. You’re four and half, going on five.

Then you get into your teens and nobody can hold you back. You jump to the next number or even ahead. “How old are you young man?” “I’m gonna be 16.” You may just be 13.......but hey, “you’re gonna be 16.”

Then comes the greatest day of your life.......You become 21. Even the words almost sound like a ceremony....... “You become 21......YESSSSS!
But then you TURN 30...........Whoa, what happened?  
Turning 30 sounds like “bad milk”......... “I TURNED 30.”

There’s no fun now.....you’re just a sour-dumpling.  What’s wrong?  
What’s changed?  You BECOME 21.......then you TURN 30  
..........then before you know it, you’re PUSHING 40.  Whoa.....
put on the brakes, it’s all starting to slip away.  Before  
you know it, you REACH 50........and by then your dreams are  
gone.  But wait........you MAKE IT to 60.  You didn’t think you  
would!  So you BECOME 21........TURN 30........PUSH 40....
REACH 50........and MAKE IT to 60.  You’ve built up so much  
speed you HIT 70.

You GET INTO YOUR 80’S........then everyday becomes a  
complete life-cycle:  you HIT lunch,  you TURN 4:30, you  
REACH bedtime, before you know it......you are WELL INTO YOUR 90’S.

Then a strange thing happens.  If you make it to 100 you become a little  
kid again.......”Just How Old Are You?”  “I’m 100 and A HALF!”

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It truly amazes me when I read the OLD TESTAMENT and see  
the number of God’s people who were still very fruitful and productive  
in their old age.

.........NOAH started building the ARK when he was about  
500 YEARS OLD.

.........MOSES was 120 YEARS OLD when he led the Israelites  
to the edge of the Promised Land.

        And DEUTERONOMY 34:7 tells us that even on the day  
        MOSES died.........”his eyes were not weak and his  
        strength was not gone.”

.........And of course there was CALEB who was still ready  
to go out and fight in battle at the age of 85.
These Men “Grew Old Gracefully”

But without a doubt, one of the finest examples in the OLD TESTAMENT on “How To Grow Old Gracefully” would have to be A B R A H A M.

**Brief Overview Of Abraham’s Life**

Let me give you a brief overview of Abraham’s “colorful life.”

Abraham was born and raised in *Ur of the Chaldees*, which is now modern-day IRAQ.

When he was 75 Years Old, God asked him to leave the home he had known his whole life and move to a land he had never seen or heard of before.

Perhaps this move wouldn’t have been all that bad had it just been Abraham and Sarah. But *Genesis 12* tells us they also took Abraham’s nephew, Lot with them.........

......as well as all the slaves and servants they had purchased.........and countless head of Livestock....... as well as all their earthly possessions.

As time went on, this traveling caravan became so big, Abraham and Lot decided to part ways. Abraham gave his nephew the first choice of land. Well Lot chose the best land.
But over the course of time, some enemies attacked LOT and tried to take his land.......and who had to come to the rescue, but ABRAHAM...........who was likely in his late 70’s perhaps even 80 years old at that time.

Of course, as I mentioned in this morning’s message, one of the remarkable things we remember most about ABRAHAM was that he was 100 and his wife SARAH was 90 when they had their first child together.

Well Sadly, SARAH died when she was 127 years old......leaving Abraham a widower at age 137. Well we read earlier that Abraham lived to be 175 years old. (Gen. 25: 7)

What Did Abraham Do those last 38 Years of His Life?

*Did he just shrivel up and live like a hermit?

*Did he spend the last 38 years of his life wallowing in grief and sorrow?

No! Let’s go back to GENESIS chapter 25 and read something I think is absolutely incredible.

Genesis 25: 1, 2

My goodness, not only did ABRAHAM get re-married sometime after his 137th Birthday.......He also fathered SIX MORE KIDS!
Now be honest! How many of you would want to still be raising children when you’re in your 60’s……70’s……or 80’s? I mean can you imagine opening presents at Christmas time and your toddler opens up a box of PAMPERS and you open a box of DEPENDS?

While none of us would want to trade places with ABRAHAM, I think we have to admire him for living his life to the fullest to the very end!

Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and FULL OF YEARS; and he was gathered to his people. (Genesis 25:7,8)

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What Can You And I Learn From Abraham About Growing Old Gracefully?

I’m sure there are lots of things we could learn, but let me just make a couple of key points.

First of all.........................

I.  We Should Grow Old Joyfully

1. The Story of Abraham begins in Genesis chapter 11 and ends in Genesis chapter 25......and almost all fourteen chapters basically deal with Abraham’s life from Age 75 on.
And do you know in those fourteen chapters.....you never find Abraham whining, complaining or begrudging his old age.

2. At Age 75 he set off on the Great Adventure to the Promised Land.

At Age 86, he fathered Ishmael through Sarah’s handmaiden Haggar.

At Age 100, he fathered Isaac.

From Age 137 on, he fathered six more kids, and probably had more grandkids running through the house than you could shake a stick at.

WOULDN’T YOU SAY ABRAHAM GREW OLD JOYFULLY?

3. I know people in their 30’s…..40’s ....and 50’s......who ACT like.......THINK like.......and LIVE like someone in their 80’s or 90’s.

4. Some people look in the mirror and if they see a NEW WRINKLE or a NEW AGE SPOT or a NEW GRAY HAIR ............they are ready to go make their Funeral Arrangements that very day.

5. I saw this little piece the other day I thought was kinda humorous. Its called.........”How To Always Stay Young.”

   (1) First of all, throw out all non-essential numbers:   This includes: AGE, WEIGHT, HEIGHT and PANT SIZE.

   (2) Keep only CHEERFUL FRIENDS...........Grouches pull you down.
(3) KEEP LEARNING. Learn more about the Bible, about computers, about crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let your brain get stuck in “idle.” An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.


(5) LAUGH OFTEN........laugh long.....and laugh out loud!

(6) ENDURE THE TEARS.........Grieve, but move on! The only person who is with you your entire life is YOU.......so DON’T STOP LIVING UNTIL YOU’RE DEAD!

6. Are you GROWING OLD JOYFULLY?

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Something else ABRAHAM teaches us is to............

II. We Should Grow Old Faithfully

(Read from Bible)

1. Let’s go back to when Abraham was 75 years old.

   Read: Genesis 12: 1-5

2. Most men are retired by the time they are 75. They are ready to just settle back and take the remaining years of their life easy and just enjoy doing the things they always wanted to do.
Not Abraham. When God commanded him to pack up his bags and move 1,500 miles away........Abraham didn’t say, “Well God, that sounds like a great plan and everything, but you’ve picked the wrong guy......you see I’m 75 years old.......I don’t have alot of years left.”

No, Genesis 12: 5 tells us after Abraham heard God’s command, he didn’t argue, he didn’t try to second guess God........BY FAITH he started packing up all his belongings and moving his family in the direction God was sending him.

BY FAITH............Abraham fathered the Child of Promise when he was 100 years old.

BY FAITH............Abraham took young Isaac to Mt. Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice in obedience to God.

As Abraham Grew In Years, he continued to grow in his faith.

3. There’s a POWERFUL LESSON there for you and me.

As OUR YEARS increase, so should OUR FAITH.
4. As we get OLDER, you and I should TRUST GOD more than we did when you were younger.

As we get OLDER........we should WORRY LESS about life, realizing there has never been a time when God failed us or let us down.

As we get OLDER........we should LEARN TO LET THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD fade into the background and LET THE ETERNAL THINGS OF GOD have a greater place of priority in our lives.

As we get OLDER........we should become MORE LOVING, MORE PATIENT, MORE UNDERSTANDING, MORE FORGIVING, MORE COMPASSIONATE and MORE HOLY......and MORE CHRISTLIKE.

5. Your FAITH IN GOD should be GREATER at 40 than when you were 30........GREATER at 50 than when you were 40 ........GREATER at 60 than when you were 50..............GREATER at 70 than when you were 60.......GREATER on the day you die than on the day you accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior.

6. IDEALLY.......You and I should go out of this life with our FAITH IN GOD getting stronger and stronger with each and every passing year until our life is over.

ILLUSTRATION: I can’t help but think of Miss Emma. What an inspiration it is to see her still walking into this auditorium to worship at almost 95 years of age.

What a wonderful example of what it truly means to GROW OLD FAITHFULLY!
As we close, I want to share this thought-provoking piece with you. Its simply entitled:

**A Prayer For Growing Old Gracefully**

Lord, You know better than I myself that I am growing older and will someday be old.

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all; but YOU know, dear Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains; they are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cock-sureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet, for a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people; and give, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Help me to FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT and TO FINISH THE RACE and KEEP THE FAITH until my days on earth have ended and I meet my Savior face to face.

-In JESUS’ NAME, AMEN