

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"When I'm Old and Gray" 8/2/23

Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare Your power to the next generation, Your might to all who are to come. (Ps 71:18)

My grandson sent me this verse with his simple words of wisdom, telling me, "Life is so simple, will you let go of your burdens and lean on the Lord our God." Somedays we need to be reminded of what we know, but can't hold on to, what we can quote but can't accept, of what we hope is true, but which still slips through our fingers.

God will never leave us or forsake us. Yet, when things go sideways, when our plans don't work out, when we face a loss, when we are given bad news, when we're too old to do what we ustacould, when we ask – along with the Beatles – "When I get older losing my hair... Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I'm sixty-four?" When that song came out, I thought 64 was old, now - if only. But the question remains, when I'm old "will you still send me a Valentine, can you still love me after all we've been through?"

Will you still love me? A question for the ages. David asked it of God, we ask it of God and of others. We have a warped sense of time, we feel too young, next thing we know we feel too old. How to measure age? Many dye their hair, get some kind of surgery or treatment, spend bookoo bucks on serums and scrubs, the right make-up and, of course, gym memberships. We try to hide the lines, the gray, the new old-looking body which snuck up on us. Of course, working out is healthy and smart in the first place, but in the back of our mind we hope it will help us to look younger. So, we can be loved.

I have really gone off course, but you understand. I always thought, I've earned every wrinkle. In theater they are considered "character" lines. I quit dying my hair, the natural look for me. I count on it being true that, like a good bottle of wine we get better with age. Say it until you believe it, no, it is true. Wisdom comes with gray hair.

I can fight my message on every turn, so I'll try to get to my point, we don't outgrow God's love as we age, as we pick up new ailments, as we slow down, as we look at what we accomplished, at what we didn't complete, as we wonder what now, as we've aged out of our job, our abilities, the dating pool. Maybe, just maybe we've aged into a new ministry, a new way we can serve God and others – even if people help us across the street, tweak our cheeks and tell us we're adorable – don't get me started. Yes, God will still loves us when we're 64.

Please pray with me:

God of eternity, thank You for the life You've given to us, bodies which age, though I'd appreciate it if the act slowed down a bit, and minds which continues to learn and still remember. Help us to use what we learn to serve You, even in old age. May we honor and learn from our elders and when the time comes, help us to impart wisdom to others. Help us to let go of our burdens and lean on You. In all things we give You thanks for Your continuing love and for never leaving us, even when we are old and gray.

Amen.