

Security for Seniors

Dr. Maarten Kuivenhoven

In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. ²Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. ³Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. ⁴Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. ⁵For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. ⁶By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. ⁷I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. ⁸Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. ⁹Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. ¹⁰For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, ¹¹saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. ¹²O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. ¹³Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. ¹⁴But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. ¹⁵My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. ¹⁶I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. ¹⁷O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. ¹⁸Now 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. ¹⁹Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee! ²⁰Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. ²¹Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. ²²I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. ²³My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. ²⁴My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

—PSALM 71

This is a sermon for seniors. Now, you might ask, Who are the seniors? As we read the text, you can draw your own conclusions, but these hints should suffice without putting a specific age to being a senior. Just let me say this: seniors always want to qualify when it comes to seniors' discounts but not always to the other things that apply to seniors. Seniors don't want to be called old or gray-headed or weak. But the point is not to define who qualifies as a senior but to speak to those who are approaching the end of their lives. Psalm 71 speaks of those who are old and gray-headed. Psalm 71 gives the sense that a senior is one who speaks to successive generations. Psalm 90:10 speaks of the limits of life as threescore and ten (70) or, by reason of strength, fourscore (80), thus a senior is someone who is approaching or near that number. Even if you're not close to that number, this message can certainly help prepare you for what many call "the golden years." Old age—senior years—comes with a sense of insecurity. The very name "Social Security" implies that for the elderly, there is an inherent sense of financial and provisional insecurity. You no longer have the strength to work and to provide for your spouse and family, unless of course you have a good pension and savings from a lifetime of work. But Social

Security was designed to provide a sense of security and provision for old age. If there is security on a social level, then what security is there for seniors on a spiritual level? That's what we hope to consider from the Word of God. Our theme is "Security for Seniors": (1) A well-grounded security, (2) A much-needed security, and (3) A forward-looking security.

A Well-grounded Security

So, what is this security that aids senior saints for the final leg of their earthly pilgrimage? The psalmist shows us by *professing the Lord's powerful person*. It is security that is grounded in God Himself. Notice what the psalmist says in verse 1, "In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion." The psalmist invokes the covenant name of God. It is the name of God that speaks of the faithfulness of God. In the psalmist's old age, the God of faithfulness forms the foundation of his spiritual confidence. When confusion of mind threatens to overcome the psalmist in his senior years, he knows that the faithfulness of God will be his confidence. Even as the mind begins to slip and the memory begins to fade, the Lord remains the confidence of saints in their senior years. Is this your confession now, senior saint—"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust"? Is this your security for your senior years? There is no better place to rest than in the Lord Himself. This is well-grounded security for the senior years.

But there's more. This security is also seen in the *plea for the Lord's gracious preservation*. This plea is seen in verses 2–4, where the psalmist cries out repeatedly for the Lord's deliverance. "Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape." An appeal to the righteousness, or justice, of God. "Incline thine ear unto me, and save me." An appeal to the Lord to stretch His ear to the cry of the aged psalmist. "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort." An appeal for God to be a strong refuge. "Thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress." The security of the Lord's deliverance in the shelter of who God is in old age. In the trembling

years, there is a secure fortress in God for the aged saint. “Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.” An appeal for deliverance from those who practice wickedness. It is an appeal for security and rest in God as a Rock—the Rock of Ages is a Rock for the aged.

This security for seniors is also seen in *the praise of the Lord’s past provision*. The psalmist is looking back on his life. He’s reflecting on how the Lord has cared for him in the past. He says in verse 5, “For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.” From an early age he had learned to place his confidence in God. His security in God began when he was young. That’s an important lesson for young people as well. Place your confidence in God when you are young—not in yourself—so that when you are old, that confidence can remain unshaken. The psalmist further reflects in verse 6, “By thee have I been holden up from the womb.” He sees God’s providential care from the moment of birth and beyond. This forms the subject of his praise in verses 7–8. His well-grounded hope for deliverance and help in the time of old age comes from reflection on who God has been for him in the past.

So, too, for the aged among us. Here’s God’s instruction for you in the time of old age. Don’t grow bitter because of pain but let the sweetness and strength of who God is sustain you and ground your hope for final deliverance. Resolve to make God your strong tower and refuge. Reflect on His goodness to you from the moment of your first breaths and praise Him for it.

A Much-needed Security

And when do you need security? In times of vulnerability and weakness. Seniors face this in a special way. The time of old age is a time of *physical weakness* in which security is needed. This physical weakness is captured by the psalmist as he writes in verse 9, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.” Senior years are times of vulnerability—the feelings of no longer being able to work as before. The body weakens, and the

mind slips. Feelings of uselessness set in. Society kicks the elderly to the curb as if they have nothing more to contribute. The fears of abandonment as the psalmist cries out, “Cast me not off.” Forsake me not when my strength fails. When a once-strong, robust body breaks down and can’t do what it used to, there is a searching for security outside of ourselves. When our joints need to be replaced and surgeries loom to fix a worn-out body, we search for security. Where is lasting and ultimate security found? Not in canes and walkers. Not in surgeries and rehabilitations. The psalmist finds it in God, and hence he cries out in the midst of his weakness and vulnerability, “Cast me not off in the time of old age, and forsake me not when my strength faileth.”

My aged friend, where does your physical weakness bring you? Does it bring you to this point where you realize more and more that security lies not within your strength, a strength that you perhaps relied on before? But now as the body breaks down, you realize that you can’t rely on your own strength? You relied on your spouse, but if your spouse is gone, you have no one. Where do you turn in physical weakness and vulnerability of old age? There is much-needed security to be found in the Lord.

In time of spiritual temptation, the elderly need spiritual security. Perhaps some of us think that the time of old age is a time where temptations are silent. The elderly saint should be much more advanced in the areas of battling temptations, no? Well, according to the psalmist and most elderly saints, this is not the case. Temptations are not quiet in old age. The temptations may be different than they were in younger years, but they are still temptations: temptations to fear God’s abandonment, temptation to give in to the enemies of the soul that are perhaps more active in old age to deprive the aging saint of spiritual comfort. Listen to how David describes these temptations. “For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded and

consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt” (vv. 10–13).

The spiritual enemies, fears, and doubts of the aged saint are real, aren't they? Reflecting on a life past and the sins of youth come back to haunt you as the tempter comes to shake and sift you. Times of intense loneliness as you mourn the loss of a spouse and busy children, and the temptation is to give in to the temptation and fear that God has abandoned you. All you have is time as you sit and reflect on days gone by and you face days of pain, sorrow, sickness, loneliness. Surely old age with its temptations is a time for much-needed security in the Lord and His deliverance.

But as David cries out to God for help, notice how this much-needed security finds its entrance into his heart as he commits himself to praise God. He has learned to look beyond his circumstances and the enemies of his soul, to look to God for security. He says in verse 14, “But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.” His security lies beyond himself. He says, I will hope continually. Despite the physical weakness and the spiritual temptations, his hope is grounded continually in God. That's where he turns in time of trouble. He finds his much-needed security in God. His spiritual conflict leads to spiritual confession and confidence. It is a much-needed security but certainly not out of reach, as David's experience shows here. Indeed, the old man who writes this psalm moves from pain to praise.

Is this your confession in old age, my friend? I will hope in God continually. That's where my security is found. During pain, I will praise Him because I know He is holding me even during the most difficult period of my life. I know He will hold me when my strength fails. He is my confidence when I face the enemies of my soul and they taunt me with death and seek to rob me of spiritual comfort. And even if you are not aged, these verses tell you where to be right now before you reach old age. You need God as your confidence now. Don't delay until senior years, but learn this now.

A Forward-looking Security

What does this security do for seniors? It makes you productive in your senior years. It makes you forward-looking in your senior years. Reflecting on God's faithfulness in past years is helpful in grounding your security in God for the present. But reflecting on God's faithfulness and your spiritual security in Him also enables you to live for the Lord in your senior years. That's what we see in the last verses of this psalm. David looks forward. He is secure in God. He can face the last years of his life with confidence even during pains and problems of aging. His forward-looking security enables him to do three things.

It enables him *to magnify God for the next generation*. There is evident concern that others know about God, as we read in verse 15, "My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof." The desire of this aged saint is to publish the good news of salvation. He has experienced this through all his days. He wants others to know the immeasurable salvation of God. He wants others to know of the righteousness of God, that which is life to those who believe. He continues in verse 16, "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." His daily strength is not his own, but God's. This strength will fuel his proclamation of God's righteousness. He has been taught by God in verse 17, and as he has been taught by God in his youth, so he wants the next generation of youth to know about God. Listen to what he says in verse 18. "Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." He wants to magnify God to the generations that follow him. This is his desire, as he says in verse 19, "Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!" As he looks forward, the power, strength, and righteousness of God are the subjects dear to his heart and on his lips, overflowing to the next generation.

So often, old age can seem so unproductive. You can't do much anymore. But if you have your faculties about you, you can pray and you can speak of God's power, strength, and righteousness to the next generation. If you have been taught, then you need to be a teacher to the following generations. The faithfulness, power, strength, and righteousness of God are the best topics to share with younger generations. When these things are combined with your own personal narrative of how these things form your eternal security, they present a compelling gospel testimony that shapes younger lives. Are you speaking, aged saint? Are you listening, younger generations?

It enables him *to hope in God for the general resurrection*. And as the aged saint finds security in God, it enables him to look beyond this life even. Consider what is written in verse 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." This puts all this aging trouble in perspective. The same God of providence who brought these troubles into his life will also bring him out of those troubles in the final act of deliverance in the resurrection from the dead. There is the promise of life that the aged saint takes hold of here in these words, "Thou shalt quicken me again." It is not the fount of youth that so many chase. No, it is eternal life in glory, resurrected body and soul. The body that is decaying and decrepit will rise again from the depths of the earth. Death will not have the final say for the aged saint. Here's hope and comfort and security for seniors. In fact, this is the hope of all the saints, no matter what your age is. But particularly for aged saints, this comfort is priceless. God will finally and fully deliver in the resurrection. There is life beyond the grave.

It enables him *to praise God for His wonderful deliverance*. In light of this resurrection hope and security, the aged saint has every reason to praise God. It is not age that defines our praise. It is not physical capacity that defines our praise. It is not wrinkled skin or gray hair that defines our praise. It is not the trembling hand or the pain-wracked limbs that define our praise. No, it is

God who defines our praise at every stage of life. But it is notable that the aged saint here praises God for his comfort, for his truth, for his holiness, for his deliverance. We read of this in verses 21–24. “Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.” How will you be found in old age? Will you find security in God, even in the heart of old age, and sing His praises, looking ahead to final deliverance? He is the security for seniors.

Amen.