

Growing Old is Inevitable, Growing Up is Optional Cape Town Dec 2017

Good Morning

Jacques, converted here in 2001, went in to the full time ministry here 10 years ago (Werner asked me to carry a couch)...

Been in Joburg last 5 years

Family, my beautiful wife, Anzel 20 months old, little Lincoln 4 months old...**(photo's)**

Title for my lesson this morning - **Growing Old is inevitable, Growing up is intentional...**

Whether you like it or not - Growing old is inevitable.

It's happening as you sit here!

You came in this door, a couple of mins younger then what you are now.

Not sure if that is good or bad news for you - I guess if your younger - this is GREAT news, I guess if you're a little older - BAD news!

Me when I was younger, someone ask how old you are, 'im almost 5' or 'im almost 7.' So wished I could be older!

Growing old is inevitable - it does not require any choices or decisions on your behalf - it happen all by itself. So you don't have to worry about it!

Laura found this app, that projects what you will look like in the future, based on features you have not. Here is a picture of what will look like when I am age 60...**(photo)**

Shame on you if you think I look that way now! Jesus knows your heart.

Growing old is inevitable.

But Growing up is Intentional!

That requires a series of choices and decisions you and I need to make on a daily basis, or at least on a consistent basis to grow up as we transition through life.

What is the growing up that we are talking about?

We are a spiritual people - our goal is to become like Christ.

Our goal is to finish the race

To remain in the incredible covenant relationship that God has called us into.

To die as faithful disciples, with our faith, heart and integrity in tact.

That is what we were talking about...

These things are not a given! We all know people that started the race well and dropped out along the way. We all know 30,40,50 year olds that skipped growing up

What I want to talk about this morning, is two simple choices that we can make on a daily basis to increase our chances of growing up as we go through life, to stay the course and mature along the way...

Specifically speak to the graduates here, but I think it will apply to all of us... There is so much one could say, but these are the two I want to talk about...

1. Endure Hardship...

Endure means...

That phrase comes out of Hebrews 12:7 but in order to get some context we gonna read the passage here together, unpack it and then make some observations...

Hebrews 12: 5 - 11...

The Hebrew writer writes to an audience that have under-gone tremendously hard times.

Some of these guys have been imprisoned for their faith, others have had family members killed because of their faith and others have suffered financial loss or exclusion from certain groups because of their decision to follow Jesus.

The real problem, was that the audience was considering turning back on their commitment to be followers of Jesus!

The Hebrew writer writes into this

v. 5 Have you forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his sons (and daughters)

The trials and hardships that you have been facing, you have to see it as discipline from your heavenly Father, and he is allowing them for your good, because he loves you!

As a physical father or mother does.

Learning that now, started to discipline little Anzel (our 20 month old). Give her a little spank on the hand...not fun, but we do it because we want her to grow up to be a woman of character...

Story...of disciplining Anzel...

Three things to say No too (plugs; standing in her eating chair, speakers and tv)

Table, dancing on the table

Spank her if she touches a plug, but ineffective.

Renton's the one day. Unfolds, spank.

Oh we see what the problem is, it's the way you spank.

Jay looks at me and says what were you trying to do?

It needs to hurt to be effective.

Now, looks at a plug - say No, No, No...

As a parent it is not fun, don't look forward to it.

As the child it is painful!

v. 11 - No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Amen. We don't enjoy going through it! But as a loving Father that wants us to grow and mature he knows we need it!

What hardships are we talking about here?

Not talking about...

Hardships talking about is:

We don't cause the things, not because of our decisions, they come because we live in a fallen world.

Now the temptation when hardship comes is two-fold - and it mentions it there back in v.5 - re-read...

- **5. A Make light of the Lord's discipline**
- **5. B Lose heart** - we tend to get discouraged, we go the self-pity route

The reality is, tough times and hardships will come in our lives, regardless of how old or young we are.

Here is the real tough thing - tough times does not guarantee growing up or maturing!

It is only those who are trained by it!

And God as a loving Father will keep putting us in those situations until we learn the lesson.

So what do we need to do in order to be trained by it?

1. What is God trying to expose in my attitude, heart and character?
2. What is God trying to form in my attitude, heart and character?

I believe if we sufficiently wrestles with these questions whenever hardship or tough times come, instead of just making light of it or getting discouraged we will be able to grow and mature in the way that God desires us to - and we will produce a harvest of righteousness and peace.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who are trained by it...

But then we have to endure hardships.

The second thought here is that people that grow up ask great questions

2. Ask Great Questions...

Proverbs 2: 1 - 10

Incredible proverb.

Really describes the heart of a learner.

It says if you want to gain wisdom, if you want to obtain knowledge of the Lord, if you want to understand how to discern what is right and wrong in every situation and make a choice about what is choice - then

'you shall call out for insight'

'we should cry aloud for understanding'

'we should look for it as if we are looking for silver and search as for a hidden treasure...'

(story about that search for hidden treasure - movies)

We should go after learning with that amount of hunger and humility in our lives.

Great questions come from people that are hungry to learn and to grow.

And great questions - if you ask them - are the keys to unlock insight and understanding.

I'll never forget this, when I was younger my mom use to say something, and I never really grasped it at the time, but now as im getting older im understanding it more and more...

She would say 'I have already forgotten what you still need to learn.'
I don't know if any parent has said that.

But now I understand that. She has moved so far from being a teenager and a campus student that she has forgotten what it was like. But when I come and ask questions and probe it brings back all those experiences and memories. But if I do not it lays dormant and she just moves on.

If your graduating today! Or if you want to grow today...

'If you want to go where other people have gone, and want to do what others have done, you simply have to ask them how they got there.' (repeat)

Story of John Maxwell:

Leadership consultant

Speaker

Writer

Young twenties; given a church of about a 100, didn't know what to do

Read article about top 10 most influential churches and what they were doing.

So inspired, phonebook to phone the pastors and ask if he would get with them.

Phone, ask 30min of your time pay you \$100

Only 2 said yes

Write down all the questions, 5 pages, take his tape recorder. Sit down and just fire away taking notes. After 30 mins said thank you, want to respect your time and gave them the \$100 and then leave.

The 2 were so impressed that in 2/3 years they mentioned it to others, and in time the other 8 phoned him back and said we are willing to get with you!

He recounts that moment where he humbled himself, and sat at their feet is what transformed his life and leadership for ever.

That humility to say, help me, I want to build what you have built, I want to do what you have done! Can you please help me

For some of you, may have gotten there without asking questions but asking short cuts your journey in a greater way. You get there way quicker and way better then you would have trying to get there on your own!

There are people in this room...

Ask you to do this morning - gonna give you 30seconds to do this right now - want you to write down for me the best question(s) that you have asked somebody that has had the most significant impact in your life.

Repeat. Give 30seconds...

Good exercise to do - sometimes we just don't know what to ask! Get into the habit of thinking about or stealing others people's great questions!

Here are mine:

1. How do you discern the will of God when making decisions (e.g. how do I know when a career opportunity comes if that is from God or not?)
2. How do I grow in...this area of my life, or how do I turn away from this nagging sin...(e.g. how do I grow as a leader, how do I grow in this area of my character, how do I turn away from my impurity)
3. What should you factor into when choosing a godly wife? (most formative decision is becoming a disciple of Jesus, but next is who I get married too)
4. What does this passage mean? (I've read it but don't understand this...campus ministry guy, constantly asking, read this but don't understand what do you think, one of the most significant questions you can ask)
5. How to discipline our children? (story of Anzel)
6. Lately - where can you buy the cheapest nappies? (if you're a parent you know that is a massive question to ask)

These are some of mine.

Amazing thin is there are people in this room...

What I want to ask you this morning - challenge you with this morning - if you're a young man or young woman, or you're an older man or older woman, or your and old man and an old woman, the nature of your questions should change but the habit of asking should NEVER cease. When it ceases you cease to grow and learn.

People that grow UP, that grow the fastest and mature in the years to come, is not the most talented, or the most charismatic or the smartest or most confident, but it is those that humble themselves continually and where you find them is sitting at the feet of people that have gone before them with a pen and a notepad and then going home and applying those things in their lives.

Family, put before you this morning - growing old is inevitable, you don't have to spend any effort that will take place on its own!

But growing up takes intentionally!

You and I have to make a daily or consistent decision

1. To endure hardship, to stand back and learn from it and use it as a training opp from God, to ask what is He exposing, what does He want me to learn
2. And we need to humble ourselves, we need to cry aloud for understanding and call out for insight by asking great questions from those that have gone before us!

If we consistently makes these choices I believe we will continue to grow Up into the men and women God destined and desire us to be!