

# Introduction

## Discussion

*How do you feel about ageing? (Do you know why you feel like that?)*

*What fears do you have about it?*

## 1) Ageing is a struggle (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11)

No time lasts forever

God makes the changing times beautiful

But God has also set eternity in our hearts

## Discussion

*What do you make of how times change and yet we yearn for eternity?*

*How do you feel that tension in your experience?*

*If you want, think about a time in your life you wanted to last.*

*Or think about realising time may be running out for a desire to be fulfilled.*

## **Case study: the struggle of ageing bodies**

Our bodies are wasting away and will one day die

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5

<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. **5:1** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

1 Corinthians 15:42-43

<sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”

So allow yourself to be confronted by the struggle

Ecclesiastes 3:11

<sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

What if I don't allow myself to be confronted by an ageing body & what if I do?

## **Discussion**

*In what sense is it right to groan as we age?*

*Why is it difficult to allow ourselves to be confronted by ageing?*

*Where might you need to allow yourself to be confronted?*

**Or if you prefer, talk about these scenarios and answer the questions as if they're you....**

-You injure your back lifting a heavy box at home. The medics can only do so much. Things improve, but your back will never be quite as it was. You love sports and outdoor pursuits. You realise you won't be able to do them in quite the way you always have done. That feels sad and frustrating.

-You've recently been forgetting things, you're feeling that brain fog, you don't feel at all like yourself. You wonder if it's the start of the menopause.

-People have always commented positively on your appearance. You like the way you look, and you worry about how you'll feel when the crow's feet start coming.

-You hear from your brother that your mother is in hospital. She's had a stroke. They don't know whether she'll recover. You've not really ever considered life without her there. And how is she going to be cared for if she does recover?!

**BREAK**

## 2) Ageing can be beautiful

The beauty of inward renewal

2 Corinthians 4:16

### Discussion

*How much do you think about the inner renewal of Christ's image in you?*

*How could thinking about it more help your attitude to ageing?*

There is a greater beauty to be revealed

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So remember your creator and the beauty He is creating

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"

What if I decide not to remember & what if I do?

## **Discussion**

*At the beginning we asked - how do you feel about ageing? How have Ecclesiastes & Corinthians challenged your answers?*

*Can you spot areas of your life where right groaning is tipping into grumpiness about the way God has done things?*

*How can “remembering our Creator” help us not to lose heart?*

## **How would “remembering our Creator” help the people in these situations?**

-You've gone a certain distance in your career. But now younger people are starting to overtake you. You start to wonder whether your bosses value you and your work. You wonder what all those hours staying late in front of the laptop have been for.

-You find yourself single in your 40s. You always thought you would get married and have children. But time is running out now. You feel lonely in your flat at times, and envy those with a full and busy house.

-Your children are growing up. Things are not always easy at home. The teenage years have come in with a bang. There's quite a lot of "heated discussion" about various issues. Your children are not working as hard as you want them to at that excellent school you sent them to. You've given them every opportunity in life and this is how they repay you! Why can't they be like your friend's children who seem pretty nice and hard-working in comparison? You're concerned about how they're going to turn out.

- You're young by every standard but you're aware that time passes quickly. There is so much you want to do and be and you worry about it a lot.

- You have someone who is particularly dependent on you. You don't know how they will cope without you. You don't fear your own death or even getting older apart from how it will affect them. At times you feel consumed by anxiety about it.

- One of the things you love more about getting older, is being a bit more assured in your opinions and who you are. You enjoy not feeling subjected to other people's opinions and you relish in voicing yours.

## **PRAYER**

What gift of grace is Jesus my  
redeemer  
There is no more for heaven now to  
give  
He is my joy, my righteousness, and  
freedom  
My steadfast love, my deep and  
boundless peace  
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
For my life is wholly bound to His  
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing,  
"All is mine"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
For by my side, the Saviour He will  
stay  
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
For in my need, His power is displayed  
To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend  
me  
Through the deepest valley He will  
lead  
Oh the night has been won, and I shall  
overcome  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven  
The future sure, the price it has been  
paid  
For Jesus bled and suffered for my  
pardon

And He was raised to overthrow the  
grave  
To this I hold, my sin has been  
defeated  
Jesus now and ever is my plea  
Oh the chains are released, I can sing,  
"I am free"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow  
Jesus  
For He has said that He will bring me  
home  
And day by day I know He will renew  
me  
Until I stand with joy before the throne  
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
All the glory evermore to Him  
When the race is complete, still my lips  
shall repeat  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

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