

## **Psalm 71: 4-18 (ESV): Even to Old Age and Gray Hairs**

**Main point:** God is with you throughout your entire life, even to old age.

**Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.**

**Background:** A psalm of David, written in his old age and intended for the people of God to use in their afflictions, especially in their elder years. Several times he alludes to the realities of age. [It's fine to skip over bracketed sections.]

### **Focus of the study:**

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.

<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are my hope,  
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

<sup>6</sup> Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;  
you are he who took me from my mother's womb.

My praise is continually of you.

<sup>7</sup> I have been as a portent to many,  
but you are my strong refuge.

<sup>8</sup> My mouth is filled with your praise,  
and with your glory all the day.

<sup>9</sup> Do not cast me off in the time of old age;  
forsake me not when my strength is spent.

<sup>10</sup> [For my enemies speak concerning me;  
those who watch for my life consult together

<sup>11</sup> and say, "God has forsaken him;  
pursue and seize him,  
for there is none to deliver him."]

<sup>12</sup> [O God, be not far from me;  
O my God, make haste to help me!

<sup>13</sup> May my accusers be put to shame and consumed;  
with scorn and disgrace may they be covered  
who seek my hurt.]

<sup>14</sup> But I will hope continually  
and will praise you yet more and more.

<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,  
of your deeds of salvation all the day,  
for their number is past my knowledge.

<sup>16</sup> With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come;  
I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

<sup>17</sup> O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

<sup>18</sup> So even to old age and gray hairs,

O God, do not forsake me,  
until I proclaim your might to another generation,  
your power to all those to come.

**Questions:**

1. *v. 4: Who is David addressing? What is he asking?*
  - a. addressing God: help! Rescue me!
2. *I wonder why he needs help?*
  - a. Unjust and cruel enemies
3. *How does he describe God?*
  - a. v. 5: my hope, my trust
4. *How long has God been with him?*
  - a. v. 5-6: from my youth; from before my birth; from my mother's womb
5. *What kind of life has David had? I wonder who knows some of the stories of David's life?*
  - a. Difficult! Battles (Goliath), enemies (Saul and other armies against God's people), adultery and murder (Bathsheba and Uriah)
6. *And who has David called on, leaned through it all?*
  - a. v. 7: God: "you are my strong refuge" – *What is a refuge?*
    - i. place of safety, strength, shelter, hiding place, fortress
7. *v. 9: David speaks again of his length of days: "in the time of old age; when my strength is spent." When he's feeling weak and old, what might be his feeling about the things that are against him, the thing that are hard to bear?*
  - a. doesn't have the strength on his own to withstand enemies
8. *What does he need God to do? How is he feeling in his old age?*
  - a. stay close; help!
  - b. feeling tired, spent
9. *And then: how does his tone change in v. 14? Why?*
  - a. But I will hope continually and praise you yet more and more
  - b. v. 15: He remembers God. What does he remember?
    - i. Righteous acts
    - ii. Deeds of salvation
    - iii. Might deeds
    - iv. How many? "number is past my knowledge"
10. *What does he recall again in v. 17-18? How long has God been with him?*
  - a. From my youth you have taught me
  - b. to old age and gray hairs
11. *What does David want to do with the rest of his life?*
  - a. Proclaim God's might to another generation, God's power to all those who come
12. *Who is in your next generation?*
  - a. everyone! children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, friends ... on and on
13. *What have you seen God do in your own life? How has God helped you? [generate as many ideas as possible]*
14. *So what do we need to proclaim to the next generations? What kinds of things do you want to tell the next generation about God? [generate lots of ideas!]*

- a. God's power
  - b. God's righteousness
  - c. God's great deeds
  - d. Who is like God??
15. Ask for any prayer requests for today.
  16. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
  17. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace