



I Have Trusted in You Since I Was Young

Psalm 71:14-19

Psalm 119:9-11

John Dunham

August 2, 2009

*“Sovereign Lord, I put my hope in you;
I have trusted in you since I was young.
I have relied on you all my life; you have protected me
Since the day I was born. I will always praise you.” Psalm 71:5-6*

Prayer for Illumination (before Scripture reading)

Lord, break the bread of your Word among us and nourish us with your truth. In the name of Christ Jesus we pray. Amen

During new member classes, those interested in uniting with this church are often asked questions similar to these: *“When, if ever, did God become more than a word for you?”* and, *“Where are you in your spiritual life, on your faith journey?”* The questions are intended to encourage an honest consideration and declaration of one’s faith.

Psalm 71 is written as if David was asked questions such as these, by God himself.

David, in response, made a declaration of his own. It was a strong statement affirming God’s faithfulness. Listen again to his words:

“You have taught me ever since I was young, and I still tell of your wonderful acts. Now that I am old and my hair is grey, do not abandon me, O God! Be with me while I proclaim your power and might to all generations to come. Your righteousness, God, reaches the skies. You have done great things; there is no one like you.” Psalm 71:17-19

Who has been your teacher from the beginning? David was an instructed believer. He was not merely saved. He was taught. In our day there are persons who want a “quick fix” spiritually, and ethically. They don’t want to grow. They want to clutch that one-way ticket to heaven. They are similar to seventy-year-old wearing diapers, clutching a bottle, babbling incoherently. Alive? Yes, but infantile intellectually, spiritually, and ethically. David says, **“O God, from my youth you have taught me...”**

David's instructor was God. Too many of us think that we can learn all by ourselves. We have our own thoughts. We have our favorite authors. We learn through experience. We have a Frank Sinatra approach to the Christian life, "I'll do it my way." Better to allow God to be your instructor! **"Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way."** (Proverbs 3:6)

How does God teach us from our youth on up?

He teaches us through his Word, the Bible. David delighted in the Scriptures. He quoted them. He knew the history of God's working in the life of Israel. Looking back on the way to life, he writes: **"How can a young man keep his life pure?**

**By obeying your commands. With all my heart
I try to serve you...I keep your law in my heart,
so that I will not sin against you."** (Psalm 119:9-11)

David began early. And David kept on learning all the way into the sunset years of life. When I was a little boy I learned and believed that God's love in Jesus was for me. I was in the second or third grade when I came into the kitchen of our home in Pontiac, Michigan. My Mom asked me, "Johnny, what have you been doing?" I replied, "Talking with Jesus." I wish, today, that I remembered what I was talking with him about!

Then, too, I remember the evening, as a seventh-grader, when our youth group attended an evangelistic meeting at a nearby church. That night I went forward to publicly receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I already knew about Jesus and his love, but that night it became more personal. I realized that knowing *about* Jesus, and living a 'good life' was not enough. It became clear to me that Jesus died, he gave his life, for me, that I might be forgiven, and have peace with God. That's what I wanted. And, all I had to do was to accept his gift, and trust myself and my life to him.

If any of you in worship today feel that you know about God's love in Jesus, but don't really *know* him, I invite you offer a prayer such as this: "Dear Lord, in Jesus' love please forgive me. Take my life and let it be, forgiven, given over, and truly used of thee." I would be happy to sit down with you and talk about knowing peace with God in Jesus.

You can say that I have had a life-time of experience growing in my faith. I haven't always felt close to the Lord, yet I can proclaim his faithfulness to me without hesitation.

Many a person who calls this congregation their family of faith and spiritual home could stand in this pulpit today and proclaim three score years and ten, plus or minus, of the faithfulness of God. Many of you could talk about the ups and downs of life, and how you have been sustained by the steadfast love of Jesus. Of course there have been hard times. There have been moments of crushed dreams, and others flushed with success, God's goodness.

The bottom line is that you have a future no matter how old you are. It's a future in this life, and it's a future in the life to come. The Apostle Paul wrote: **"...whether we live or**

whether we die, we are the Lord's." God's final word is made clear to us again as we sit together at the Holy Table of our Lord. Here we remember that Jesus, God's Son, has come among us—he walked and talked and worked, he smiled and cried, and he gave his life on a rough, wooden cross—for you and for me. We rejoice that he rose from the grave and broke the power of death, once and for all.

And his final word to us is this: **"I will never leave you or forsake you."** I will never turn my back on you.

I trust that our response to him is captured in the words of Psalm 71, verses 5 and 6, as printed on the cover of the bulletin. Please repeat them with me:

**"For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord,
My confidence since my youth.
From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth
From my mother's womb. I will ever praise you."**

AMEN...and let us praise our God

In whom we have trusted...

Ever since we were young!