



**My grandfather was a typesetter. My dad used to tell of how he could so quickly pull the letters out of the sorting box and arrange them.**

**-- Those letters were then inked and impressed upon paper.**

**-- And the mirror image that was left became, in a sense, the legacy of that type.**

**-- We all leave legacies . . . some kind of mark on the lives of others.**

**TR: The question is, what kind of imprint will we make?**



**What kind of legacy will we leave?**

**-- Will we fail to pass on the most important batons of life?**

**TR: Will we be one of the many . . .**



**. . . irresponsible seniors who leave a legacy of regret?  
-- How can we be sure NOT to be that kind of person?  
TR: How can we sow to the Spirit NOW, so that when the THEN  
comes, we will reap a fruitful and lasting legacy of honor?**



## **SOWING AND REAPING**

**We are continuing our series on sowing and reaping.**

**-- The core idea comes from Galatians 5-6 . . . sowing to the Spirit, reaping the fruit of the Spirit and ultimately eternal life through Christ.**

**-- Today's thoughts are not just for the elderly, but for all who are growing older (which means it is for us who are still breathing and not in the morgue).**

**TR: But, let's use the idea of a senior saint leaving a legacy as the foil for our thoughts today.**

## GETTING "OLD" IS NOT FOR WIMPS

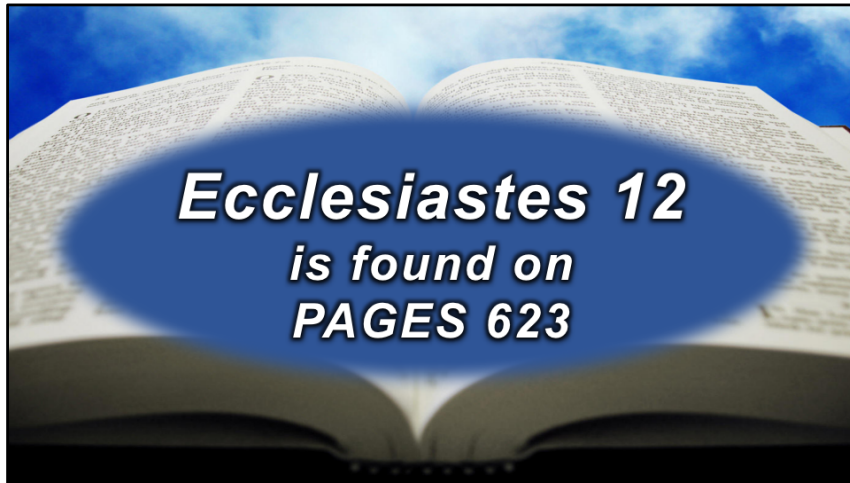


**My dad repeated often that . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Whether your health fails you as a young person or as someone with decades of experiences behind you, it is not easy.**

**TR: Let's use our sermon notes and our Bibles, looking first at . .**

**.**



***Ecclesiastes 12***  
***is found on***  
***PAGES 623***

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The poetry here gives to us an incredible picture of what happens to our bodies as we age.**

**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"; <sup>2</sup>before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain,

ESV

**And because of the decay caused by living in a fallen world, we are challenged to "Remember our Creator in our youth."**

**-- READ SLIDE**

**-- The eyes grow dim**

**-- The discouragement of dark clouds, even after the rain passes**

**TR: Verse 3 continues . . .**

in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- with trembling hands, bent back, teeth that are falling apart, and dimmed vision

TR: And the description still isn't done . . .



and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—<sup>5</sup>they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way;

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- hearing that is muffled, yet sleep that is easily disturbed  
-- paranoia and phobias that never used to even enter into our thinking

TR: Youth really is gone when . . .

the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- the hair grows white, and even energy and sexual appetites just drag along.
  - Getting old is not for wimps!
  - Remember your Creator in your youth because this is NOT your eternal home
- TR: Remember Him before . . .

before the silver cord is snapped, or  
the golden bowl is broken, or the  
pitcher is shattered at the fountain,  
or the wheel broken at the cistern,  
7and the dust returns to the earth  
as it was, and the spirit returns to  
God who gave it.

ESV

### **READ SLIDE**

-- Whatever imagery we want to use, life will soon be over,  
for life is short.

-- Dust to dust.

-- And then we will give account to our Creator.

TR: Getting old is hard . . . getting physically frail is hard . . .  
but as these weaknesses prepare us for eternity, we are left  
with the question of . . .



**. . . what kind of legacy we will leave.**

**-- Will we pass the baton well or will it get dropped (drop an actual baton) . . . with the horrible sound of the legacy of regret?**

**-- Many of us would rather not think about all this, but whether we want to or not, there is a baton in our hand . . .**

**-- . . . and it won't be there after we die.**

**TR: As I pondered Scriptures that especially speak to senior saints, I realized that it has always been common to wonder . .**

**.**

**AS WE GET OLDER WE WONDER . . .**



**. . . about several things. People have been wondering about them for thousands of years.**

**TR: Psalm 90 is a psalm of Moses and he writes in verse 10 . . .**

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. <sup>11</sup>Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Life is short, even for Moses who lived to 120, full of vigor, SO we pray . . .**

So **teach us to number our days**  
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: And as we pray that, we also pray in light of the first common wondering of older age . . .**

Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. <sup>17</sup>Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, **and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!**

ESV

... down in verses 16-17 ... **READ SLIDE**  
TR: I think most of us wonder ...



## AS WE GET OLDER WE WONDER . . .

- if what we did **mattered** and will it have any lasting impact.



### . . . READ SLIDE

-- The prayer, “establish the work of our hands,” is the yearning for our lives to mean something, to have purpose and consequence.

-- For the atheist, there is no lasting consequence for we are but fireflies, here for a night or two, and then gone.

-- A business proverb is “Inspect what you expect.” But, if there is no one ultimately inspecting our work, then we have no expectations to live up to. And no one to hear “well done” from.

TR: But the follower of Jesus understands that there is something more.

1 Corinthians 3:11-13a p. 1055

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup>each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it,

ESV

**In 1 Corinthians 3, the Apostle Paul teaches us about legacy . . . about doing things that matter and will have a truly eternally lasting impact.**

**-- READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 13 continues . . .**

. . . because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup>If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

ESV

### **READ SLIDE**

-- We can have lasting impact, but only if we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

-- Whether we are written up in the history books or have statues carved in our honor means nothing IF we haven't build on the one and only foundation that stands firm.

-- All the "good" deeds done that are manifestations of pride and independence from God will not survive. Only those built on the foundation of Jesus.

TR: The fire will test all the work, as verse 15 says . . .

If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

ESV

### **READ SLIDE**

- **Our legacy is not the same as our salvation.**
  - **The work of those who have not put their feet on the foundation of Christ will be burned up . . . there is only a legacy of regret.**
  - **But, even for those who have trusted Christ, there can still be much regret because we drop the baton . . . we don't finish the work God has given us to do.**
  - **And therefore there is no work of our hands to be established!**
- TR: What a contrast to Jesus, who prayed . . .**

John 17:4

21

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

ESV

**... in John 17 ... READ SLIDE**

**-- Isn't that what we yearn to be able to say as well?**

**TR: God wants us to accomplish what He has for us to do ...**

**AS WE GET OLDER WE WONDER . . .**

- if what we did mattered and will it have any lasting impact.



**. . . and to know that it mattered and it will have a lasting impact.**

**-- Even, knowing that, many of us will wonder, when we get old or weak with disease, about something further.**

**TR: We see this lingering thought captured in Psalms 71 and 92**

**. . .**

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."

ESV

## READ SLIDE

-- Some of us feel this way . . . our strength is spent.

TR: But, like the Psalmist, we still want to leave a legacy, as verse 17 and following captures . . .

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.**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- The godly yearn for God's empowerment to pass on the baton, to proclaim God's might to another generation.

TR: We pray that we will be like the righteous described in Psalm 92 . . .



(The righteous) are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. <sup>14</sup>**They still bear fruit in old age;** they are ever full of sap and green, <sup>15</sup>to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

ESV

### READ SLIDE

-- Our grandchildren may consider our jokes “sappy” but our hope is that we aren’t buried before we’ve died.

TR: As our strength is more and more spent, and as the rigors of old age or disease make us feel like we a dragging a bit, we wonder . . .

## AS WE GET OLDER WE WONDER . . .

- if what we did mattered and will it have any lasting impact.
- whether we are **still** able to make some difference.



### . . . READ SLIDE

-- Can we bear fruit in our old age?

-- EX: Knowing we can make a difference changes things: cf. Laszlo Bock at GLS: Phone fund raising: a) \$1,300; b) with results reported \$1,300; c) with life stories \$3,100; d) with 5 minute stories by beneficiaries \$5,000.

TR: We want to make a lasting impact, we want to still make a difference. What we want is to be able to . . .



**. . . pass on a legacy, even when we know we don't have the horsepower that we used.**

**TR: But, how can we leave a worthy legacy?**

**WE PASS THE BATON BY ...**



**How can we pass the baton?**

**TR: Here I would like us to park for a moment in Psalm 78, beginning in verse 4**

We will not hide them from their children, **but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.** <sup>5</sup>He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel,

*ESV*

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: We pass on the baton well by . . .**

## WE PASS THE BATON BY . . .

- proclaiming **God's** might.



### . . . READ SLIDE

-- It is our job to get the baton into the next runner's hand. It is not up to them to take it out of ours.

-- Don't just wait until someone asks . . . create opportunities, like the Passover Meal, to tell them the Rock Stories of your life.

-- [rock stories] = based on the rocks of memorial taken from the Jordan River so that we wouldn't forget. But they are stories of God at work, even through us.

-- If God is not the hero, more than likely we are expressing pride not gratitude, as we tell the story.

TR: Verse 5 continues in Psalm 78 . . .

. . . which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, <sup>6</sup>that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children,

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Why do we teach our children in such a way that they can teach children yet unborn?**

. . . so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: We pass the baton well when we . . .**



## WE PASS THE BATON BY . . .

- proclaiming God's might.
- helping others set their **hope** in God.



### READ SLIDE

-- We live in a world that sets its hope in the things that cannot and will not last.

-- I ache for atheists who rail against God for the evils in the world, even though they have no hope for conquering those evils and the mysteries of tornadoes and floods.

-- We must teach our kids and grandkids, biologically and spiritually, the great stories of God at work so that they we grasp the baton themselves and place, yea, SET, their hope in God.

-- To be like 85 year old Caleb in Joshua 14: *"So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said."*

**TR: And that's not all, we proclaim God's might, we help others set their hope in God. And, verse 8 continues . . .**

**. . . and that they should not be like their fathers,** a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

*ESV*

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Passing on the baton well includes . . .**

### **WE PASS THE BATON BY . . .**

- proclaiming God's might.
- helping others set their hope in God.
- encouraging others to not make the same **mistakes** we did.



**. . . READ SLIDE .**

-- cf. my telling young pastors to not make the same mistakes I made . . . make new ones!

-- Cf. Older women teaching younger women . . . it happens so rarely but it is so needed. I've heard older women say, "What have I to share?"

-- Part of what we share are the mistakes you've made. With vulnerability we pass on the baton.

TR: Your yearning and mine is to leave a stamp on people's lives that will not be erased.



**Yet, for many, we feel like our legacy could be blown away by the winds of time . . . and in not much time.**

**TR: If that's all you want, to leave a temporary footprint in the sand, then consider . . .**



**READ SLIDE**

-- Of course, we said earlier that we are trying to make sure that we are **NOT** this kind of person.

TR: But we can perhaps learn by considering what we should be doing . . .

**WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .**



**. . . IF we want to DROP the baton.**

**-- Here I want to park in 2 Timothy, a powerful last letter from the Apostle Paul.**

**TR: Begin in 2 Timothy 1:12 . . .**

. . . which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, **for I know whom I have believed**, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Taking the contrarian view, if we want to drop the baton, then we should be OK with being . . .**



## **WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .**

- **unsure** of your faith.



**. . . READ SLIDE . . . DON'T be able to say, "I know whom I have believed."**

**-- I have told you what it takes to make a funeral easy for a pastor . . . with your mouth clearly profess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior AND with you live confirm that it is indeed so.**

**-- cf. Last year with Kathy's parents deaths and the challenge of not knowing the details of the most important stories of our parents' lives (when and how they came to faith in Christ)**

**-- If we want to drop the baton . . . let's be unsure of our faith.**

**-- Let our faith only be a heart thing and not also a head thing.**

**-- Believe because we're willing to give it a try . . . we're willing to try anything.**

**-- Stay really close to "the getting in place" so that people will say when you're gone, "I think they might have been a Christ-**

**follower.” (Drop the baton)**

**TR: Verses 13 and 14 give us to more ways to drop the baton . . .**

**Follow the pattern** of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup>**By the Holy Spirit** who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Remember, we're taking the contrarian view here . . .**

**WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .**

- unsure of your faith.
- hesitant to say, “Imitate me.”



**We can really limit any legacy impact we will leave behind if we are . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Paul said, “Follow the pattern”. Elsewhere he says, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.”**

**-- Let the sins that easily beset you continue to trip you up, year after year, so that people wonder if you stuck at the point in your Christian walk when all you can take in is milk.**

**-- Allow the spiritual diapers to stay on so that your embarrassment won't just be about the Depends you have to wear for your incontinence.**

**TR: Verse 14 just gave us another way to drop the baton . . .**

## WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .

- unsure of your faith.
- hesitant to say, “Imitate me.”
- the **“hero”** in our own stories.



- . . . and that is by being the “hero” in all our own stories.
- Paul said, “By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.”
  - But baton-droppers tell their repeated stories and rarely mention that the real hero was and is Jesus and the power of the Spirit He has sent to indwell us.
  - Not everyone tells stories from the past, but for those who do, the hero is usually us.
  - The implied message is, “I did it, so should/could you!”
  - Perhaps we are anti-heroes but still the focus remains on us . . . what we did, what we experienced, the jokes we played, the experiences we had.
  - Any legacy that is not built on the foundation of Christ and His work on our behalf will not make it through the fire.
  - Actually, we may be setting the next generation up for great

**failure by not making clear our failures and mistakes so that they need not repeat them.**

**TR: 2 Timothy 4:16-18 give us a few more ways to drop the baton . . .**

At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! <sup>17</sup>But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 17 continues . . .**

So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed **and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.** To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: A few verses earlier, in verse 8 we read . . .**



Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also **to all who have loved his appearing.**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: If we want to drop the baton, let's make sure that we . . .**

## **WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .**

- unsure of your faith.
- hesitant to say, “Imitate me.”
- the “hero” in our own stories.
- **backwards** looking.



**. . . are backwards looking people.**

**-- Let's not look forward to when we are brought safely into Christ's heavenly kingdom.**

**-- Let's not look forward to Jesus' appearing with loving anticipation.**

**-- No, we don't want to help others set their minds on what will last . . . not if we want to drop the baton.**

**-- We need to look backwards . . . to mere earthly experiences . . . making sure we complain about the frustrations of age and disease . . . a lot!**

**-- If we are positive at all, it should be in longing for “the good old days.”**

**-- If we look backward with regrets and anger and vengeance, spiked with bitterness . . . then we can be pretty certain that we won't leave a godly legacy for anyone.**

**TR: And, if you noticed that Paul, now an older man with death approaching, told of his heart to fully proclaim the message of Jesus, being strengthened by the Lord . . .**

## WE DROP THE BATON BY BEING . . .

- unsure of your faith.
- hesitant to say, “Imitate me.”
- the “hero” in our own stories.
- backwards looking.
- unable to also tell **recent** “war stories” of faith.



. . . keep that in mind and do the opposite if you want to leave the next generation empty-handed.

-- Make sure your spiritual “war stories” are all dated, implying that only the young do anything of consequence for Christ and that older folks can’t bear fruit, at least not much.

-- While “disabled” may be an appropriate label for those who cannot physically work anymore, I don’t believe a legacy-leaving believer will ever allow themselves to be put on the disabled list or on the injured reserve and certainly not take on the “retired, has-been” label.

-- EX: cf. my hope of helping Tom Keef and Bob Kahly have their most fruitful years of ministry EVER.

-- REVIEW SLIDE

TR: So, what fingerprints are you leaving behind?



## What's your Legacy?

**What is your legacy of faith?**

**-- What has the next generation learned from you about the might, power, and great works of salvation that God has wrought?**

**-- What will people say to you on your deathbed? About you at your funeral?**

**-- What will Jesus say when He welcomes you to the other side of the river of death?**

**-- If your current legacy can be wiped down or blown away, you can change that, beginning today.**

**TR: Shouldn't we be praying for a spirit like that of Caleb, who in his old age said, "Give me this hill country with the giants and fortified cities!"**

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. **<sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

ESV

- I know getting older or facing sickness is so very hard.
- Those who have done so well. They have not been wimps. They are among my greatest personal heroes.
  - These are folks who can say with Paul . . . READ SLIDE
  - Have we allowed ourselves to become squirrely and merely limp through these words . . . (say these with mousey voice while holding baton with two fingers and then dropping it) “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
  - That’s not what men of God do. That’s not what women of God do.
  - Take up the baton in the strength of the Holy Spirit, even if in the other hand you have to hang on to your cane or your

**walker, and leave a legacy that points to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**TR: Sow, that is plant, today what God is calling us to do, so that when the day comes and our strength is failing, others will be able to say, “They . . .”**

**FINISHED  
WELL**



**“... finished well”**

**-- I want to be able to say . . . I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

**-- If God grants me a death where my wife and kids are by my side, I yearn to be able to hear them say with full honesty . . . you have fought the good fight, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith.**

**-- And that verse has to be true for lives, NOT just a final battle with cancer or heart failure.**

**-- But, even more than that, I ache to hear when I've crossed the finish line, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”**

**-- We CAN still make a difference, we can still bear fruit, the work of our hands can still be established.**