26-1108a - Detailed Summary

26-1108a - *Still Bearing Fruit, Tom Freed*

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and John Nousek

See the transcript: Transcript HTML - Transcript PDF

Still Bearing Fruit

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 1:18): Mike Mathis **Psalm 92:12-15**: The first Scripture reading, taken by Mike, is Psalm 92:12-15 from the New King James Version. It declares that the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright. He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.	**2nd Reading** (1:23 - 1:59): John Nousek **Isaiah 40:31**: The second Scripture reading, taken by John, is Isaiah 40:31. God says that those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 18:17), Preacher: Tom Freed

(2:04 - 4:36) Introduction: Still Bearing Fruit

Tom begins by noting that it is his turn to preach among the six men who share the preaching duty in this small congregation, and he introduces the sermon title “Still Bearing Fruit.” He addresses those further along in life—some in their 60s, 70s, 80s, or even 90s—and asks whether they have ever thought their best days are behind them, felt that life has passed them by, or concluded they are too old to do things they once wished to do. He observes that many have had such thoughts, and the world is quick to reinforce them. The culture claims life is pretty much downhill after 40, that one should slow down, stop working so hard, and take it easy after raising a family and retiring. In a purely physical sense, some of this is true: bodies slow down and energy diminishes. Yet this is not the whole story, and it is certainly not the spiritual story for the Christian. Believers can still bear fruit for the Lord at any age and can still do meaningful, even amazing, things for Him in later years. This is seen both in Scripture and right here among the congregation, where many continue to do great things as they age.

(4:36 - 5:36) God’s Picture of Aging in Psalm 92

Tom turns to the psalmist’s words in Psalm 92. The righteous flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord and flourish in the courts of God. They still bear fruit in old age and are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright, He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. The righteous do not merely hang on in old age; they flourish, still bear fruit, and stay full of life. This is God’s picture of aging for His people. Tom invites the congregation to look together at what God has in store for them in their later years.

(5:36 - 7:09) How God Measures Life and Renews Strength

The world measures life by energy, productivity, and relevance according to its own standards. God measures it by faithfulness and fruitfulness in His house. He is not looking for the strongest body or the most impressive résumé. He is looking for people who remain planted in Him and continue to bear fruit. Psalm 103:5 says that the Lord satisfies you with good so that your youth is restored like an eagle's. Isaiah 40:31 says that those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, and walk and not be faint. This is not a promise that knees will stop hurting or that one will suddenly have the energy of a 25-year-old. It is a promise that God can keep giving spiritual vitality, purpose, and strength for the work He still has for His people even when the body is slowing down. Time will not turn back, and one will not feel amazing all the time, but one can still be strong and growing spiritually at any age.

(7:09 - 9:23) Old Testament Examples of Later Fruitfulness

Some of the most important work God has ever done was accomplished by people the world would have written off. Moses is the clearest example. He was 80 years old when God called him at the burning bush and sent him to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:7). For the next 40 years he led Israel, received the law, interceded for his people, and saw God work in ways that still shape us today. Deuteronomy 34:7 records that when Moses died at 120, his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated. His best and most lasting work came after 80. At 80 most people have slowed down or are ready to call it quits, yet Moses started then. Abraham was 75 when God called him to leave everything and go to a land he had never seen; he was 100 when Isaac was born, and Sarah was 90. The greatest acts of faith in the beginning of God's covenant people came in what the world would have called their later years. Caleb stood before Joshua at 85 years old and said, in essence, "Give me that mountain. I'm still as strong as I was the day Moses sent me out to spy out the land. I'm ready to drive out the Anakim" (Joshua 14:10-12). He was not looking for a rocking chair; he was looking for the next assignment.

(9:23 - 12:22) New Testament Examples of Later Fruitfulness

The same pattern continues in the New Testament. John the Apostle was one of the youngest when Jesus called him, yet he outlived all the others. In his later years, most place him in his 80s and 90s. He was exiled to the island of Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 1:9). From that barren island he received and wrote the book of Revelation. He also wrote the Gospel of John and three letters that bear his name. Some of the deepest teaching in the New Testament came from a man the world would have considered long past his prime. Paul continued his most influential work in his later years as well. Many of his letters, including Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and especially 2 Timothy, were written while he was older and in prison. In 2 Timothy, written near the end of his life, he says, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." Even then he was still writing, still encouraging younger men like Timothy, and still directing the churches. His body was worn out, but his usefulness to the Lord was not. Anna the prophetess had been a widow for decades. She was advanced in years, yet Luke 2:36-38 says she never left the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. When she saw the infant Jesus, she began giving thanks and speaking about Him to everyone who was waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. Her later years were her most fruitful years of ministry. Simeon was also advanced in years. The Holy Spirit had told him he would not die until he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. When he held Jesus, he said, "Lord, now you are

letting your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation." His whole life of faithful waiting reached its peak in old age. These are not exceptions God made for a few special people; they are examples of how God works. He is not finished with people just because the calendar says they are old.

(12:22 - 14:16) Examples Among Us Today

This is definitely how God still works today; He still uses us at any age. The same thing is visible right here in the congregation. Most of the men who take turns preaching and leading Bible study are retired from their secular jobs, yet they are still working for the Lord, and many of them are growing more than ever. They are studying, teaching, encouraging, and serving with a depth that only comes with years of walking with God. Steve is a clear example. He is still preaching with clarity and power and still teaching a Bible class. He is doing as good a job as he has ever done; the last Sunday sermon was one of the best Tom has heard from him. He is not just filling a spot; he is bearing fruit, full of sap and green, just like Psalm 92 describes. He is not alone. Others among us continue to teach, encourage, pray, visit, and lead in quiet but real ways. This congregation is not a place where people are simply waiting out their final years. It is a place where people are still being planted in the house of the Lord and still bearing fruit. There are plenty of examples here of people doing work—preaching, teaching, and serving behind the scenes.

(14:16 - 15:52) Practical Applications

What does this mean for us practically? First, refuse the world's narrative. Do not accept the idea that usefulness to God has an expiration date. One may not be able to do everything once done, and that is okay, but one can still do what God is giving to do right now. Sometimes that means preaching or teaching. Sometimes it means praying faithfully for others. Sometimes it means encouraging a younger person, writing a note, making a phone call, or simply showing up with a steady, faithful presence. Fruit looks different in different seasons, but it is still fruit. Second, keep hoping in the Lord. Isaiah 40:31 does not say those who have a lot of energy will renew their strength; it says those who hope in the Lord will. Keep looking to Him. Keep opening the Word. Keep praying. The renewal He gives is real, even when the body is weak. Third, stay planted. Psalm 92 says the righteous are planted in the house of the Lord and flourish in His courts. Stay connected to the people of God. Stay in the Word. Stay in worship and fellowship. The sap that keeps us green comes from remaining rooted in Christ and His body.

(15:52 - 18:17) Closing Encouragement and Invitation

Some may feel that their best years are behind them, looking at what they used to be able to do and wondering what is left. As long as one is still drawing breath and trusting in the Lord, God is not finished. He may have significant work still ahead—work that only someone with years of experience, tested faith, and quiet wisdom can do. Moses was 80 when his greatest work began. Caleb was 85 and still ready for battle. Anna and Simeon were advanced in years when they saw the Messiah and spoke of Him. John wrote Revelation as an old man. Paul was still writing and encouraging the churches near the end of his life. Right here among us, people who are retired from work are still working for the Lord and bearing fruit. The world may not have much use for them, but God does. He is still able to satisfy with good so that youth is renewed like the eagle's. As long as one is planted in His house, one can still bear fruit. The best is not behind; it is still being produced even now by His grace. As the congregation goes from here, they are called to be like the

person Psalm 1 describes: whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does, he prospers (Psalm 1:2-3). All can be like that at any age, especially when meditating on God's Word and filled with the Spirit. If anyone needs to become a Christian this morning, or if any Christian needs the prayers of the congregation, now is the time to come forward as the congregation stands and sings.