

Longevity in the Ministry

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

All right, 78 Psalm. Tonight, 78 Psalm. We'll start reading down around verse 9, 10, or 11. We might start at 8. Let me say it's a joy to be here.

I feel very honored. I feel very humbled. To be here and try to preach to this group of preachers. Some of my best favorite people in all the world are here tonight.

Tonight, outside of my family. I love Brother Cofield. I haven't known him long. I met him at a mission conference. And I thank the world of him. And then Brother Gardner is probably close to the bestest friend I've got.

He'll preach as long as I have. One thing you'll be sure of. You ain't going to have many friends at all. Sometimes, hey, we have many. I got a few. And he's one of them.

[1 : 03] And I thank God for that. Now, okay, you got the verse up there. This is longevity in the ministry. No, not a lot. But longevity in the ministry.

All the way up here and yesterday. I thought if I don't quit, I'll stay in the ministry. If I don't stop, back up, or quit, then I'll have longevity in the ministry.

Look at Psalm 78. Now, 5, 6, and 7 is talking about passing on what you know about the Word of God to your children, things like that. Then you get down to verse 9.

And it says, Don't quit.

If you're going to stay in the ministry, 30, 40, 50, whatever years you're going to stay. If you start early, you'll stay longer. The way you stay in it, don't quit.

[2 : 13] I would say right off the bat, if you're here tonight and you're our preacher, this ain't a picnic. Not a picnic. Not a picnic. You'll go to college.

You'll go to the OG training center. One day, you're going to leave. You're going to get to the mission field, get to church, and all the other stuff, all the shine will get wiped off.

Now you are by yourself. Nobody knows you. Ain't nobody ever heard of you. Now you are. You and the Holy Ghost. That's it. And then the war breaks out.

Because the devil don't like you being there. Apostle Paul says we're in a war. He says a good fight. He said endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

He said put your armor on. This is a battle. And it is. It's like David fighting Goliath. That's exactly what it's like.

[3 : 14] If you're prone to be lazy, if you're prone to get your feelings hurt, I quit. Stop now. Stop right now and go to the house.

Because you're going to get your feelings hurt if you've got any. Amen. If you're lazy, go to the house. This ain't a picnic. It takes study, study, study to preach three or four or five times a week.

It takes study. You can hide in the crowd like a bunch of sisters that I know. While they were throwing Christians to the lives, Paul was saying, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

Paul fought devils. He fought desertion. He fought over doctrine. He fought disciples. Him and Barnabas didn't get along. Him and Peter got into it.

He fought division, despair, discouragement. I'll tell you right now, you will too. All of us do. It just matters where you're going to stay and fight or back up and bless God, quit.

[4 : 29] Quit. It's got to make up your mind. Don't quit. Don't quit. Look at these quitters. Notice their military regiment.

My son and my brother aggravate me about alliterating. We'll be MRs all night long. And there are three of them. So there we are. Their military regiment.

Notice their background. They were soft. Ephraim was Joseph's son. He was the son before all the famine, all the hardship, and he was soft.

Everything was given to him. He didn't work for it, fight for it, or nothing else. It was all soft. And he was soft. Can I tell you a secret?

It's trouble, trials, wind, storms, junk that you don't like, junk you don't like coming your way. That's what makes you what you are.

[5 : 30] Sissy's ain't got no role in the ministry. You'll stop and you'll quit. They were soft. They were scared. Couldn't drive out the Canaanites.

They were all bark. No bite. They were like Kim Newton. All talk and no walk. All talk and no walk. I'm like Ric Flair.

If you're going to walk the walk, go talk the talk. Walk the walk. Amen. They were soft. They were scared. Wayne Coffin will get up here.

Boy, Austin's already been up here. And they laugh and smile and happy and things like that. He's been gutted and he's been gutted. I mean gutted with a knife.

If you're soft and scared, you ain't going to make it. My brother sitting like that has been gutted. Every preacher in this auditorium tonight has been preaching four, five, six years.

[6 : 31] They've been gutted. They were soft. They were scared. Hosea said they were like silly doves. I like cutting up and having fun.

Always have. When times come to church, this is business. This is business. They were silly. They were superficial. Hosea said they were half, they were like a cake, not turned.

They were silly windbags. That's all they were. That's all they were. That's like a lot of preachers. I know. God help us all. They were soft.

They were silly. And they were sinful. That is their background. Notice their battle gear. Hey, they were warriors. Ephraim was warriors. They had been called to fight.

Now, can I tell you all the secret? The day you all got saved, you enlisted in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you like it or not.

[7 : 29] You are in a fight. And I think all of us ought to get at it and fight the fight for Christ. They were commissioned to fight. They were trained. They were dressed for battle, much like David when he fought Goliath.

They were ready, had their uniforms on, had all them things up here and all them medals and all that kind of stuff. And it says when David fought Goliath, they put the battle in a ray.

You know what that means? It's like them boys you knew in high school. It was out in the playground or in the gym and they started trastalking each other. I'm going to whip you.

I'm going to whip you. But they said, no, you ain't. I'm going to whip you. They were putting the battle in a ray. But nobody ever got hit until David showed up. He said, you can dress up and look real nice.

It's your pocket. You don't get all duded up and you've learned the Bible. You know the Bible. But can I tell you a secret? If I'm going to go fight somebody, I'm going to fight somebody, but it's because God's going to fight.

[8 : 33] Amen. I'm going to find some redneck with a knife in his back pocket and I'm going to choose him if I'm going to go fight. I ain't going to get somebody, just going to run them out. Barry Pace stood up, introduced himself.

I made some order for his daddy laying brick. His daddy, Dennis Pace, he was one of those guys. If he was going to fight you, the next thing you knew, he walked up to you and did like that.

He didn't say nothing. All you knew was his fist just hit you in the nose. He didn't talk. These guys were called to fight, commissioned to fight, and they were capable of fighting.

You got a manual and I've got a manual. But that manual that you know and I know and I went to college and I'm studying it. Ain't going to do the world a lot of good if I don't show up and ready to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's one thing to show up all dutied up. It's another thing to fight. They had weapons. They were armed. Go look at verse 9.

[9 : 38] My Bible says they turned back. This is their mutiny recorded. Notice their crime. They turned. They turned. They turned.

That's a crime. If you're saved by God's grace, God saved you. Serve God. I'd sit on a chair somewhere. Oh, God didn't save you. Just take you to help. He's going to take you while you're here.

You need to be serving God just like everybody else. They were designated soldiers, dressed for soldiers, disciplined for soldiers. I learned one thing when I went in the military real quick.

I had no rights at all. None. They woke me up 4 o'clock in the morning. Ain't nobody gets up 4 o'clock unless they're scared of something or going rabbit hunting or deer hunting.

Nobody gets up that early. Nobody does. They woke me up. I had to beat it all. They didn't even ask me. Cussed me for 12 hours a day. All day long.

[10 : 34] They thought my name was words that I can't say no more. But that's all they knew. I learned right off. I ain't got no rights. They sent me to a place called Vietnam.

Give me an M16, a flak jacket, and a stinking helmet. I didn't volunteer to go over there. I'm not brave at all. I didn't volunteer to go to that place. You know what? They didn't ask me. They just give me some papers.

Brother Underwood knows what I'm talking about. They gave me some papers with a destination on it and just told me to go. They bought my plane ticket. Hallelujah. They had to pay for that. They sent me over there. They shot at me for a stinking year.

I couldn't go home. Couldn't go to jail. Couldn't get out of it at all. But can I tell you, I shouldn't have any right serving God.

I got the right to serve God, and that ought to be it. There's all kind of goals in this book. Most of us sit on their fanny in a church house somewhere and wait on God to call me.

[11 : 34] And God doesn't say go. Why does he got to call me when he says go? Get up. Start out. God don't want your mission failed. God will keep you at the house. Amen.

That's really. Damn true. I taught me that. I thought he was crazy, but he was right. Notice their crime. Notice their time. Notice what it says in verse 9.

Turn back in the day of battle. Time of conflict. They quit. Turned around and went back to the house. Time of crisis. They turned around and went back to the house.

Me and me tell you a secret. There's a woman at home, if you're married, that looks to you. And if you quit and you back up, what's she going to do? What's mama going to do if you back up?

These little not-headed youngins following you around. Jeff Bush got six, seven, eight, five right now. He may have. They got all kind of kids. What's going to happen with that man right there?

[12 : 37] He says, oh, I'm sick and tired of this. Ain't nothing going right. People don't like me no more. And I'm going to back up, go to house. Bateman's same way. Got five. What's going to happen to Bateman's? I mean, they've got two strikes against them now.

There's their daddy. But if he backs up and quits, what are they going to do? Time of crisis, they quit and they turn back. I can't do that. You can't do that.

You've got to serve God, keep right on going. And I'm not up here telling you. It's a stinking picnic. It's not. It's not. I've got no gripes. God's been good to me. Nothing bad has ever, ever happened in my life.

It's all been a pleasant trip to glory. I've got no fusses about God at all. But in a picnic, somebody's depending on you.

Somebody's watching you. And you're responsible for somebody. And men that stood up, that got called to preach wise, Mile Creek, I'm responsible for them men. All my life, I look at them four back there and there's five or six more in South Carolina.

[13 : 39] I'm responsible for them. Posey's in his 50. We're grown kids and grandkids. I'm responsible for Posey. If I stop, I back up. I quit. What's Posey going to do? Hell, Preacher Jim, give up.

He quit. I can't do that. Because him and them other guys, I can't do it. That's my boy back there. I can't do that. But they did. In a time of crisis, in a time folks was counting on them, they quit.

They stopped, did not go to the battle, and quit. You say, I won't. I hope not. No family counts on you.

The Christian Baptist Church counts on you. The test of the battle. You listen real good. The test of the battle reveals a real soldier.

It ain't basic training. It ain't learning in the OG training center. It's when you end up in South Africa. We're down in where Brother White's at. The planes are taken off.

[14 : 41] It ain't nobody there. You and my women, some youngins. Nobody knows you. You'll find out real quick if you're a real soldier or not. Some folks think with their feet and not with their heart.

You better know somebody that'll fight. This is your day. He gave me a year. I'm 68, really. This is my day.

I'll be gone 10 years. God, I hope I'm gone 10 years. I don't want to live longer and get dumber than I am now, crazier than I am right now. But one day I'll be gone. While I'm alive, this is my day.

This is mine. I tell you a secret, it's yours. You can sissy out and whip out all you want to. But when the time comes to die, what are they going to say about you?

Notice their malady revealed. I've got to hurry. Notice what was wrong with them. They were frail in the Word. Verse 8, had sick heart. Weakened convictions. You better believe what you believe.

[15 : 41] You better believe what you believe. You better tie down what you believe. You better believe it. Because you get where you're going. You may be the only one. I believe it. Jim Whitton, a friend of mine, one of the best men I met in my life.

He'd get up and preach in Scotland. He'd say, y'all might not believe what I'm saying. I guarantee you, I believe it all. I do too. I believe that book. And you better get it in your heart what you believe.

Grandchildren. Gave me a t-shirt. It says, being scared to death. Courage is being scared to death.

You're still doing what you gotta do. Everybody's scared. I guess, God, Lord help us. Getting up here scares me to death. Ugh. Tired my nerves up.

Verse 8, they were spiritually halting. They were unsettled. Verse 10, they forsook their walk. Their will was corrupted. And it says, a kelp knot.

[16 : 46] And it's an act of the will. Now, I know my DNA is different than most everybody's. Guys, his too. And my boys is. And God helped Chad.

His wife is. We're bullheaded. We're stubborn. Got a mean streak sometimes. God, help us not all the time. But I think if you're gonna serve God.

You're gonna last as long as the way. You just gotta make up your mind. You're gonna do it. I mean, all these books and junk. Not junk, but all these books about how to do this, how to do that. And I read them.

I think, well, good God. Just make your mind up. You're gonna do it. Do it. Really, Jim asked me. Folks, you know, we ask questions about kids. No, let's turn. He was asking me what I thought about when he was growing up.

God, I never thought about it. My daddy paid me no attention at all. I didn't pay him a lot. I was busy. I tried to build my Creek Baptist Church. I loved him.

[17 : 40] I stayed with him. Spent time with him. But if you ask me the key to all that God, I don't know. I just woke up every day and thought, praise him. I'm Jim's dad. I think I'll be Jim's dad today. And the Lord Jim's alive, I'll be Jim's dad.

Boy, that's real profound, ain't it? All you gotta do is just get up, have a day, make up in your mind, in your heart. I'm gonna serve God today. I do it today. I do it today. I don't worry about tomorrow.

But they didn't. They were feeble. Look at verse 11. It says they forgot his works. Let me tell you a secret. You better not forget what God's done to you, for you.

Better never forget that. You're in real stinking trouble if you forget what God did to you. Danny Posey showed up at Mile Creek one Sunday. His wife and a bunch of them had done got saved.

And old Posey showed up and didn't like me at all. Got a goofy looking haircut. Looked like a stinking chicken or rooster or something. Come walking in. Driving a Budweiser truck.

[18 : 48] Wasn't long. God saved him. I ain't forgot that, and I know he ain't. The liquor and the beer I drunk filled this building.

I had a good mama. Good mother. And God got a good mama. She prayed for me. What for mama and the Holy Ghost? I'd be in hell. We're still going to hell.

I ain't ever going to forget that. I ain't ever going to forget what God has done in my heart. And where God has put me. And I look at my little girl, and that boy sitting back there, I ain't ever going to forget what God has done.

How can you quit? How can you quit on a God and went to a cross and shed his blood for you? And I was sorry, but you was no better. You was going to save hell. I was going to.

None of us were at the time until God saved us. How can you quit on a God like that? You'll be tempted to quit. But I'm saying, how can you? I wrote a poem down.

[19 : 51] One of the few. I don't know any. I wrote it down so I can read it. It says, the path of man is too dark. The cross of Christ is too glorious. And the heart of God is too grieved for me to turn back.

I believe that. Just make up your mind. And you're going to finish what God has called you to do. George Washington got to Brandywine Creek.

Where a cross the enemy was entrenched like never before. His aide came up to him and said, General Washington, it's been our rule that we burn the bridges behind us.

But if we burn the bridges behind us, this time we'll suffer casualties on our flank in retreat. George Washington elected his aide. He said, burn the bridge.

From here on out, it's victory or death. And I'm old. I mean, I sometimes feel older than 68. And my day's about gone.

[20 : 52] But when I croak and I die, I want to be heading that way. I want to be heading forward. I want to be doing something for God to the day I stinking lay this down and I can't pick it up no more.

So I'm going to encourage you. Young preacher, don't quit. I said, right where you sit, don't quit. Don't give up on God. God, I couldn't tell you how faithful God's been to me.