STILL HERE BY GRACE

Sixty Years, a Lot of Miles, and a Faithful God

Today I turn 60 years old!

I'm not exactly sure how that happened. In my heart, I don't feel 60. In fact, some days I still feel about 35.

Then I walk past a mirror.

Apparently, the mirror and I are no longer working from the same calendar!

But as this birthday approached, I found myself doing more than counting years. I've been **counting blessings**.

Carol and I were talking recently, and I told her, "There was a time in my life when I honestly didn't think I would live to see 30."

And yet, here at 60.

- Not because I've always made the right decisions.
- Not because I've always taken the right road.
- Not because I somehow figured life out.

I am here because of the **GRACE and MERCY of GOD**.

The older I get, the more I understand the words of Jeremiah:

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Lamentations 3:22

There are chapters of my life I wouldn't want to live again. There are decisions I wish I could change. There were roads I traveled that God never intended for me to take.

But even when I wasn't faithful to Him, He was faithful to me.

CALEB WAS STILL COUNTING

I love the story of Caleb in Joshua 14.

Caleb was 40 years old when Moses sent him into the Promised Land as a spy. Forty-five years later, at the age of 85, he stood before Joshua and said something powerful:

"And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years…" Joshua 14:10

I love that phrase:

"The LORD hath kept me alive."

Caleb understood something we sometimes forget.

- Every year is a gift.
- Every sunrise is mercy.
- Every birthday is another testimony that **GOD HAS BEEN FAITHFUL**.

At 60, I can look backward and see things differently than I could at 30.

Back then, I saw circumstances.

Now I can see **PROVIDENCE.**

Back then, I saw closed doors.

Now I can see **PROTECTION.**

Back then, I saw failures.

Now I can see places where **GRACE** found me.

Back then, I wondered where God was.

Now I can look back and say, "**He was there the whole time."**

BUT CALEB DIDN'T STOP THERE

Here is what really speaks to me.

Caleb didn't say, "God has kept me alive for 85 years, so somebody bring me a rocking chair."

No sir!

He said:

"**Now therefore give me this mountain…" Joshua 14:12**

I like that.

He was thankful for **YESTERDAY**, but he was still excited about **TOMORROW.**

And that's where I find myself at 60.

I'm grateful for where I've been, but I don't believe God is finished with me yet.

- There are still people who need Jesus.
- There are still sermons to preach.
- There are still people to love.
- There are still grandchildren to encourage.
- There are still hurting people who need someone to sit beside them.
- There are still mountains to climb.

And, Lord willing, there are still plenty of opportunities to **MAKE HEAVEN BIGGER BY LOVING PEOPLE WELL.**

SO, WHAT HAVE 60 YEARS TAUGHT ME?

I've learned that life moves much faster than you think it will.

I've learned that people matter more than possessions.

I've learned that some things I worried myself sick over weren't worth five minutes of worry.

I've learned that God's plans are usually different—and much better—than mine.

I've learned that forgiveness sets prisoners free, and sometimes the prisoner is you.

I've learned that family is precious, friendships are treasures, and every opportunity to tell someone you love them should be taken.

But most of all, I've learned this:

GRACE IS REAL.

I haven't just preached about it.

I've lived it.

So as a 60-year-old man, I may move a little slower getting out of bed. My knees may make noises that weren't there at 30. And that fellow staring back at me in the mirror may have a few more miles showing on him.

But my prayer is that my heart will still say what Caleb's heart said:

“Give me this mountain.”

I don't know how many birthdays the Lord will give me after this one.

But I know what I want to do with the days He gives me.

I want to love Jesus more.

Love my family deeper.

Love people better.

Preach the Gospel stronger.

Laugh often.

Forgive quickly.

Give generously.

And finish faithfully.

Because when I look back over these first 60 years, one truth stands above everything else:

GOD HAS BEEN BETTER TO ME THAN I HAVE EVER DESERVED.

So here's to 60.

I'm not old...

I'm just a classic with a whole lot of mileage and an unbelievable warranty called GRACE!

And as long as the Lord gives me breath—

I'm still climbing.

“And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive…” — Joshua 14:10

Be blessed and be a blessing.

— Bro. Jeff