

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Job 29:21-25.**
- B. Someone has defined "the good old days" as "a combination of a bad memory and a good imagination."
- C. We should try to live life in a balanced way. Yes, God permits us to experience difficulties and sorrows, but God also sends victories and joys. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (2:10).

I. JOY ONE: The Presence of God in his Home.

- A. See **Job 29:2-6.**
- B. There is especially poignant note in this opening statement: Job wished he were back in the prime of life (29:4). While this is a natural desire, it is also a dangerous one. *If we focus so much on the glories of the past that we ignore the opportunities of the present, we may end up unprepared to meet the future.*
- C. The light of God was upon Job, and God's presence was w/him and his children. God was the source of all of Job's wealth and success, when his "path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out...streams of olive oil" (29:6).
- D. Along with the obvious commands about loving our spouse and children--try to enjoy them! If you are going to look back at these times as the "good old days" you have to make them the "good present days."
- E. Joy in life comes by having God as a part of your home.

II. JOY TWO: Respect and Help from Others.

- A. See **Job 29:7-11.**
- B. When Job walked through the city, the young men stepped aside to let him pass. He had his seat at the city gate with the leading men of the city, and even they ceased their speaking when he arrived. Wherever he went, he was treated with respect. "Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me" (29:11).
- C. Respect is not something that one should strive to get, but rather comes by living right. Look at all the practical admonitions of Rom. 12:9-21. Build character.

III. JOY THREE: Ministering to Others.

- A. See **Job 29:12-17.**
- B. What God gave to Job, he saved with others. These verses describe the ministry of a compassionate man who brought help and happiness to many.
- C. Job strengthened righteousness and justice in the city (29:14) as he helped the handicapped, provided for the needy, and even defended the strangers.
- D. But Job did not stop w/assisting the needy; he also confronted the wicked and broke their power (29:17).
- E. Notice the admonitions in Ephesians 4:28-32 and 2Thessalonians 3:6-13.
- F. In what ways are ministering to others each day? Each week?

IV. JOY FOUR: Having Confidence in the Future.

- A. See **Job 29:18-20.**
- B. Job had every reason to believe that life would continue w/many blessings for many years. He was confident that he would stay fresh and vigorous, live to an old age, and die in peace and glory. He saw himself as a deeply rooted tree that would go on bearing fruit (29:19).

- C. Job 29:20 suggests that Job expected to maintain his physical vigor and beget many children.
- D. We, as Xians, have many reasons to have confidence in the future:
 - 1. The promise that Jesus will always be w/us (Mt. 28:20).
 - 2. The promise of physical blessings (Mt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19).
 - 3. The promise of the HS as our earnest of salvation (Eph. 4:30; 2Cor. 5:5).
 - 4. The promise that the church will endure (Mt. 16:18).
 - 5. The promise of spiritual rest from the forces of wickedness (Mt. 11:28-30).

V. JOY FIVE: The Privilege of Speaking Words of Encouragement and Help.

- A. See **Job 29:21-25**.
- B. He was indeed a Barnabas, “a son of encouragement” (Ac. 4:36), whose words were respected and appreciated. When he spoke, it was as gentle and refreshing as the rain. When he smiled, it lit up the whole situation and gave people hope. Job’s approval was like the dawning of a new day! He was a leader who helped the perplexed make wise decisions and gave the mourners fresh comfort and hope.
- C. All of us need encouragement--heavy doses of it!
 - 1. Those gifted with encouragement should use it (Rom. 12:8).
 - 2. Encourage and build up one another (1Th. 5:11).
 - 3. Encourage the fainthearted (1Th. 5:14).
 - 4. Encourage at every opportunity (Heb. 3:13; 10:25).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. “The good old days” need not be just that. Work to put these things in your life.
- B. Think about how you can do these five things to make your motto, “the good old present days.”
- C. All of this can be yours, if you have a relationship w/God through X.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.