

# To Declare that the Lord is Upright<sup>1</sup>

by John Hawkins

*Every aged Christian is a letter of commendation to the immutable fidelity of Jehovah. He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. — Charles Spurgeon*

*The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they 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. — Psalm 92:12-14*

*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. Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? — Psalms 71:18-19 ESV*

*Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. — Isaiah 46:3-4 ESV*



It's been four years now since the passing of Elisabeth Elliot on June 15, 2015, at the age of 88. She was a Christian, a daughter, a sister, a wife (3 times, predeceased by her husbands twice), a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. She was a linguist, a missionary, an author, a seminary lecturer and an international Christian speaker. To me, she was the most helpful Christian author in shaping my understanding of what it means and looks like to live my life for Christ. She spoke from the Bible and from her own experience of living out God's Word. Her words and life modeled for me Psalm 92:12-14.

In Psalm 92:12-14, we're told that the righteous flourish like the palm and cedar trees. For most of us who read this, we're left wondering, "But what about those of us who are not always so righteous?" Allen Ross says of the righteous ones mentioned here that "God knows them, and because God knows them, they shall never perish. They may do unrighteous things at times, but they know to find forgiveness because they want to do what is right." That's the kind of righteousness Elisabeth Elliot spoke of and modeled. That's the kind that I long for in my own life.

These people are "planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age: and they are ever full of sap and green." Pastor John MacArthur says of these people, "The gray head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness. Somebody old who has walked a long time in the path of righteousness is a treasure, a treasure of wisdom and a treasure of experience and a treasure of understanding ..."

The psalmist concludes by saying that the purpose of seasoned righteous believers is "to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Amazingly these older believers' testimony is not of themselves, and it doesn't stop with the difficulties that they've gone through. Their testimony is of their God. He is their rock and they can testify that there is no unrighteousness in him. As Charles Spurgeon said, "Every aged Christian is a letter of

commendation to the immutable fidelity of Jehovah. He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”

Elisabeth had written the following about growing old:

*I'm not the least bit bashful about telling my age. I'm glad for every birthday that comes, because it is the Lord, my faithful Guide, who "summoned the generations from the beginning." I look in the mirror and see the increasingly (and creasingly) visible proofs of the number of years, but I'm reconciled. Christ reconciles me to God and to God's wonderful plan. My life is his life. My years are his years. To me life is Christ, and death is nothing but gain. When I remember that, I really can't think of a thing I ought to be afraid of. I can't be sorry I'm a year older and nearer to absolute bliss.*

Elisabeth Elliot’s last 10 years were ravaged by dementia; such a bitter irony for one who throughout her life thought, wrote and spoke so clearly. Her life continued to bear fruit, even in those years of silence, because of all the seeds that the Lord planted through her witness of Him through the years. As the Bible says of Abel, “and through his faith, though he died, he still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4). This is now true of Elisabeth’s faith. And I hope that at my death, it will be true of mine as well.

So tonight I long for this same kind of righteousness and fruitfulness, that which testifies of God alone and that continues to speak beyond death. May God in these later years of my life continue to prove to me that He is my ever-righteous rock. And may I run to that rock and testify to those around me of Him alone.

### Take it to the Lord

1. Read through this meditation again, asking God to open your eyes, mind, heart and soul to His message for you today.
2. As He speaks to you, listen. Ask Him to guide you as to what you should do with what He says and for the grace to do so.
3. End your time with some form of worship—prayer, praise, thanksgiving or surrender.

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<sup>i</sup> From *Longings Toward a God-Centered Life: Meditations on Great Thoughts and Passages* by John Hawkins. The purpose of publishing these meditations is to share perspectives for leaders and followers on biblical understanding for daily living. The meditations are derived from John’s reflections on quotes from Christian leaders and from God’s Word.