

Finishing Well

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 30th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, YOU USED TO GIRD YOURSELF AND WALK WHEREVER YOU WISHED; BUT WHEN YOU GROW OLD, YOU WILL STRETCH OUT YOUR HANDS AND SOMEONE ELSE WILL GIRD YOU, AND BRING YOU WHERE YOU DO NOT WISH TO GO.
~ JOHN 21:18 (NASB)**

1) Looking Forward By Looking Backward

A) Peter, who has recently been restored to the ministry of caring for the followers of Christ as a shepherd* (cf. John 21:15-17), is reminded again that his life is in Jesus' hands (John 21:18).

B) At first glance, this verse seems to indicate that Peter would grow old and die in a "convalescing" state. The Bible has a great deal to say (both positive and negative) regarding characteristics of being young and growing old.

* Peter's restoration was covered more thoroughly in the October 9th, 2005 sermon entitled "Rejection & Restoration." You can listen to the sermon and download the corresponding notes in the sermon section of our church website (www.lbac.org).

- C) A further look, however, at John 21:18-19 reveals a clearer explanation regarding Peter's future (21:19).

2) The Death Of The Apostle Peter

- A) Many scholars note that the phrase "stretch out your hands" was another way of saying "to be crucified" in the first century. This would mean that Christ was alluding to the type of death which Peter would experience.

- B) According to church tradition, Peter was crucified during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero (near 65 A.D.). Peter requested, according to tradition, to be crucified upside down, unworthy of dying in the same position as Christ.

3) Old Or Young, Be Active In Following Christ!

- A) This is the second time in Peter's life where Jesus tells him about his future (cf. John 13:38). However, this time Jesus is revealing something about Peter's future to encourage his complete focus in following Christ (John 21:19).

- B) Jesus' call to Peter to "Follow Me!" is both emphatic (get your eyes onto me NOW!), and Jesus uses a continuous form of the verb, to follow (follow me now and follow me forever!).

- C) No matter what our circumstances, we must not "lose heart" or "lose sight" of following Jesus Christ. Our focus is not on the temporal, but the eternal (cf. 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18).