May 1

Grace and peace to you.

As many of you may know, my wife Judy and I have two dogs. I call one “the Big Dog” and the other one “the Little Dog.” The Big Dog’s name is Randulfur (don’t ask) and the Little Dog’s name is Toby.

I am a total dog person. I grew up with a collie named Caesar (loved that dog) and Judy and I had a dog for a short time named Nicky before we got our Basset Hound. His name was Al (loved that dog, too). Al was cool. Al lived close to the ground. Al did not like to exert himself unless it was to reach for a treat. Al lived for ten years but then got bone cancer before I had to take him on that last ride to the vet. He died in my arms. I cried. A lot.

In any case, Randulfur is my buddy. He keeps me company when I study or write, or just because. In fact, as I sit at our kitchen table writing these words, He is lying on the floor next to me. He looks like this:

![Randulfur](image1)

Toby, on the other hand, while a sweet dog, is completely indifferent. This is him at the moment on the couch in our living room:

![Toby](image2)
Both dogs are “senior” dogs. Toby is 13 and Randulfur is 11. They have been with us a long time and now that Judy and I are “empty nesters,” they help keep us company at night.

Last week, Randulfur and I both had our annual checkups. Mine was my first “welcome to Medicare checkup” and Randulfur’s was his “senior dog checkup.” We both did pretty good.

As I get older, and as my best four-legged friend Randulfur gets older, I’d be lying if I said it doesn’t cause me to think about my remaining years ahead. Statistics tell me that he will go before I do, and that’s ok. It also makes me think about the many Scripture passages about aging, and a few come to mind, this one chief among them:

“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” (Isaiah 46:4).

God’s marvelous promise is that He is always with us, including into old age and all that old age brings. Not only that, He will sustain us, He will carry us, and at the end of our earthly lives, if we have placed our trust in His Son, He will recue us. For me, and for the years ahead, that is everything, and that is enough.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

May 2
Greetings, DGCC Family.

Yesterday I introduced you to our two dogs, Randulfur and Toby. Really, we refer to them as our “granddogs” because Toby is our daughter’s dog and Ran is our son’s dog. They both moved out of the house and the dogs…well, the dogs didn’t. So here we are.

Recently I have noticed that Randulfur, as he has gotten older, has “lost a step,” meaning he is slowing down a bit. He also has a bit of a hard time getting up off the floor, especially a tile floor like the one in our kitchen. The vet said that she can “definitely feel the arthritis in his hips.”

So, I guess it’s fair to say that he and I are slowing down together (not that I was ever that fast). That’s ok, or at least that’s what I tell myself. The fact is that in God’s created world, everything that is living one day won’t be. People, dogs, cats, trees, and so on. Every living thing has a shelf life, the expiration date of which is known only to our Creator God. The writer of Ecclesiastes famously said it like this:

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: time to be born, and a time to die…” (3:1-2).
That’s maybe the not so good news. The good news, however, is that there’s the Good News. The disciple John said it like this:

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

And so my prayer for you today is this: If you are aging, know that God sustains you. Know that God carries you. And when you place your eternal trust in His Son, know that He waits for you.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
May 3

Grace and peace to you today, my friends.

So, here’s a bit of a gruesome tidbit about the Big Dog: He like bunnies. And by that I mean that he likes to chase them. And catch them. And eat them. Sparing you the gory details, more than once I have had to clean up a very dead and disemboweled bunny in the back yard. That is, if he hasn’t eaten it whole.

I’m perfectly good with it, because the bunnies like to eat our flowers and bushes, and they seem to have overpopulated the neighborhood. I fear, however, that Randulfur is inadvertently improving the bunny gene pool because he is catching and eating the slow and stupid ones. Good for the bunnies, bad our annuals.

However, most recently, I noticed something: Randulfur actually left a bunny in our yard alone. Not only that, it took him a while to even notice it. In the past, I think he was able to smell them the moment he went outside and chase right after them. The other day was different. I let him out and he went down the deck stairs, and there was a well-fed looking bunny right in the middle of the yard. At first Ran didn’t even notice him, and when he did, he took a few steps toward him and Mr. Bunny hightailed it into the bushes. Ran looked up at me as if to say, “Meh. It’s not worth it.”

Once again, this made me think about how he's getting older, and so am I. And even though the physical capabilities of youth may diminish, there is something that Scripture teaches us flourishes as we get older. The Psalmist said it like this:

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green…” (94:12-14).

Some of us may be getting a bit gray around the temples (no pun intended), but let me encourage you that that does not mean that the Almighty is done with us. I hope that as you, and I, grow older, we remain present in God’s court and continue to bear His fruit.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
May 4

Blessings to you this day.

Like most days, yesterday morning I was sitting in my chair and reading the Wall Street Journal. There were the usual articles about the political acrimony that seems to endlessly divide the nation. As I was reading, Randulfur came up to me and put his head in my lap, which is way of saying “pet me!”

So, I rubbed his nose and scratched behind his ears and he gave me his doggie smile. As he did, I noticed again his two missing front teeth, and the increasing amount of gray hair around his eyes and on his snout. I said to him, “looking good, old man.”

He gave me his doggie smile again, and I smiled at him and said, “all done, buddy,” and he settled into his spot right behind my chair. And even though we smiled at each other, one of us had some sadness in his heart, and maybe a tear in his eye. Just sayin’.

You know, my own gray hair (such as it is) doesn’t bother me, but his does. I really have no explanation for that except to say maybe it’s because he doesn’t know how all this all ends, and I do.

I went back to reading the paper but found myself no longer caring about the political nonsense going on and instead found myself pondering this passage from the apostle Paul:

“But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior” (Philippians 3:20).

Our hair turns gray. The political fighting continues. And so it goes. But this reminder from Paul helps us to understand that ultimately, none of this matters in the long run, meaning in the “eternal” run. And that’s because we belong to Him. We live in His Kingdom. And His love is everything.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

May 5

Happy Friday, everyone! Here’s your musical devotion for the week – it’s one of my favorites. Turn up the volume and enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWtNEkOV34M&authuser=1
IHS,

Pastor Lou