FLOURISHING IN GRACE

Four Timeless Lessons from the Olive Tree

A Little Gift from Mina

Seventy Years of Grace · October 2026

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A Note from My Heart

As I turn seventy, I find myself thinking less about the number of years and more about what has sustained me through them. There have been seasons of laughter and discovery, and there have been seasons I would never have chosen. Through them all, the mercy of God has been a place to stand.

I have come to love the picture of the olive tree. It grows slowly, withstands difficult weather, and can continue bearing fruit when it is old. It reminds me that growing older is not the same as being finished. There is grace for every season, including this one.

Thank you for sharing this milestone with me. I offer these four reflections as a small gift, with the prayer that they will encourage you wherever you are in your own journey.

With love and gratitude,
Auntie Mina

1 · Stay Rooted

An olive tree draws its strength from roots that reach beneath the visible surface. The wind may shake its branches, but its life depends on what holds it steady below. I have learned that a life of faith needs that same hidden depth.

There were times when I wanted quick answers and immediate relief. Instead, I found myself learning to pray, to wait, and to trust God one day at a time. What sustained me was not always a dramatic breakthrough. Often it was the quiet grace to rise and continue.

Psalm 52:8 describes a green olive tree in the house of God, trusting in His mercy. That is the kind of life I want: not untouched by storms, but deeply rooted in mercy.

For reflection: What keeps you grounded when life changes?

2 · Let the Seasons Teach You

An olive tree knows heat, rain, dry ground, and the slow return of growth. It does not demand that every season feel like spring. It lives through each one, receiving what it can and enduring what it must.

At seventy, I can look back and see that some of my most important lessons came in seasons I would gladly have skipped. Loss taught me tenderness. Change taught me flexibility. Waiting taught me that a slower life can still be a meaningful life.

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that there is a time for different things under heaven. I am learning not to judge a season only by what it produces. Sometimes the gift is the wisdom it leaves behind.

For reflection: What has this season been teaching you?

3 · Keep Bearing Fruit

We often speak as though usefulness belongs to the young, the energetic, or the visibly successful. But an older olive tree can still produce fruit. Its shape may be weathered and its pace may be slow, yet its life is not over.

I am discovering that fruitfulness changes its form. There is fruit in a thoughtful word, a listening ear, a prayer offered for someone, a story passed to the next generation, or the courage to begin again. We do not need to repeat our younger years to live well today.

Psalm 92:14 speaks of bearing fruit in old age. That promise encourages me to ask not whether I can do everything I once did, but what good I can offer in the season I have now.

For reflection: What fruit might your life bear today?

4 · Offer Shade to Someone Else

A mature tree offers more than its fruit. Its branches can become a place of rest. I think that is a beautiful picture of legacy: not merely what we achieve, but the shelter and encouragement others find because we were here.

Our stories can become shade for someone walking a road we already know. We can speak honestly about mistakes without being ruled by regret, share what faith has taught us, and make room for younger voices to grow. We can also keep learning from them.

I want the years ahead to be marked by generosity of spirit. If my experience can help someone feel less alone, choose hope, or trust God through a difficult day, then those years will be fruitful indeed.

For reflection: Who might find encouragement in your story?

A Blessing for the Journey

May your roots grow deeper in the love and mercy of God. May you receive each season without losing hope. May your life continue to bear fruit in ways both seen and unseen. And may the wisdom you have gathered become a blessing to others.

Whatever your age, may you remember that you are not finished simply because life has changed. There is still room for growth, for love, for laughter, and for grace.

Thank you for being part of my seventieth birthday. Your presence, whether near or across the miles, is a gift I treasure.

Still growing. Still grateful. Still choosing joy.

Stay Connected

Our stories continue beyond this birthday. I would love for you to keep walking with me through reflections on faith, joy, books, family, and the beauty of beginning again.

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Explore my books, including I Emerged: Don't Call Me Mara and Auntie Mina's Joy Toolbox, through my website.

Created as a complimentary birthday keepsake.
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