



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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JUMP START #381

1 Kings 2:36- “Now the king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, ‘Build for yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, and do not go out from there to any other place. For on the day you go out and cross over the brook Kidron, you will know for certain that you shall die; and your blood shall be on your own head.’”

The story of Shimei is fascinating. It involves David and Solomon and our rich Bible history. During the time when David was king. He was dealing with a revolt from Absalom his son. Absalom tried to take over the kingdom and make himself ruler. David had to flee Jerusalem. It was during those dark days that Shimei is found. He was a descendant of Saul, Israel’s first king. He comes across David and his men. They are discouraged because of Absalom. Shimei accuses David of stealing the throne from the family of Saul. He curses David and throws dirt on him. One of David’s men offers to kill Shimei. David won’t have it. When the tide turned against Absalom and his revolt, Shimei switched allegiance back to David. Shimei couldn’t be trusted.

As David dies, he tells Solomon, his son and next king, about Shimei. Our verse above is Solomon’s way of dealing with Shimei. He allows him to live, but puts him on a short leash. He is not allowed to leave Jerusalem.

Something happens after our verse. Two of Shimei’s servants take off. Shimei goes after them. He leaves Jerusalem to do this. Word reaches Solomon and the order to execute Shimei is given. He is killed.

There is a powerful lesson for us here. This story is more than a history lesson, it reflects you and I and our relationship with God. Solomon was giving Shimei grace and allowed him to live. There were conditions. Even something innocent, such as chasing after runaway slaves, was a violation of Solomon’s order. He broke the rules. He knew.

It’s the same with us and God. He allows us to live in his grace. Jerusalem is the Lord for us. We must stay with the Lord. If we leave, we violate the rule and consequences will take place. We can see this. This isn’t hard to grasp.

The difficulty is with runaway slaves. That seems to give us the reason to break the rules. In the 1960's this was labeled "Situation Ethics." The debate then surrounded the "situation" which determined the "ethics". It was proclaimed that under certain circumstances a person may have to lie to survive. If that was the case, then lying wasn't always wrong. This thinking included all kinds of sins. Situations determined right and wrong, not God's word. A person could never absolutely say that something was always right and always wrong.

The voice of Shimei reminds us that that thinking stinks. It didn't work with Solomon and it doesn't work with God. We need to quit playing games and understand that God says things for our good. There are reasons he tells us what he does. Our hearts lean towards the rebellious side and we want to push God's buttons to see how much we can get away with. That's not the spirit nor the attitude that God wants from us.

Jesus did a similar thing with the woman caught in adultery from John 8. She was used as a means to trap Jesus. No one seemed to care about this woman, except Jesus. She was guilty and deserved to die. Fear must have raced through her veins as she was moments from being put to death. Jesus turned the guilt upon the corrupt crowd that brought her and told her to go and sin no more. Don't leave Jerusalem. She was given life, life with a condition. Do you think she went right back home and engaged in more immoral sexual sins? I doubt it. This was life changing.

Too many want to fuss with the rules and they don't realize that God has allowed us to live, just don't leave "Jerusalem." When some of us do and we get caught we tend to get upset, first with the church, then the Bible and finally God. Why? We knew. We were the ones who left.

Had Shimei sent someone else after the runaway slaves he would have lived. Had he written them off as gone, he would have lived. The moment he left, he was on his own and guilty. Don't leave Jerusalem. Don't leave Jesus. Don't leave the Bible.

This isn't hard, until we feel that we have to go after something outside the city.

Roger Shouse

Some additional thoughts

Monday- Gen. 2:17

Tuesday – Josh. 7:20-25

Wednesday- Jer. 38:20

Thursday- Rom. 8:28

Friday- Rev. 21:18,19

Saturday- Matt. 24:13

