



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)

July 31, 2011

JUMP START #382

John 8:31,32-“ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, ‘ if you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”

Freedom! What a powerful and exciting word. Our nation was built upon individual freedom. The freedom to worship, the freedom to speak, the freedom of the press are in the fabric of who we are. Wars have been fought to keep this freedom. This month our country celebrates this freedom. This is something that should never be forgotten. A trip overseas reminds us how wonderful this country is.

Long before there was an America, Jesus spoke of freedom. All freedom comes with a price and a cost. Free speech means allowing the opposing voice to be heard. Not all like that. Freedom of the press allows articles that I disagree with to be printed. The freedom of Christ comes with a price, first, his blood was shed to inaugurate this and it takes our devotion to his word to maintain it.

Our verse today identifies two key principles. First, the knowledge of truth. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth.” Knowledge of what is right is powerful. It opens doors and builds confidence. The knowledge Jesus had in mind was Biblical knowledge, the word of God. Paul told the Ephesians to not be unwise but to “know the will of God.” To know God and his son is amazing. The Psalmist said knowing God’s word would make one wiser than teachers (119). This knowledge comes from spending time with God’s word. Thinking, learning, applying, growing—all the ways anyone learns anything.

The second principle Jesus taught here is freedom. This knowledge. God’s truth will make you free. To the Jewish mind, the first thought that they would think would be independence from Roman rule. Freedom from Roman taxation, Roman soldiers in the streets and freedom from corrupt and wicked Roman rulers. The Jews longed for this. They anticipated a Messiah that would do this for them. As so often in the teachings of Jesus, the Lord had something totally different in mind.

Jesus is thinking of spiritual freedom. The context points to that. A few verses later Jesus would say, “truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave to sin.” That theme is repeated by Paul in Romans 6. Sin slaves. It captures the heart, controls the mind and once the door has been opened to temptation, it is hard to close it again. Sin keeps us from being what we should be. The consequences of sin is death—both physical and spiritual. The world Jesus came to did not know freedom from sin. That concept was not possible. How would they overcome what they were addicted to and enslaved to? Who would do it? The answer is Jesus. He lived without sinning. He was the perfect one. He never had to apologize. He never had to ask for forgiveness. He never spoke out of turn. He never lost his cool. It is that truth, that way, that life which would release a person from the grips of sin.

Because of Jesus, death is not the end of the journey. Because of Jesus, one doesn't have to sin. Because of Jesus, there is hope. Because of Jesus, we can again be united with the Father.

I like our freedom. In many places in the world today, I could not write my Jump Starts and send them out. It would not be allowed. I like being able to live where I want and work where I want. Those are amazing freedoms. But greater than all of those is what Jesus has done. The freedom that allows me to know the Father.

The truth will make you free—what a great thought that is. Where would we be if Jesus had not come? How miserable our lives would be.....how hopeless and full of dread. Jesus brings joy, peace and righteousness to a world that is wrong.

The freedom is there—it's in his truth. Have you found it? Are you staying with it? It will make a difference in your life.

That's a freedom we need to be thankful for!

Roger Shouse

Some additional thoughts:

Monday-John 8:36

Tuesday- Rom. 6:18

Wednesday- Rom. 6:22

Thursday- Rom. 8:2

Friday- Gal. 5:1

Saturday- 1 Peter 2:16,17