



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 #383

John 4:23—“ But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be his worshippers.”

Our verse today comes from a conversation that Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. It all started with Jesus asking her for a drink of water. So easily and naturally, Jesus could turn everyday things into a spiritual conversation. The woman was a mess. She had already been married five times and currently was living with someone. She was Samaritan and Jesus was Jewish. There were layers and layers of differences between these two at the well. Yet the conversation turned to worshipping God.

Jesus used the occasion to reveal what would take place once his work was finished. He said, “an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father.” The hour is now, our verse tells us, that true worshippers shall worship in spirit and truth. This is often taught as attitude (spirit) and accurately (truth). There may be a greater contrast between the Old Testament worship that Israel offered God, as described in the Law of Moses, and the New worship that the followers of Christ would offer.

One thought that I want to look at today, is the expression “for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.” God seeks. God is looking. God wants. And what he wants are people that will worship him in spirit and truth. Not Israel or Samaritans, but true worshippers. God is seeking those who are seeking him. God wants us to want him!

Worship is more than going to church on Sunday. That worship is valuable and important. But that is not all there is. It is easy to view worship as one of those things we must do, so we go and when we are done, we have checked worship off of our list of things to do. I’m not certain that worship ever gets checked off. Some of our worship must be together with the church, the Bible says that. In 1 Corinthians as Paul defines the Lord’s Supper, he uses the expression, “ when you come together as a church” and “when you come together.” There is a coming together with the church to worship God. We need that. We need to remember that we are not alone and we need to remember that we are connected and part of God’s family. We are not it by ourselves. We are part of something larger than just us. Together with others, we encourage, remind, warn and remember.

But that is not the extent of worship. Another aspect of worship is my private, individual worship. Praying to God, reading his word, devoting myself to his way and considering God are all aspects of worship that can take place while I am cutting the yard, driving my car, sitting in a chair or taking a walk. God wants me to want him. God wants me to seek him. Not just on Sunday, but every day. Pray without

ceasing, meditating day and night are expressions the Bible gives us of hearts that longed and sought God.

Some of our problems come about from failing to grasp this. If we disconnect from God as we leave the church building, much like unplugging something, then we are on our own the whole week. The world fills our hearts with stuff and worry and fear and we feel distant from God. Sunday worship is not a multi-vitamin that we take once a week that gives us 100% of our daily requirements to make us whole until the next Sunday. It doesn't work that way. Have you noticed that? Sunday has a way of making us feel close to God. The songs, the people, the prayers, the lesson—all fill a huge need in our hearts. By Monday, reality hits us again. Work, family, schedules, things to do, things you don't want to do but should, things to fix, things here and things there. God is forgotten. Busy takes over. Tired, cranky and worn out our thoughts are about money, buying things, going places and doing things. God is forgotten until next Sunday.

You don't have to be a preacher to look at the scene and realize this isn't working. God is far too important to be given only one day out of seven. What God wants is a relationship—and that means time. Every day. Every day thanking God for a new day. Every day reading from his word. Every day remembering that he is on the throne, even today. Every day realizing that God loves me. Every day. Every day worship. Try turning off the car radio and sing some hymns on the ride to work or home. That'll be different. Try reading a few verses while you eat lunch. That'll be different. Try thinking, "I wonder what God wants me to do today?" that'll be different. Seek him---that's what God wants.

And when we do that, we find it has a positive effect upon us. No, all our problems will not go away magically, nor will the bills automatically get paid, nor will the kids like each other. But what it does is invite God into my world and my life. We need that. It opens our eyes to see that God's way works, every day. It helps me to be pure and righteous. It's harder to do wrong when you are thinking right. It turns negative thinking into seeing blessings and goodness. Mostly, it praises God. God wants us to want him. God wants us to worship him.

Can you imagine a man coming home from work and his wife asking, "Honey, how was work today?" His reply, "Work was ok, but the worship on the way home was awesome." You can do that. Do you want to? God wants you to.

Roger Shouse

Some additional thoughts:

Monday- Duet. 4:29

Tuesday- 1 Chron. 28:9

Wednesday- 2 Chron. 15:12

Thursday- Psa. 14:2

Friday- Psa. 70:4

Saturday- Matt. 6:33

