



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 #342

Col. 4:22-“ Say to Archippus, ‘ Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.’

Our verse today contains an interesting expression. One that we don’t hear very often. It is the idea of fulfilling the ministry. This is not the only time Paul says this. In his final words to Timothy, Paul said, “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Tim. 4:5) There it is again----fulfilling a ministry. I’ve never told another preacher those things. Maybe I should.

What does it mean to fulfill thy ministry? We use the expression, “fulfilling prophecy,” which means, prophecy is completed. To fulfill thy ministry is to finish or complete it. That still seems odd to me. We say finish school, or finish the race, finish that project. But to say, “finish your ministry,” is a rather unusual expression.

God has a plan for all of us. We were made on purpose for his purpose. Finishing or fulfilling one’s ministry means a person has not only stayed with it, but they have done what they were supposed to do. They have fulfilled it. They completed it. When a person has completed their degree requirements, there isn’t more that is expected. They have fulfilled what they were to do. Is this any different? The role of preaching is to teach and preach. Fulfilling that means that was done.

Take this to a different level. In many ways, isn’t the role of parents a ministry? They are teaching, leading and influencing their children for the good of God. Fulfill thy ministry. Finish the project.

On a larger scale, God has something planned for all of us. Fulfilling that, or completing that is what our task should be. Our agenda needs to be fulfilling this agenda for us. The journey we make as Christians is not a short sprint, but a long marathon. Most can run a short distance. Few can stay with it

for the long haul. Fulfill. Complete. Finish. Those are the ideas that Paul gives us about his life in 2 Tim. 4. I have completed . I have fought. I have finished. He did it. He fulfilled.

We understand this in theory, it's the doing that we struggle with. We get busy. We get sidetracked. We get tired. We get discouraged. Things happen. Before long we've stopped. We've stopped before reaching the finish line. Guilt bothers us at first. But after a while even that doesn't bother us any longer. We know what we ought to do, it's the doing part again.

Does any of this sound familiar to you? Has this become your life story? It's not a pretty story nor is it the way you intended, but you are here. The word "fulfill" reminds us. It compels us to try one more time. Get back at it, to not let Satan win.

There are few things more encouraging than a funeral of a person who has fulfilled the journey God wanted. They stayed with it. They were faithful to God all the time. It reminds us that we ought to, we need to, and that we can do the same.

The church at Colossae was given our verse today. The brethren there were to tell this young preacher to fulfill his ministry. Stay with it. Finish what was started. Sometimes that's what we need—someone else to remind us and tell us. We know, but having someone else say it has a profound impact on us. Others are counting on us. It's hard to see the good we do for others, but it's there. They need you to fulfill. They need you to complete.

I hope this helps. I hope it reminds you. We've not reached the finish line, not yet. God needs you to fulfill. He needs you to finish.

Roger Shouse

Some additional thoughts:

Monday – Ex. 40:32-43

Tuesday – 1Kings 9:1-3

Wednesday- Psa. 76:11a

Thursday- Luke 14:27-30

Friday- Acts 20:24

Saturday- John 19:30

