



# THE EXHORTER

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***“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](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## JUMP START #320

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***Ecclesiastes 7:1- “A good name is better than a good ointment, and the day of one’s death is better than the day of his birth.”***

There are passages in the Bible that our heads tell us are right but our hearts have a hard time believing it. Our passage today is an example of that, ‘the day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth.’ Using modern lingo, we have a hard time “wrapping our brains around that one!” more than that, we rarely conduct ourselves in the manner that this verse suggests.

Solomon, throughout this chapter is contrasting things that are better. The word “better” is used seven times in the first 10 verses. And for the most part, what he says is better, we’d argue with. For instance, Solomon says that “sorrow is better than laughter” (v3). That’s hard to believe. He says, “it is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting.” (v2) Really?

It is interesting how we deal with births and deaths. There is so much joy before the birth. There are baby showers, a lot of preparation, and a ton of excitement. When that baby is born, pictures are taken, phone calls are made, and smiles are the order of the day.

When there is a death, it’s just the opposite. A phone call in the middle of the night tells of someone dear who has passed away. What was important, no longer is. People cancel plans and travel to the funeral. There are a lot of tears, long faces, hugs and sadness prevails. A service is offered. Scriptures and prayers are used to find comfort and hope. There is a trip to the cemetery, and that long walk back to the car. Something has been left at the cemetery. Emptiness fills hearts. Life changes. Many feel depressed.

Babies or funerals? Give us the babies. Babies represents the future. Babies are fun. Funerals are not.

How can the day of death be better than the day of birth? I believe there are some implied thoughts here. Solomon is appealing to those who are spiritual. This is written for those who will read with the idea of connecting better with God. He mentions the concept of taking things to heart, which involves reflection, inspection, and discernment. Not all will do that. Not all care. The spiritual will. The spiritual does.

Looking at it that way, this begins to make sense. At the beginning, birth, the future is unsure. Which path will they choose? What kind of person will they become? There are many fears, dangers and concerns. At the end, death, they have completed that journey. As Paul said, the faith had been kept,

the course finished. The fight fought. The right path had been chosen. The life lived in such a way that it is an illustration for others. God has been honored, remembered and glorified in that life. The end is better. They have finished and completed what God wanted. What awaits is Heaven.

Most of us have learned some hard lessons in our life. Many of us would do things differently and better than what we did the first time. But having said that, we can't, but if we could, most of us would not want to go back and be fourteen years old again. Not me. If I could have my mind, my heart that I have now and go back, that's one thing, but to be just that goofy teenager I once was, again, no thanks! We've grown. We've learned. We've changed. We've become disciples of Jesus. What we thought was important, isn't even on the radar today. What we thought we needed to be somebody, wasn't even close to what we are now. Because of Jesus, we like who we've become. The time we lived before Jesus, just forget all that. Now you are beginning to grasp what Solomon may have in mind. The end is better than the beginning. (v8) The day of death is better than the day of birth. (v2) The finished product is better than the idea on a piece of paper. The day of graduation is better than the first day of school. Solomon is looking at completion, finishing is what we are about, becoming who we should be.

As we age in Christ, we ought to be getting better. The fruit of the Spirit ought to be more visible in our character. We ought to be walking more by faith and less by sight. Wisdom, reflection and grace ought to be our trademarks. Prayer should be natural and easy. We are getting better and better. We are becoming more and more like Jesus. Just as a sculptor tinkers and tinkers with a statue until finally he is pleased and reveals it to the world, so God, as the potter, is tinkering and tinkering with us. Our hearts allow that. We work with God on this. But better and better is what we should be.

The day of death will be better than the day of birth. Now some us need to get on the ball. We are getting older, but not better. Like an old dog, we're just laying around not doing much these days. How come? The best is not behind us, it is ahead of us.

This is the way God wants us to look at things.....

Roger Shouse

**Some additional thoughts:**

**Monday-** Ecc. 11:9,10

**Tuesday-** Psa. 71:5

**Wednesday-** Psa. 23:4

**Thursday-** Psa. 116:15

**Friday-** Prov. 12:28

**Saturday-** 1 Cor. 15:55-57

