



THE EXHORTER

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

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JUMP START # 250

2 Cor. 13:5—“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you fail the test?”

Tests are a part of life, but I have found that most people do not like them. There are all kinds of tests—school tests and exams; medical tests; drivers license tests; tests to be certified as a doctor, lawyer, or pilot. There are some areas it seems that there should be tests, but there’s not. For instance, just about anyone can become a parent, even though they haven’t grown up themselves.

Our passage has to do with a spiritual test. It is a faith test. Paul says, “See if you are in the faith.” Several things of interest about this verse. First, Paul is writing to a church. You’d think the people that got this letter would already know if they were believers or not. Secondly, this was to be a self exam. The words are, “test yourselves.” Christians can be strong in the judging department. They are quick to point the finger of wrong towards others. That is not the direction here. The concentration is upon ourselves. If we put as much effort into making sure we are in Christ, rather than worrying about everyone else, we’d be a better people. This test was not done by the preacher. It was not done by a group of leaders, but individually. Thirdly, inherit in this verse, is the concept that a person could be going to church services and not pass the test! That’s scary! Fourth, Paul wrote this because many were questioning his right as an apostle. In this section Paul would say, “Since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me” (3) and “but I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test” (6). So, naturally, he turns the same thoughts on them. You question me, now I am going to question you. Test yourselves! Examine yourselves! Is Christ in you?

We remember passages such as Gal. 2:20 where Paul would say, “Christ lives in me,” or Col. 3:4, “Christ, who is our life.” What better description of a Christian than this, “Jesus Christ in you.” A person can sit through church services without Christ in them. They can attend out of habit, play with the babies, smile and shake a few hands and be content that they are a good member, all the while, Christ is not in them. Christ in you will affect you. Think about other

concepts. If you have cancer in you, it will affect you. Eventually, you will become sick. If you are in love, you have love in you, it will affect you. If you have hate in you, it will affect you. Here, if you have Christ in you, you will know. You can tell. You can examine yourself and see it.

How? Your attitude, is it Christ-like? Are you grumpy, complaining, bitter, and angry? That's not like Jesus is it? Why are you like that? Bad day? Bad year? Or, is something missing, like Jesus? Your behavior? Is it Christ like? Are you obedient to the word of God or do you play spiritual "dodge ball" with God? Are you obedient in the details? The small things? Your relationships with others? Is it Christ like? Do you walk with grace and forgiveness or are you a hard nose, who is demanding and unforgiving and never giving anyone a second chance? How was Jesus? How about your spiritual life? Do you pray? Do you read the Bible? When you go to church services, do you worship?

This test is an internal one. It affects who we are, and what we do. Our internal wiring changes when we are in Christ. This test demands honesty and truthfulness. God already knows. Do you? With this test comes the opportunity to make adjustments and corrections. A person can put on Christ and become an imitator of Jesus, if they have failed.

What a difference it makes, to have Jesus in you. Is he there? Do you know? It may be time for a test.....

Roger Shouse