



# 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 #267

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**Mark 3:1,2- “And he entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there with a withered hand. And they were watching him to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse him.”**

The man with the withered hand. He was at the synagogue to worship, I hope. The way the text unfolds, we wonder if he was planted there by the Pharisees to trap Jesus. There are several interesting things about these verses.

First, there seems to be little doubt that Jesus could heal this person. We don't find the Pharisees bringing a “near impossible” crippled to be healed. Jesus has shown over and over that he could do the impossible. The blind could see. The lame walked. The dead were resurrected. So a withered hand, was nothing to Jesus.

Second, they not only knew that Jesus could heal the man, they expected it. How could Jesus turn down a withered hand? Jesus had a heart for the hurting. He'd shown that before. Lepers sought him out, because they knew he cared. The sick were carried to him because people knew that Jesus cared. We sing a song that goes, “Does Jesus care...” the chorus answers with, “Oh, yes he cares, I know he cares, his heart is touched ...”

Thirdly, the fact that they knew Jesus would probably do this didn't thrill them. That's amazing to me. They couldn't do this. Without Jesus, the man with the withered hand would die with a withered hand. I'd think the people would line up for miles to see this. Had miracles become common and normal for them? I don't think so. Was a withered hand below the “wow” factor? I doubt it. They were so steeped in prejudice and hatred and plotting that they shoved the miracle to the back and thought little of it.

Fourthly, they seemed more concerned about the day of the week than the events that happened. Sabbath was huge for the Jewish community. The rabbis had added so many traditions to what God had said, that they nearly ruined the purpose of the Sabbath. So, instead of a day to draw closer to God, they were using the day to plot, plan, and destroy Jesus.

Jesus healed others in the synagogue. There was the bent over woman. In both stories, Jesus called the person to come to him. He wanted all to see. The miracles healed the hurting but confirmed who Jesus was. He wanted everyone to know.

I wonder about these verses. I wonder if we, if I, assemble in church services and we fail to really see Jesus. These Jews did. Or, they saw Jesus, but they didn't see him as he really was. Healing the man with the withered hand should have had an effect on the audience. You'd think, they'd drop to their knees, and sing praises to God. You'd think they'd follow Jesus out the door and become disciples, believers in him. You'd think so, but that didn't happen. They saw Jesus, but they didn't see who he really was.

I wonder if the same can happen to us? Do we see Jesus? He's there in our Bibles. He's in our prayers. He's in our songs, but do we fail to really see him? Do we see the Lord of Heaven and Earth? Do we see his holiness? I wonder if God sees us and says, "I'd expect them to fall on their knees and sing out in praise to me. You'd think they would follow Jesus out the door and become disciples, believers in him. You'd think so." But it often doesn't happen. Nice church service we say. Good singing. Nice sermon, we tell the preacher. Good Bible class. But life changing? Knee dropping? Could it be that it has become all too common? Could it be that we see Jesus, but we really don't see him?

Makes you wonder. Makes me wonder. Probably, makes God wonder.

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