



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 #521

1 Kings 2:2,3-“I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn.”

King David was old and about to die. He knew that. His son, Solomon, was the next king of Israel. Our passage today could be viewed as David's farewell address and his charge to the next king, who just happened to be his son. His words ring true today and the concepts could be spoken from a dad to his son before he goes off to college, the military, or even gets married.

There is a string that runs through these expressions. It's as if each phrase is a bead and they are strung together with the common connection being, "Keep these things." David says: keep the charge of the Lord...keep his statutes....(keep) his commandments...(keep) his ordinances....(keep) his testimonies. Keep, keep, keep. The book of Proverbs says to "buy truth and sell it not." (**Proverbs 23:23**) Keep it!

In order to keep something, a person has to have it to start with. To keep the faith, a person has to have faith. To keep the commandments, a person has to have the commandments. David wasn't giving Solomon anything. Solomon already had these. He had God's statutes, commandments, ordinances, and testimonies. They had been given through Moses and the prophets. It was up to Solomon to now keep these things. You keep by doing them and obeying them.

Keeping implies guarding, protecting, and maintaining the way things are supposed to be. By telling Solomon to keep, David was implying, don't change things, don't depart from these, don't give up on these, don't go away from these. What powerful words that are needed today.

Too many folks don't understand the value of keeping. Some keep things that really don't matter. They keep stuff. This is why shows like "Hoarders" are so popular. We are amazed that people can live that way. Too many others live that way mentally and emotionally. We keep things that people have said to us. We keep living in the past. We keep scars and pains of failures. These things are often called emotional baggage and we lug these things around from relationship to relationship. They seem to get heavier and heavier through the years and we seem to add more and more to them all the time. Give them up. Leave the past. This is not what David was telling Solomon. We sometimes keep the wrong stuff.

Others fail to keep God's word. They are not content with it. They don't want to stay with it. It's old to them. It's the religion of their grandparents. So, instead of keeping what God said, they leave it. They leave it for the thrill of something new, exciting and different. They change the structure of worship, which ought to be praise to God, for exciting times for the audience. They give up preaching for plays...feasting on the word for feasting on the pot roast....bowing the head and heart to God for clapping and applause to man. They leave the word for comedy...current events....and the shallowness of pep talks. They have not kept. They did not stay with it. They have not maintained. Is it any wonder that Youtube videos, such as the current, "I love Jesus and hate religion" are so popular today? Folks just want Jesus but not religion. Give me Jesus but you keep the church. Give me Jesus without the commands, the requirements, or the responsibilities. I want the Jesus who is a friend. I want the Jesus who is cool with me not going to church. I want the Jesus who won't frown if I drink alcohol now and then. I want the Jesus who understands that marriage isn't for me...I'll just live with my girlfriend. Do you know that 12 million people have viewed that Youtube. People love it. They see it as speaking to them. It's how they have felt and now they see you can love Jesus and hate religion.

What about keeping? What about keeping the law? What about keeping the commandments? What would Jesus want us to do? He said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (**John 14:15**). Jesus spoke about divorce. In fact he was pretty narrow about who can get a divorce. Still want Jesus? What about worship? Jesus wasn't "against religion" or church. He worshipped in the temple all his life while on earth. He observed every Jewish holiday according to the Law. Jesus kept the law, perfectly. Still want Jesus?

You see, the Jesus that the Youtube crowd wants isn't the Jesus of the Bible. It's their own Jesus. A Jesus that they think, DIDN'T KEEP the rules. But the real Jesus did. They want the Jesus that lets you stay the way you are. But the real Jesus wants righteous living and holiness. They want a Jesus that is cool. But the real Jesus was holy. The people of his day didn't understand him, like him, or want him around. Still want Jesus?

It's about time for us to get back to the keeping business. To keep the commands, we first have to know the New Testament, our law today. We need to follow it. We need to love it. We need to be satisfied that it alone will lead us to Heaven. No changing is needed nor necessary.

Keep it.....keep it.....keep it. It starts with us, then our families and then our congregations. Throw out the man made rules. Give up on being progressive and different. Just tell me the old, old story of Jesus. The way of the cross leads home—that's more than a song. That's the way it is.

Keep it.....how important this is.

Roger Shouse

