



THE EXHORTER

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

May 27, 2012

JUMP START #551

Luke 12:51-53- “Do you suppose that I have come to grant peace on earth? I tell you no, but rather division; for from now on five members of one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

The words of Jesus found in our verse today seems out of character and out of place. Many don't know what to do with them. Radicals will use examples of this to show that the Bible contradicts itself and therefore cannot be from God. In one place Jesus did say that he came to give peace, (**John 16:33**) here he says he didn't. The context, circumstance, and type of peace Jesus was defining are not the same. It's like saying, Bob is rich and Bob is poor. Contradictions some would shout. On the surface, that seems like an impossibility. It's not. Maybe it's two different Bob's. Maybe it's the same Bob, but two different periods in his life. Maybe it's Bob's wealth and Bob's health being described, he's rich in money, but poor in health.

Still others struggle with this because it makes Jesus seem demanding and even “mean” sounding. They see a smiling Jesus who kissed babies, patted people on the head and made everyone feel better. They like a “Mr. Rogers” version of Jesus. Our verse today doesn't fit into that image. They forgot about Jesus turning over tables, on two separate occasions. They forgot that Jesus offended some of the multitudes. They forgot that Jesus refused to deal with the inheritance problem that one man needed help with. Others walked away when Jesus stopped feeding them. It's easy to make the Jesus that I like. A Jesus that allows me to be as close as I am comfortable with and a Jesus that lets me be as committed to the level I like. Religious, but not too much. Holy, but not to an extreme. Good, nice, but easy on the godly-that's the way some want to walk with Jesus, so they make up a Jesus that fits that. I heard a famous TV personality, when confronted with what the Bible says about homosexuality, responded, “Well, that may be your Jesus, it's not mine.” How many Jesus' are there? Can we each have one that fits to what we want?

Our passage today is about loyalty and commitment to Jesus. If he is the Lord, which means authority, then we must acknowledge that by following him. He will be first, but not second. He will have all of a person, not just part of a person. He'll have you every day and everywhere, not just on Sunday and not just in the church house. He is as much the Lord when you are at work as when you are singing praises in the church building. He is as much Lord when you are taking a test in school as when you bow your head in prayer. He is as much Lord when you fill out your taxes, take a walk in the neighborhood, go on vacation, watch late night TV, surf the internet, write things on Facebook, or text, as he is when you read

your Bible. He is the Lord. He comes first. He comes before all things. He comes before ball games, whether I'm watching or playing. Whether I'm in the stands or on my couch watching. He's first. He's first in my choices. He's first in my commitment. He's first in my schedule. He's first in my checkbook. He's first.

He is so much first, that he comes before my family. He comes before my parents, my children, and even my mate. This is the true test of Lordship. This is where many give up on Jesus. They'll follow Jesus, love Jesus, and do nearly anything for Jesus, except go against family and put family behind Jesus. If the family decides to get together, worshipping Jesus will come second. If the family decides to do something contrary to the Bible, family comes first. Some are willing to take the chance of losing their soul before they'd go against family wishes. If the family didn't go to church, I won't. If the family wasn't baptized, I won't be. Never go against family, is their thinking. The blood of family, to them, is thicker than the blood of the Savior. This is the very thing Jesus is talking about. Commitment to him, making him the Lord of your life, means there may be a division in your family. You won't go along with family, you'll follow Jesus. So on a Sunday morning, when the one you are married to says, "Let's not go to church today, let's just sleep in." Sorry, Jesus comes first. Come with me or not, I must follow Jesus. That will make some friction in the home. Some won't get it. Some will be upset. Some will test you. But Jesus understands. He comes first. He always comes first. The division will be so intense that some who are not believers would leave the marriage. Paul's words are, "Let them go." **(1Cor. 7:15)** Christ comes first.

To a Jewish audience, which Jesus was speaking to, this meant worshipping on a different day than the family. No more Sabbath, now the first day of the week. No more animal sacrifices, trips to Jerusalem, Temple worship, going to priests. All that changed, when a Jewish person followed Christ. The consequences were extreme. They were immediately cut off from the family. A father would view that child as dead, or worse, non-existent. No communication. No inheritance. Abandoned and forgotten is what happened. Some were even persecuted by their own families. Some would turn their own family in to persecutors. They left the family faith, be done with them. Will it be Jesus or not?

Today, some are kicked out of the home. Some are rejected and the relationship sours. Will it be Jesus or not? Interesting to consider, if I was following my dad in a car, and he turned into a ditch, would I do the same? No. However, if I read my Bible and decide to follow Jesus, and I realize that my dad is spiritually in a ditch, will I turn into that ditch spiritually as well? Many do that. They'd rather be with family in Hell, than with Jesus in Heaven. Strange thinking in my book. If Jesus is the Lord, then what he says is right. He trumps feelings, family history, family decisions, or even how I think things ought to be. Nothing trumps Jesus.

Will it be Jesus? That's before us today in every choice we make. Will it be Jesus? God crowned him as the Lord. Will I crown him as the Lord in my heart?

Will it be Jesus?

Roger Shouse

