



# 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 #555

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**Matt. 11:28- “Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

These words from our Savior catch our attention and welcome us to him. Rest-sweet rest is such an inviting thought. Vacations are often referred to as “R&R” – rest and relaxation. Many come back from a trip worn out and frazzled. They need a vacation from their vacation. Driving down highways we find “rest stops.” In restaurants, there are “restrooms.” Years ago, homes for the aged were called “rest homes.” The word “rest” has found a place in our language, but often not in our lives. We awaken early in the morning, tired. We moan, “Give me a few more minutes” hit the snooze button on the alarm and roll over in bed. Moms will sometimes declare, “I’m sick and tired of all the mess.” Sick and tired –she wants relief. She wants something done. She wants rest from picking up after others.

The rest that Jesus offers has nothing to do with mattresses, beds, vacations, clean houses, or a break from the routines of life. There is another kind of rest, a rest for our souls. Jesus is inviting weary souls to find rest.

- Jesus called the weary and heavy laden. Those who are tired and worn out. Tired of a messy and miserable life. Tired of failing because of sin. Weary of carrying guilt, shame and a past. Heavy-laden with the mistakes of life. Jesus is talking about the consequences, the fear, the weary that comes with sin. Sin is much more than doing something you were not supposed to. Sin comes in a package. It’s that package that most fail to see. Sin changes things. It changes our attitude, how we view things, and it changes us. Sin hurts those around us. Because of sin, we let others down who were counting on us. The guilt, neglect, selfishness and harm of sin is like walking with a ball and chain around us. There is a scene in a movie, Christmas Carol, when Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his old accounting partner, Jacob Marley. The ghost is chained and drags those heavy chains as he visits Scrooge. Weary and heavy laden-similar picture.

Jesus gives you rest. It comes in the form of salvation. Forgiveness for those past wrongs. A second and new chance in Jesus. Acceptance and fellowship with God. Freedom. Those heavy chains released. Those shadows of shame gone. Rest. A spirit that is fresh, alive, and joyful in the Lord. You know how you feel after a good night’s rest. You awaken feeling great, and ready to get at it. The rest Jesus talks about is more than a feeling, it’s a relationship. Things have changed once again, and again you have changed.

Sin changed you, now Jesus changes you. In Jesus you found what is good, right and that comes with a plan and a purpose. Alive in Jesus- what a great expression and a great relationship that is.

Rested souls-that's what is found in Jesus. What are rested souls like? Souls that have found this rest, don't cling to the past. It's gone. They don't dwell on their mistakes and failures. They don't continue to beat themselves up. They found forgiveness in Jesus. Souls that have rest are free to concentrate upon Jesus and his kingdom. Sharing the story of Jesus, helping weary people find the Lord, building the kingdom-this is the work for those who are not weary.

When a basketball team has weary players, the coach sends in the subs. Weary players make mistakes. They are not sharp. They get beat down the court. They start losing. Is it any different in life? The fresh players are fast, alert, crisp and can turn the game back around. Rest in Jesus.

Worry, guilt and fear are the three ugly sisters of the soul. They seem to hang together. Where you find one, you'll soon find the others. They remind us of what we'd like to forget. They limit us, defeat us, and drain us of our energy. Some folks are experts in passing out the guilt. Parents become good at this, especially to their grown kids. Using guilt, they force people to do things for them. They shame them into what they want. We fall for this. We add layers and layers of guilt upon us and we return to those heavy chains of failure.

It's time to boot those ugly sisters out of your heart and out of your life. Someone can offer guilt, but you don't have to accept it. Refuse the gift. Live rested in Jesus. If you did wrong, apologize, seek forgiveness, first from Heaven and then from those you hurt, and then move on. For some, that's not enough. This is why they invite the three ugly sisters into your life. Weary, guilt and fear show up. You've done what you should. Refuse it. Don't go backward to the past, go forward with the Lord.

Some churches pass out guilt more than they do the collection plates. People go to worship and leave feeling like a heel. The preacher got his degree from the school of guilt and shame and he loves to remind you how terrible you are. Mistakes and wrongs of others are talked up and down and all around. You'd think in a house of God, where God is praised, that rest would be found there. Often it's not. Some leave church services feeling worse than when they came in. It doesn't take much for that person to say, "forget it, I don't need that."

Worry, guilt and fear-they don't stand a chance with the rest that Jesus offers. A rested heart is a heart that can look at the past, present and future with confidence in the Lord. Jesus offers you rest. Do you have it? If you do, it will show.

Roger Shouse