



THE EXHORTER

“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)

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JUMP START #401

Gen. 45:5-“ Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

Today, we look at Joseph. He is a man of remarkable character. His life was not easy, and in fact, he had many struggles and defeats, from family members and from his boss. He was rejected. He was falsely accused. He was the victim. He was forgotten. He had all the ingredients of being an emotional wreck---selfish, looking out for no one but himself. But that is not the way Joseph was. He did not let these setbacks define his life nor detour him from the great person he was inside.

In our verse today, as Joseph meets his brothers for the first time in decades, he reminds them that God has used him to help the family---the very family that sold him and forgot him. Three times Joseph refers to God working thru him.

We look at Joseph and we must look at ourselves. Many of us have had hardships, tragedies and disappointments. There were jobs that you really wanted but didn't get. There were transfers that moved you and your family to another location, when you didn't want to move. There were family troubles. All of these have a way of leaving scars on our hearts and they can make us bitter, instead of better.

James told the brethren he wrote to, “ count it all joy when they encountered various trials.” **(James 1:2)** The trials lead us to a character God wants. Often, God will use the trials to put us in a position to glorify him and help others. I wonder how many times we have fumbled here? Stuck on our own problems, feeling very pitiful, and unable to understand why we have to go through things like this, we fail to use the times to become a person of character.

Joseph reminds us that our lives touch so many others and we need not to be so fixed upon ourselves that we fail to see what we can do for others. Joseph used his position and influence to help the nation, save his family and fulfill the purpose of God.

You meet people like that from time to time—generous beyond belief. I have seen brethren through the years pay the college expenses for someone else's kid. I have seen, just this week, a preacher give away his entire library for free. I have seen people use their position to help others get jobs. Many of these folks started off humble, struggled through life, but when they reached a position they used it to help others.

God was with Joseph—he always was. He was with him when his brothers put him in a pit. He was with him when he was sold to travelling merchants. He was with him when he was tempted by his boss's

wife. He was with him when he was in prison. He was with him when he was forgotten in prison. And he was with him during the successes.

Because you have endured hard times is not an indication that God is not with you. God may be looking pages ahead in your life and putting you in position or putting you through things so that you can be the person he wants you to be.

The easy life is not always the best life. Character forged upon trials and hammered by the grace of God tends to become what God wants. Not only was God with Joseph, but Joseph was with God. He never gave up on God. In a foreign country, he remained loyal to God.

Your life now may be the “prison time” that Joseph went through. Don’t give up. Don’t quit on God. He wants you to still pray to him. He needs you to praise him for his greatness. He wants you to continue to stand for him, love him, and proclaim his message wherever you can. God needs you—even in the prison time. Maybe you have been falsely accused, or maybe you feel like you have been sold by your family. Tough times. Many tears may flood your eyes. Don’t give up. God needs you. Another page will be turned in your life and God needs you to be there.

There are few people in all the Bible like Joseph. I want to meet him someday in Heaven. His life has helped my life, so much. I only hope that my life can help others as well.

Roger Shouse