



# 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***

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## JUMP START #536

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***Exodus 26:5,6- “You shall make 50 loops in the one curtain, and you shall make 50 loops on the edge of the curtain that is in the second set; the loops shall be opposite each other. You shall make 50 clasps of gold, and join the curtains to one another with the clasps so that the tabernacle will be a unit.”***

Purple curtains, fifty loops and golden clasps-these are some of the details that God gave for the building of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle would be the place of worship for ancient Israel. It would be used by Israel through the days of Moses, Joshua, the judges, Saul, David, until Solomon built a permanent place, the Temple. The Tabernacle was a series of tents-portable, so as Israel travelled, it could travel.

The chapter of Exodus that our passage comes from details what God wanted in the Tabernacle. It was important. The ark of the covenant would be placed there and the High Priest would seek the mercy of God there.

I referred to this passage recently in a sermon and talked about it again yesterday with one of our members. Fifty loops-why fifty? Does God care? Why not 55? Or, 45? If Israel made fifty-one, instead of fifty, was God going to count? Those sort of questions ought to bother us, but any more they don't. We ask them. We've read books such as, "Don't sweat the small stuff," and have been taken in by the philosophy that the "big picture" is all that matters. Love God, that's important, we're told, don't sweat the other stuff. Just what is meant by the "other stuff?" Those of this mindset will quickly tell you. The kind of music you have in worship, how the church raises money, fellowship, baptism, the frequency of the Lord's Supper-small stuff we're told. Don't sweat it. Love God. Diversity is good. Different flavors, different types of worship-contemporary, rock, old fashioned, traditional-any way you like-it's all good.

Tons of books on the market right now would say what I have just said. Loving God is most important, this other stuff really doesn't matter. Build, grow, seek and relate to the community-that's the mindset today. Find ways to attract. Use anything that works, especially clips from movies and TV shows. Less Bible, and more reality stories and humor. Tell your story-the sadder, and more sordid the better. Does any of this sound familiar? This is what is going on in many places today.

What about fifty loops? God thought it was important and God wanted Israel to make fifty loops-not forty-three, and not sixty. FIFTY! This is as much about listening and following God in all things as it is about fifty. Can we just do as God said, in the way he said it, or is it necessary for us to always be changing, trying to improve and trying to run ahead of God on our own?

Fifty loops, has everything to do with you and I in our relationship with God. If I don't think fifty loops is important, and think Israel could make as many loops as they wanted, then I will be one who is loose with what God says and will make my own list of the "small stuff." Maybe fifty loops was BIG to God. It may not seem that way to us, but who are we to determine what is small and what is BIG? In the New Testament, the church sang. Nine times in the N.T. the Bible shows the early church singing. Yeah, but someone says, "I like rock music" as my form of worship. As long as we are singing to God from the heart, why does it matter? Just singing from hymnals is so old-fashioned- get real! Remember 50 loops? He said fifty. The same person that said fifty, said sing. The same one that said fifty, said give. Yeah, but we can make some more money with a car wash and selling raffle tickets. Fifty loops or sixty? Which will it be?

And the Lord's Supper on Sunday? Why not Saturday night? Why not Tuesday afternoon? Why not only on Easter? Or flag day? Or ground hog day? Why Sunday? Remember the fifty loops? That's why. Is it wrong to have it on Saturday? The Bible doesn't say "you can't." It also didn't say sixty loops, "either." Is it possible to do things the way God said it?

If you can't handle the fifty loops, just a few verses later, God tells Israel to make boards 15 feet long for the flooring of the Tabernacle. Throughout Exodus 26 you find details, measurements, colors, and numbers of what God wanted exactly in building His Tabernacle. This served as a pattern for Israel and an example for us. God knows what's best, and God knows what he wants. Loving him is obeying him, even down to the number of loops in a curtain.

Let's not get too big for the Bible nor think we can do a better job than what God has done. Social issues today have led some to declare activities, lifestyles, and practices as acceptable, when God declared that they were wrong. Does it matter? Who's right? Fifty loops, that's what it comes down to.

I expect that Moses and the priests counted the loops. They were interested in details. They were interested in what God said. I expect we'd be better off if we got back to counting the loops God wants today. I'm interested in a group of Christians that are interested in fifty loops, how about you?

Fifty loops-that's in your Bible for a reason!

Roger Shouse