



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 # 526

Psalms 1:2 *“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”*

The beginning Psalms makes a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, he does not stand in the path of sinners nor does he sit in the seat of scoffers. His habits, his journey, the company he keeps, and his way of life is different. He is set to please the Lord.

Our verse brings several wonderful lessons for us. First, we must remember that the law referred to in our verse was actually the law-the law of Moses. Most of the prophets had not been written yet. This was before the Gospels, the New Testament and the wonderful lessons of the compassion and grace of Jesus. The Law-the commandments, the many rules and instructions for ancient Israel is what the person in this passage had. It is all that he had. It is the section of the Bible that many today feel is tedious, slow and cumbersome. For the righteous man in our passage, that was his Bible. We are blessed to have the entire picture. We have it all before us.

The righteous man delighted in the law. He loved the law. He came to understand the law, follow the law and keep the law. The law was his companion. What a wonderful relationship this righteous person had with God's word. I wonder if we feel the same about the word of God. Most know that we need it and that it is important, but to say that we "delight" in it, well, that might be going a bit far for some. It shouldn't. What a wonderful book the Bible is. It does so much for us. It answers questions, strengthens our soul, calms our hearts, reminds us of our purpose and place and puts before us the very heart of our God. That is amazing!

The righteous man in our passage meditated upon the law day and night. It ran through his mind often. I expect that helped him stay righteous. When we forget God's word, we tend to get into things we shouldn't. Our lives get messy when we distance ourselves from the word of God. Meditate is planned and purposed. It's not the same as dreaming. We go to sleep and can

wake up with the craziest dreams that make no sense at all. We can't control those thoughts. Meditation is purposed, planned and thought out. It is thinking about God's word.

Meditate day and night...what do you think about before you go to sleep? We fall into bed exhausted and sometimes it's hard to slow the mind down. It's still running full steam. Some float off day dreaming-wondering what it would be like to be rich or famous. Others replay the day, thinking about all that was done. Others think about the next day and all that they have to do. Now, how do I know this? Read an article on what people think about before they go to sleep? Seen a study on this? No, these are things I have done. Sometimes my mind is writing a sermon. Sometimes I'm thinking about my next Jump Start. Sometimes it's a movie I've just seen. Thinking about God's word, meditating upon it, can help our character, grow our faith and make us, make me, a better person.

It's easier for me to think about the Gospels than it is Romans. I can see Jesus calling the bent over woman to come to him before He healed her. I can see the woman with the issue of blood, in the midst of a huge crowd, working her way up to Jesus and touching Him from behind and then the Lord turning and seeing her. I can see Zaccheus sitting in that tree and the Lord standing right below talking to him. Those are great lessons. They allow us to see Jesus and His love and compassion. They take us there and we can sense what those people went through. We see the courage and the faith they had to overcome fears and ridicule from others.

I wonder if we thought about those things more, if we would be in better moods and have better attitudes. I wonder if they would help us see the world differently. I wonder if our next day would be better because of what we thought about the night before.

We choose what we want to think about. Filling the mind with thoughts that do not matter, or worse, that tend to be lustful, materialistic and worldly will not help us be the person that God wants. A basic rewiring of our heads can do us all a lot of good. Deciding to think about God's word, God's people, God's way, or God Himself has to have a positive impact upon us.

One of my favorite thoughts is to imagine the first five minutes in Heaven. The view, the people, the splendor, the singing, and of course, the Lord. Give that some thought before you go to bed. Better yet, read the last couple of chapters of Revelation, to get a clear and accurate picture of Heaven in your mind and then start your meditating. You'll fall asleep wishing you were there.

Someday, that will be true!

Roger Shouse

