



# 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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**1 Corinthians 1:20** *"Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"*

Paul begins this section of Corinthians by proclaiming, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (v. 18). The message of God is on one hand unbelievable to many folks. First of all, that God would care so much for us that He would send His son. Then, that Son lived among us like a man, died on the cross and was resurrected from the grave. That story seems unreal in a secular and pagan culture like Corinth. Then when we see what God asks of us, it seems all too simple. Trust Him. Believe Him. Obey Him. Follow Him. Anyone can do that-and that's the point. Not everyone makes varsity. Not everyone is the top of the list, any list. Yet the message of the gospel is such that any can come to Christ.

Paul recognized that the intellectual community of Corinth wasn't moved by the message of the cross. The pagans had their own gods, like Zeus and Apollo, who fought and lived in their own world and really had little to do with "earth people." The Corinthians like to discuss intellectual ideas but those ideals did little for everyday life. The wise man prides himself in his wisdom and his intellectual abilities. His pride will keep him from Christ. It is the man who is willing to deny himself and follow Christ that becomes a disciple.

We shouldn't think nor allow others to accuse Christians as being a bunch of dummies or intellectual fools. That's not the point here. There are many, many bright, impressive and successful Christians today, and in years gone by. College presidents and professors, inventors, doctors, scientists, some famous, some not so. Even the N.T. tells of army officers, secretary of Treasury, influential women, synagogue officials becoming followers of Christ.

Sometimes we get excited about the "who's who" list of Christians. There has been and are professional athletes who are Christians. There has been connections to politicians and famous singers. Does this impress us? Should it? It doesn't make the message more believable nor more visible. Some of these professional people walked away from the message to further their professional careers.

For the most part, the message was accepted by common people like you and I. Everyday people whose names are lost to history in time, but folks with good hearts, who are trying to raise their families and trust in their Lord. That's the make up of most congregations. That's how it has always been.

Why are there not more "wise men" among us? It's not that God doesn't want them. He wants all to be saved. It's not that the message doesn't work for them, it works the same for all. It has to be their hearts. The simple message of Jesus doesn't seem intellectual enough to move them. One must begin with an understanding that the Bible is from God. Without that, the message fails. Many just can't get that. Evolution, secularism, humanism and a bunch of other "isms" fill their minds until there just isn't any room for that simple message of Jesus. For some, their expectations are crooked. They assume that if there is a God, then this ought to be a "Heaven-like" paradise, and it's not. Babies should never die, in their thinking. Yet, even in the Bible they did. Some were murdered by the likes of Pharaoh and Herod. They think the innocent should never suffer, but they do. They even did in the Bible. God's apostles were slaughtered and many of the early Christians died. This isn't Heaven. This world is broken, busted and bent on doing wrong. Starting with the wrong expectations, will destroy a marriage, ruin a friendship and distort what you expect God ought to do.

The intellectuals who do not believe will continue to scoff. They will continue to poke fingers at the Bible. They will continue to ridicule until they stand before the throne of God and realize that they were terribly wrong.

So what about you? How do you feel about the saving message of Jesus Christ? Neat story? Cool idea? Does it move you? Does it change you? Does it make a difference to you? No time for it? Too busy for it? Not ready to make a commitment? How then are you any different than the intellectuals at Corinth? Don't be too smart for your britches, as my grandma used to say. I never did know what that meant other than when she said it, she meant business.

The Gospel is for all...and that starts with you. Take some time and read God's message. Think about it. Let yourself ask questions. See what God is saying. See what God is wanting. See what God is giving. There is no other message like God's word.

Roger Shouse

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