



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 # 472

Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

Romans is Paul's thesis on salvation. It's complicated, powerful, and revealing. It's a must read for all who are interested in God.

Our verse today, is one of several that identifies our condition and state before God. It's a short statement that tells us several things.

First, God has a plan and purpose for you. He made you, wired you and blessed you. You are a special package from Heaven. Sin changes that. The definition of the Greek word for sin means to "miss the mark." It's like shooting arrows at a target. God intends for you to fly straight into the bullseye. Sin messes with the aim. It causes us to miss the target. We end up not as God intended nor planned. This is not how God made you. This is not what He had planned for you. Sin causes you to "fall short of the glory of God."

Second, all have sinned. Sin is something you choose. It's not like red hair and blue eyes that you are born with. Not only did I have that but my hair was very wavy with a cow lick or two in it. I would have never chosen that. It's just the way I came. Sin is not like that. You may inherit your mamma's nose, or your dad's ears, but you don't inherit sin. This is a major theological divide in the religious community. It's a huge point, both with us and with God. Am I a sinner because of someone or am I a sinner because of me? You made me a sinner? Birth or my choices? Ezekiel 18, James 1 and other places show that sin is a choice not a gene that is inherited. Why then do we sin? It's easy, we tend to take the easy way. It's definitely popular. Sin has always been "in." It's what we see all around us. When you stand in a mud puddle it's hard to be clean. We are responsible for what we have done. That's Romans. That's the Gospels. That's why we need to do something for our salvation.

This passage also shows us that all have sinned, except Jesus. That unites us with every human that is capable of understanding and making choices. That means the rich Wall Street guy and I have something in common. Our lifestyles may be very different, but we are both sinners. The well known star athlete and I have something in common, we are both sinners. His diet, exercise routine and strength is totally different than mine, but we are connected. The Hollywood starlet...the bum on the street corner...the Mexican drug lord...the President...the high school teacher...the neighbor...the cousin...the guy at church...you see, we may seem so different in so many ways, but there is one that connects us all and that is we all have sinned.

We all need the same thing- salvation in Jesus Christ. There is not one of us that does not need Jesus. Some won't admit it, some don't realize it, but we all have the same need-we need Jesus. We need His love. We need His grace. We need His lordship to guide us. We need His law to lead us. We need His help. We need Him to define our lives. We need Jesus. Every reader of this Jump Start is connected in this way. You need Jesus, as well as I do. None of us can say Biblically, "well, I certainly don't need Jesus."

Grasping this connection helps us. Everyone needs the gospel. Everyone needs to know about Jesus. Everyone needs to grow in Jesus. Everyone needs to develop a heart like Jesus. We are all in the same boat. There is no "class warfare" when it comes to salvation.

Imagine, every car you pass today is driven by someone who needs Jesus. Every adult you see today, is someone who needs Jesus. Some have Jesus. It shows. Some are so sweet that you might think, they don't need Jesus, but they do. Some are so mean, it's easy to assume that even Jesus wouldn't want them, but He does. Everyone on TV that you see today, needs Jesus. Everyone you read about in the newspaper today needs Jesus.

This is the message of Romans-we need Jesus. There is only one way to help everyone else, and it begins by helping ourselves. We must walk with Jesus, obey Jesus, love Jesus and be filled with His word. It starts with us. From that, share the message to all who will listen.

God only sees us in one of two ways, those in Jesus and those not. He doesn't focus upon the school we graduated from, the degree we have, the salary level we are at, the neighborhood we live in, the type of car we drive, the width of our TV screen...those things mean a lot to us, but not to God. Only, are you in Jesus or not?

That answer will be the basis of the choices you make today, the places you go, the attitudes you carry and where you spend eternity. In Jesus or not... Remember, today we are one day closer to Heaven.

