



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 # 465

Psalm 100:3 *“Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”*

This wonderful Psalm praises God for His goodness. It is delightful to read and easy to read, only five verses. Our verse recognizes ownership, possession and order. We belong to God. He made us. We are His people. This verse kicks evolution in the teeth. We didn't evolve this way through natural forces and selection, we were made by God.

Establishing that is important because it sets the tone for our relationship with God. We belong to Him...not He belongs to us. We can confuse the order and live as if God is ours instead of we are His. He does not owe us anything, nor does He have to come running at our every call.

So why is it that when we pray and we not see a response, we get upset with God? Why is it that when things become difficult we blame God? Why is it that we even say, “Why, God?” Have we forgotten the order?

Beyond those thoughts, there is something special about belonging to God. We are the sheep of His pasture, which reminds us of Ps 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” The concern of the shepherd was the wellbeing of the sheep. The shepherd had to know sheep, as well as grasses, and have an understanding of the dangers that lurked nearby. The sheep would eat wherever the shepherd led them. The best grasses were often in the hill country. To reach them meant going through canyons. This is where flash floods could happen in a flash. This is where many predators lurked in the shadows. The shepherd knew. He was watching. He was ready.

We remember the story of David as he tries to convince King Saul that he is capable of fighting Goliath, he tells the king that he rescued sheep from lions and bears, even pulling the hair on the lion's face to save a lamb. The work of shepherds was often dangerous. Shepherds also had to understand sheep. Sheep won't eat if they are bothered by bugs, especially in their

ears, or if there is tension within the flock. Shepherds have to deal with those things. Messy work.

God is our shepherd. We are His sheep. We must trust where He leads us. When He wants us to pasture on His word, we should. When He wants us to gather to praise, we should. When He wants us to rest, reflect, and grow, we should. He knows what is best for us. He knows we need to stay very close to Him, otherwise we tend to lose sight of God and go off on our own.

What a beautiful analogy that is drawn here. We are God's sheep. He is our shepherd. Following Him will lead us home where we need to be.

God understands you...He ought to, He made you. God knows what moves you, motivates you, hurts you, inspires you, and angers you. God knows you. What a comfort to know that someone really understands me. What a delight to know that He knows me and still loves me, wants me and cares for me.

That is our God. Simply, amazing!

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