



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)

September 22, 2013

Jump Start # 449

Ecclesiastes 3:2 *“A time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.”*

Our passage from Ecclesiastes is found in that wonderful section about time. Solomon gives us a series of couplets about time, "there is a time for every event under heaven" is how this all begins. The British group, the Byrds, put these words into a hit pop song in 1965.

There are two elements Solomon brings together here-first time. "There is a time..." We don't say that. It's the opposite with most of us-"there's not enough time," or, "I'm running short of time..." I'm late. I'm behind. Being late has found a niche in the greeting card industry, the "belated birthday card." There is a time. A time to be born and a time to die.

The second element Solomon brings is death. We are rarely ready for death-of anyone, especially, friends, family and self. He tells us there is a time.

There are three deaths that are on my mind. **One** was announced to the world yesterday, Steve Jobs, the brains and driving force behind Apple. He was a person of ideas that became reality that shaped and made the technological world available to most of us. What I see in Steve Jobs is a man who had ideas and he wasn't afraid to take a chance. Few of us will have the Apple touch like he did, but we learn from him that some worthwhile things involve chance, risk and believing in them. That's the stuff that makes differences in families, in churches and in our hearts. Fear always keeps the boat tied up to the dock. It's more than a foolhardy whim, it is thinking things out, thinking things through, praying about them and not fearing rejection nor that others don't see what you are seeing. How many of us and how many churches fail to dream big dreams, to pray big prayers, who fear trying things. Sure it's costly, risky, but the upside is unbelievable. I love dreamers. I love planners. If nothing changes in your habits, friends, and what you devote yourself to, you will be the way you are in five years. Yet, by doing things now, whether it's saving money, sticking to the diet, developing spiritual habits, growing deeper, you'll be better in five years. Are you keeping the boat tied to the dock?

A second death: his name is not widely known and it is becoming more and more forgotten by each generation. He died 100 years ago today. He was a college president, a professor, an author, but the hat he wore the best was a preacher. His name is John William McGarvey, known affectionately as, J.W. McGarvey. He died 100 years ago today in his beloved Lexington, KY home. His books, his sermons, his classes taught a generation the word of God. He fought the tide of liberalism that was sweeping the country. In his days churches were exploring the concept of using instrumental music-a departure from what the N.T. taught. McGarvey tried to keep brethren true to the primitive NT ways. His funeral, preached by a distant relative of mine, was held in a church building that used an organ. He would not have liked that. McGarvey's life illustrates that we all have battles to fight-some personal, some for God. Our influence fades with time-but the good that we do can affect future generations. You have battles you need to fight - some personal, some for God. The Lord needs you to stand against a new generation that wants change and has given up on the N.T. way. Using your influence makes a difference.

The third death was the greatest of all-it's the death of Jesus Christ. God sent His son to die-to die for Steve Jobs, to die for J.W. McGarvey and to die for us. We needed that death. That death changed eternity. As you walk with Jesus, you are shaping your eternity and showing others what is important.

Three deaths-three lives...there is a time. A time to be born and a time to die. I'm glad Steve Jobs did what he did-I love gadgets. I'm glad McGarvey did what he did-he showed that preachers and all of us need to remain true to the message. But I am thankful for our Lord and Savior-His life, His death, His resurrection, has given me a purpose, a plan and a place in eternity! There is a time...

Roger Shouse