



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 # 362

1 Corinthians 11:1 *“Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.”*

Our simple verse today illustrates an important principle that is sprinkled throughout the N.T. God wants us to follow Him, and God wants us to follow the pattern and example that is given by the apostles.

- The Ephesians were told, “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children” (5:1).

- The Romans were told, “...He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son...” (8:29).

- The Philippians were told, “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (4:9).

- Timothy was told, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

God wants us to follow the path He has blazed for us. Now this seems simply but it is hard for some to do this. Some have the spirit in them to be unique, to be different, to be original. They don't want to do what others are doing. That spirit may work in music or fashions, but it doesn't

work with God. He doesn't want us to discover new ways, new methods, new ideas. He wants us to "follow the leader," and 'not be the leader' when it comes to revealing truth.

There are some who are always looking for a new twist to the Scriptures, trying to find a new angle or a new insight. After 2,000 years, there isn't going to be anything new. Just follow the leader. The path of God leads home. The path of God leads us to righteousness. Some will call this traditionalism and they don't want to be caged in that, so they seek the "non-traditional" ways of doing things. A different way of worship...a different meaning to a passage...they are more interested in different than they are God. For these folks, different is a badge of spirituality. If you are not with them in the land of different, then you really aren't very spiritual. I wonder who made up that idea, God didn't.

Now, this doesn't mean what we do has to be stiff, dull and boring. Few things are more painful to the soul than a long, tedious, boring church service. I've been there. It is more enduring than it is praising. Let's get done is the hope of the audience. No, I'm not for that at all. God ought to stir our soul and spirit. We ought to sing with joy in our hearts. Our preaching needs to be passionate yet faithful to the text. Our classes should be challenging, insightful, practical and wonderful. Following God does not have to be lifeless, dull and absent of thought and mind.

Generally those who open the door to being different eventually quit following God. Oh, they'll claim to still love God and claim that they are following God in their own way, but that's just a fancy way of saying they are not following God. Our Lord said, "If you love me, you'll keep my commandments."

Follow the leader...that's what God wants. If you find yourself doing things that aren't in the Bible, you need to ask, "Who am I following?" and "why are we doing things that are not in the Bible?" Serious questions.

Imitate Paul. Imitate him in worship. Imitate him in righteousness. Paul is not the savior, Jesus is. Imitate Paul as he follows Christ. That's what he said. That's what God wants. Paul walked in God's ways. We are to put our feet into this footprints.

Follow the leader...are you doing that? You ought to!

Roger Shouse

