



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 # 1025

Matthew 23:8 “But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.”

Our passage comes from the beginning section of teachings concerning the shallow and empty faith that the Pharisees maintained. It was a religion of show and not substance. It was a religion that built walls that kept people from God. It was a religion that was not pleasing God and not the way God intended for them to be.

This opening section deals with religious titles which naturally creates a prideful hierarchy. These Pharisees loved the chief seats, the places of honor, and the respectful greetings in the market place. They loved attention. In a series of "do nots" Jesus pulls the rug out from under these attitudes. Jesus says:

- Do not be called Rabbi (v. 7)
- Do not call anyone Father (v. 9)
- Do not call anyone Teacher (v. 10)

The greatest, Jesus says, is the servant.

Our verse today shows the equality that Jesus expected among His disciples. He said, "You are all brothers." Equal. Level playing field. The same. No hierarchy. No boss among themselves. No head among themselves.

It is interesting that what Jesus established, the modern church has ignored. They have established, not by following the Bible, but by their own way of thinking, a "clergy-laity" distinction and hierarchy. Jesus wouldn't have any part with that. Titles show distinction and enhance differences. The clergy, it is thought, runs the church. The clergy, many believe, knows the Bible. The clergy says, and the laity does. Distinction. Different. Not the same. One better than the other.

Now what is really strange, the modern church will promote and defend the idea that we are not all brothers. Some are brothers and some are better than brothers. Some are brothers and some, a few, are clergy. Then, that same church that promotes a hierarchy, will have leadership conferences and seminars about equality among all humans. Stirring speeches will be given denouncing the inequalities in work, opportunities and finances, by those who hold themselves up as being different than the rest. What a joke. These modern spirits would never allow a commoner from the pew to speak on such a conference. No. Never. It must be the reverends, the doctors of divinity, the upper crust, who only are allowed to say something. The voice of the guy in the pew doesn't matter. His words are never heard. He is just a member. The clergy and the laity, to the moderns, are not the same. The clergy gets to park in special places at the hospital. The

clergy often does have to pay for parking. Everyone else, well they have to park far from the door, pay a fee and somehow believe that "we are all brothers." Really?

Jesus isn't like this. Not at all. He told the disciples, in an atmosphere of many religious titles, that you are all brothers. You call the same name, do the same work, and are the same. You have the same needs. You are going to the same place. There is no ladder to climb in God's kingdom. There is no improving your position. The work of elders is not a promotion. It is a work that is to be done. Moving from a small church to a larger church is not viewed as a promotion or moving up the ranks. Those things do not exist. We are all brothers.

We are all brothers. Therefore, I should never be afraid to ask for help. Some feel like that are too inferior to ever ask someone for help. Some feel that they don't deserve the help from others. Are we not all brothers? Are we not all the same? Ask. Don't be bashful to ask, "I need help." Or, "I need you to pray for me." Or, "I need you to help me understand something."

We are all brothers. Therefore, nothing is beneath my dignity in helping another. I'm not too good to lend a helping hand. The person I help, as Jesus did every time, may never be able to help me. That's ok. We are all in this together. We need each other. We are brothers.

We are all brothers. We need to act that way. We need to think that way. There is no pecking order among God's people. None of us are better than others. None of us are exempt from doing what the rest needs to do. There are no double standards-not with God.

Your prayers are just as powerful as the prayers of the preacher. Your insights into the Scriptures are just as helpful as the insights of others. We are all brothers. We need each other. We are there for each other. Together, arm in arm, we'll make it to Heaven.

We are brothers...

Roger Shouse