



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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2 Peter 3:1-2 "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."

In writing this letter, Peter focuses upon the things that the brethren already knew. Notice the words here: reminder, remember, beforehand. God is in the remembering business. The ark of the covenant contained three historical items that would remind Israel of God's care and guidance. The Passover feast was a reminder of what happened long ago in Egypt. When Israel crossed the Jordan River to go into the promise land, they were to pick up stones from the River bottom. Those stones served as a reminder. Each Sunday we take the Lord's Supper, which Jesus established with these words, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Remember.

Remembering is important to life. The husband that forgets his wedding anniversary is in trouble. I once scheduled out of town preaching events that happened to fall on Mother's Day and my wife's birthday the same year. She told me that I best not be out of town for our anniversary as well. We remember birthdays. We remember special events. "Remember the Alamo" is a famous expression that rallied the troops during a war. 9/11 now has a special remembrance to most of us.

Peter was telling the brethren that he was going to remind them. There are some things that we know but we forget. We need to be reminded. This tells us that not every class, not every sermon, not every article, will be something I didn't know. Some will be reminders. We need to be reminded.

Every generation needs to learn the things that many of us already know. We must be patient. Every generation needs to understand why things matter. They need to learn Bible authority. They need to have lessons about how the church operates and is governed. They need to learn about giving and worship. They need to learn about marriage and the home.

I have found most often, that when someone preaches on these subjects that I have heard many times, I still learn something. Each time I have found them to be very helpful to me. I have also found that sometimes we assume everyone knows things when they don't. I'm teaching a class entitled, "Hello, I am your Bible." It starts with the word "Bible." Our first class was spent looking at the table of contents and talking about why the books are in the order that they are and things like that. Simple stuff. Things everyone knows. Wrong. Many said that they had never had a class like that. Many were taking notes and asking questions. Reminders for some of us, will be new things to others.

Those of us that teach, it helps to realize that not everyone knows the books of the Bible. Not everyone knows much about the Bible. The stories that we think everyone knows, some don't. So, teachers, don't skip the details. Don't go so fast that it isn't understood. On any given Sunday, in a growing congregation, there may be people who are there for the very first time. They may never have been in a church building before. They may have heard of the Bible but are afraid of it or have preconceived ideas that no one can understand it. Your job teacher, is to teach God's word. Make it plain. Make it simple. Take the time, make the effort to help everyone see and understand. Explain words. Make it interesting, make it relevant, make it practical.

Remember. There are times that we especially need this. When a loved one has passed away, we need to remember what the Bible teaches about death and what happens after death. Those are those powerful lessons. While the sun is shining, we don't take those lessons to heart. It's in the darkness of the night that we wonder and we want to know.

When a marriage is falling apart is a time to remember what God says about such things. We forget.

When a friend asks us a question, it is a time to remember how to answer and what the answer ought to be.

When the bottom seems to drop out, it is a time to remember that God still cares and God is still upon the throne. We forget. We need to remember.

So, be patient with the teachers that return to familiar topics. Don't sigh and make them feel bad. Rejoice that they are doing that. Encourage them. Help them but adding constructive comments that build upon what they are teaching. It's not the time to be cute and silly. It's not the time to play the devil's advocate. The devil has too many advocates. It's time to be the Lord's advocate.

Encourage teacher to return to the basics. We need them. Let the teachers know that you'd like to hear a lesson again about the fundamentals. Help the teacher be a reminder. This is part of his work.

Roger Shouse

