



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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May 25, 2014

Jump Start # 1051

Mark 3:5 "After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored."

Our passage today comes from the healing of the withered hand. This took place in a synagogue. It was on a Sabbath day. The place was a buzzing with the thought of whether or not Jesus would dare heal this man on the Sabbath. Some were ready to pounce on Jesus. We wonder if the man was planted there as a trap. It seems that the Pharisees didn't have any problem using people to get to Jesus. This would not be the only time they did something like that. The man with the withered hand is called forward by Jesus. Everyone is watching. Instead of immediately healing him, Jesus asked a question, not to the man, but to the crowd bent on accusing Him. The question was about the Sabbath. He asked if it was lawful to do good or harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill? It was a loaded question. Jesus knew. He was ready to save a life and do good, even on the Sabbath. The twisted Pharisees were set to do harm and even kill on the Sabbath. The question revealed the polar opposites between Jesus and these Pharisees.

The crowd didn't answer Jesus. They kept silent. Their hearts were made up. There was no turning them. Jesus healed the crippled hand and the Pharisees left plotting how they could destroy Jesus.

Our verse shows Jesus' reaction to their stubborn hearts. He looked around at them with ANGER. Jesus mad? You don't hear many talking about that these days. The impression some leave us with is that Jesus was always smiling, even at disrespect and sin. Jesus was always handing out flowers. They forget about the two times he flipped tables over and drove some out of the temple who were taking advantage of people. An angry Jesus doesn't fit into the theology of many moderns. They ignore passages like this, hoping that no one will notice. The Jesus of many people, didn't care what people thought, did or said. He just loved everything and everybody. This modern version of Jesus stands for nothing, has no backbone and is without conviction. Mostly, it is not supported by Scripture and not the impression one has from reading the Bible. Modern books have reshaped Jesus into an image that offends no one. That's not the Jesus of the Bible.

Jesus was angry. Some thoughts:

1. Verses are intended to connect together. Jesus was angry, yet Jesus never sinned. The conclusion is that anger itself is not a sin, but it can lead to sin. This is why Paul said, "Be angry; and yet do not sin." He did not say, "Do not be angry." Sin invites the Devil. Anger can and often leads to angry words, angry thoughts, angry actions. Violence comes from angry hearts. Vengeance is fueled by anger. In anger, we often say things that we regret later. Not Jesus. He never sinned even though He was angry.

2. The things that angered Jesus were faith based. Our story shows the closed minded Pharisees using a crippled man to get to Jesus. They didn't care about him. Their motive was to destroy Jesus. They did not have an open mind. They were not willing to look at what Jesus was doing and definitely were not willing to listen to what He was saying. Sometimes, often times, we get angry at shallow and superficial things that do not matter in the big picture of things. Our team loses a ball game and we get so mad. We get angry at politicians. The way people drive angers us. Our favorite TV show gets canceled and we get angry. There is a long line at the check out and we get angry. Our food is slow getting to our table or it's cold and we get angry. We get mad at prices. We get mad at flights delayed. We get angry at the weather. We get angry at the weather man. Some get angry at church. If the preacher says something just a bit too close for comfort, they leave in a huff. Have you noticed how angry so many people are? A lot of music today is angry. The movies are angry. The things that really matter, seem to go unnoticed. No one seems angry about abortion. Redefining marriage seems to be ok with far too many people. Jesus was angry. He was angry because the crowd was missing the point. He was angry because people were being misled by the Pharisees. He was angry because they refused to believe in Him. What more could He do? He told them. He showed them. He proved it. He connected the dots from the O.T. to Him. Evidence upon evidence showed that He was God's chosen Messiah. He was God on earth. They, like a three year old, with his hands over his ears, refused to listen. This angered Jesus. His anger did not cause Him to strike the Pharisees. He did not open up the earth and swallow them, though He could have. He did not sit them on Pluto for a couple of hours, though He could have. He was angry, but He didn't do anything mean, wrong or ugly to them.

3. Jesus was angry, yet He stayed the course. How easily He could have shot up to Heaven and declared, 'I'm through with those people. They won't believe in Me, I'm done.' He didn't. He continued to do miracles demonstrating who He was. He continued to teach. He continued on to the Cross. Jesus stayed the course. That's a lesson for us. Sometimes in our anger, we quit. We quit marriages, church, work, life-because someone upset us. We declare that we can't work with THOSE people. Jesus did. We claim how can we continue on when some have it in for us-Jesus did. We use the failures of others as a reason for us to stop what we ought to be doing. Jesus didn't do that.

4. Jesus continued to love those who had hard hearts. Love and anger are not opposite choices. Jesus had both. His blood would cleanse the sins of those hard headed Pharisees if they believed. Jesus did not make a declaration that He would from that time forward not die for any Pharisee. No. In fact, later on, one was chosen as an apostle. His name is Paul. Jesus died for him. Jesus chose him as an apostle. Jesus included him. Parents understand this. We can be angry and at the same time, still love our child. Their rebellion angers us. However, we love them dearly and would do anything for them.

Now, the piercing thought: We know that God loves us. There are tons of verses that show that. Has God ever been angry with you? Have you thought about that? God was so angry with the people in Noah's day, that He declared enough and ended the human existence other than Noah and his

family. What about you? Has God been angry with you? Doubt you have heard a sermon on that one before. It's a thought we don't want to chase. Why would God be angry with you? Why was Jesus angry with the Pharisees? Lack of faith. Stubborn. Using people. Refusing to listen. Rejecting Him. Sin. Hardened heart. There's a list. That hits most of us. Angry with us, but not giving up on us. Angry with us, and holding out for us to change and believe. Angry with us, yet keeping the door to Heaven opened for us.

Sometimes when we are angry with someone, we are through with them. They are "de-friended" on Facebook. We take their number off of our phone. We cut all contact with them. We are angry and we want nothing to do with them. Not God. In His anger, He still wants you. He still loves you. He still wants you to come home, as the prodigal did.

Jesus was angry. It makes me sorry for the times I've made God disappointed and angry with me. It makes me want to please Him even more. It makes me thankful for grace and forgiveness. It makes me realize what a precious gift salvation is.

How about you?

Roger Shouse
