



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 # 1082

1 Kings 3:25 *"The king said, 'Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.'"*

Our verse today is a demonstration of the great wisdom that God gave Solomon. The Lord allowed Solomon to make a wish and the Lord would grant him that. Solomon chose wisdom. That impressed the Lord. He didn't ask for wealth or long life, which would have been typical responses.

Immediately, Solomon is put in a situation which called upon him to use that gift from God. Two harlots, living together, delivered babies within three days of each other. One baby died by a tragic accident, the mother rolled on it while she was sleeping. In the night she switched babies. The next morning the other woman recognized that the dead baby placed at her side was not her baby. They must have argued about it. They go to the king to settle this. They both claim the living baby. Our verse is Solomon's solution. Split the baby and let each have a half. The true mother prevailed. She would rather give up the child as to see him killed. Solomon knew. Justice prevailed.

There are interesting things about this story.

1. One woman had no problem honestly lying to the king. People are like that. God included bearing false witness as one of the "Thou shalt not's" of the Ten Commandments. Lying, Proverbs tells us, is one of the things God hates. Solomon was a righteous king at this point. A dishonest harlot stands before a righteous king and wants things to be swayed her way. People will lie to the police. They lie to judges. The desire to get what one wants or to save one's own neck, will lead a person to lie to anyone, including God.

People are not like Pinocchio. Our noses do not grow when we fib. It's hard to tell who is honest and who is lying. Parents must deal with this when their kids tattle on each other. One tells the truth, the other doesn't. Sadly, shepherds in God's church are often lied to. Dishonest Christians will try to make up things to cover their wrong steps and make themselves look better than what they are. Some have no problem lying.

2. Solomon allowed time to think. He had each woman tell her story. He listened. He thought. He relied upon his wisdom. Gathering information and facts is important before a decision is made. We can be fooled by appearances, deceived by friendships, or be held loyal to someone because of favors they have done in the past. All those things can cloud our judgment. They can close our eyes to what really is happening. The dishonest harlot was a thief. She stole the other woman's baby. Her character caught up with her.

Making a decision too quickly can lead to the wrong decision. Take time. Think and pray things out. Ask questions. Listen carefully.

3. The context of this passage leads us to believe that Solomon didn't know which woman was telling the truth. He didn't know. So, dividing the baby would reveal the true mother. It was a trick. It worked. The heart of the real mother came forth.

His wisdom didn't reveal which woman was the rightful mother. His wisdom led to a decision that revealed the answer. The book of James tells us to pray for wisdom. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. Wisdom without a foundation of knowledge won't help you. Knowledge without wisdom isn't any better. A person may be smart, but if his intelligence doesn't help him, what use is that? But combined, knowledge with wisdom, a person learns to walk with God.

Knowledge comes from studying God's word. Reading and thinking about what you read. It comes from looking at words. It comes from asking questions and digging beneath the surface. It's a real treasure hunt. Wisdom then takes that information and puts it in your heart. Without wisdom, facts are stale and dry like a college lecture after lunch. With wisdom, the information comes alive. It becomes useful, helpful and changes you. We work at getting the knowledge. We pray for the wisdom.

When you read, especially the Gospels, put yourself there. See it. Live it. Take the words of Jesus, as if He was saying them to you. In fact, He IS saying those to you. This process molds you, shapes you and helps you become more and more like Christ. This is how Christ lives in you. This is how you are led by the Spirit. It is your heart being influenced by the word of God and making application every day. Careful thought is given to the words you use, the choices you make, the attitudes you carry, the places you go, who you hang out with, what you do. Application. It's knowledge put into action. It is wisdom.

Without wisdom, Solomon would have fumbled his decision and the woman with the loudest voice most likely would have gotten the child. Without wisdom, we make decisions based upon emotions, or what ever is the easiest thing to do. Those are not always the best choices. Our decisions can be swayed by friends, not what is right. Our decisions can be made to hush up a whining child, not what is right.

Pray for wisdom. Have you done that in a while? You need wisdom. You need knowledge to feed that wisdom. It's not one or the other, it's both.

It's good to start today. Take a moment and pray before you make that phone call, have that meeting, send that email, or have a talk with the kids. Pray for wisdom. Pray for right words. Pray for clear thinking. Pray for listening ears. Pray for honest hearts. Pray for insight. Pray for the right decision.

I expect if we did that more, our decisions would turn out better. Invite God into your life. Include Him. Go to the King, but be honest when you do. He knows.

Roger Shouse

