



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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Matthew 14:31 *“Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”*

Our passage today comes from that powerful miracle when Jesus walked upon the water. The disciples were in the boat, ordered by Jesus to cross to the other side. Jesus remained and prayed. A severe storm caught them. They were battered by the waves. Jesus came walking. It was dark. The wind was fierce. And the disciples saw someone coming. He's on the water. They thought it was a ghost. They were afraid. Fighting the waves, now they were fighting their fears. What would they do? They cried out and found out that it was the Lord. He was walking on the water. Peter, wanting to verify things, asked to walk out to Him. Jesus said, "Come." Peter started walking on the water. Understand this wasn't a calm lake on a sunny afternoon. It was a stormy night. It was dark. It took tons of faith to even ask what Peter did. He got out of the boat. He saw the winds and waves and started to sink. His faith had already sunk before this. Immediately, the word used so often with the miracles of Jesus, the Lord's hand was stretched out and He took hold of Peter.

Then our verse comes. You of little faith-an expression used at least four times in Matthew. The Lord was disappointed in Peter. He had hoped more from him.

Disappointment is part of life. It is often hard to deal with. People let us down and they disappoint us. This happens at work. This happens in the church. This even happens in the family. Promises are made and broken. People don't get nor understand what you think they should. There is a set back in the relationship, sometimes, because of the disappointment, the relationship takes a major hit. It's hard to recover after the disappointment. Sometimes it is the beginning of the end. The marriage starts to unravel. It's time to start thinking about a new job. For some, it's time to find another congregation. It's hard to deal with things when you are disappointed.

We notice, from Jesus, that He didn't give up on the apostles. There would be more disappointments. There would be more failures on their part. The Lord never replaced them. He never stopped and said, "This isn't working." He stayed with them. He taught and taught and showed and showed. With God's help, they finally got it. It took time. It took a mountain of patience on the Lord's part.

(OVER)

We do well to learn from Jesus, but it's hard. Disappointment can be a knife in our heart. The knife can be pulled out and in time the wound healed, but there remains a scar. There is always that ugly scar that reminds us. It's a hard decision to know when to hang in and when to leave. It's hard to know if people are ever going to get it or not. Human nature is so different than divine nature. Sometimes we may give up too soon on others. Sometimes we just grow weary and impatient and can not endure another set back, another disappointment. It gets to the point where our hearts are not in it any longer. That's tough to recover from.

For Peter it was faith. Getting that strong faith in the Lord. The Lord believed in him and wanted him. Those patient times were necessary for Peter to become what the Lord wanted.

Parents face this. Your teenagers will disappoint you. It's hard. You teach and teach and wonder if they will ever get it. Paul faced this with the Galatians. He wondered out loud if what he was doing was in vain. Was it doing any good? They had disappointed him. They were going backwards and not forwards. It would be nice if we could take a break, fall back, regroup and charge back into the scene with more energy, hope and enthusiasm. But too many situations you can't do that. A parent can't take time off. The kids need parenting now. A marriage can't take time off. Most can't take time off from work. So when those disappointments come, prayer, sticking to what is right and staying with it must be the answer. It's the only answer. Disappointments can be such a major set back. They can take the wind out of the sails. Walking away can seem so attractive. But that's not the answer.

Unless something positive turns, the disappointed feels trapped. They are trapped in a marriage that makes them miserable. They are trapped in a job that they are no longer satisfied with. Trapped is a terrible place to be. Hope runs thin when one feels trapped. Desperation and discouragement follow quickly when one feels like they are in a corner. Trapped is a terrible place to be.

Jesus never felt this way with the apostles. He wasn't trapped. He saw hope and change and a bright future. The key was not waiting on them to get it together, but Jesus taking the lead. He taught. He led. He illustrated. He showed. Jesus, in doing this, turned His disappointment around.

What great lessons there are for us. Monday mornings are hard for some. They must head to a job they do not feel good about. Sundays can be that way for some. Heading to a congregation that they do not feel good about. Taking the example from Jesus, taking the lead, find ways to turn things around. If that cannot be done, then it may be time to move on.

Disappointments...they happen all time. We must learn what to do with them.

Roger Shouse

