



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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1 Corinthians 15:58 *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Paul's words to the Corinthians is such an encouraging and motivating thought. He loved them. He wanted them to hold their ground. He want them to keep keeping on with the Lord. He wanted them to realize that what they were doing was important and not a waste of time. Good was being done. Many sermons have been built around these encouraging words.

A question comes to mind from these verses-How does a person keep doing what the Lord wants? How do we keep from going back to our old ways and our old habits? Throughout Paul's writings the contrast between the old man and the new man in Christ is presented. Language such as "put off the old man," and, "put on the new" is sprinkled throughout the New Testament. This is much more than simply coming to Christ for the first time. These thoughts are addressed to those who are already Christians.

In sports, the expression, "Monday morning quarterback," is used to describe one who second guesses the plays on Sunday. On Monday, the mistakes are seen. On Monday, the game would have been played differently. How about us on Monday morning? How about the "Monday morning saint?" We sit in worship, singing powerful songs, listening to moving sermons but then Monday comes and it's off to school, work and a busy world. How do we keep the message of Sunday alive on Monday? How do we take the things we have learned in a quarter of classes and make them a part of our spiritual DNA?

Paul wondered about this on a grander scale. He thought that his work with the Galatians was in vain. They were moving backward and not forward. They had been influenced by prejudiced teachers and were convinced that what they were doing wasn't the right way to go. Paul's work seemed to be falling apart with them.

So, how do we keep things going? How do we take the message of Sunday and make it real for Monday? Fair questions to ask. It does little good if our spirituality dies the moment we walk out of the church building. If our attitudes, behavior and thinking isn't being refined and renewed in Christ, then something isn't right. Why go for one day if it really doesn't change anything? I heard a preacher years ago referring to sermons as a "spiritual spanking." We get our weekly dose of guilt and then return to the very things that causes the guilt. This isn't the way it should be. Honesty tells us that something is wrong with this picture.

(OVER)

What's the answer? The preacher and church services can only do so much. They have a part. Sermons need to be relevant and useful to our lives. Facts and theories do not work much on a Monday morning. Jesus was practical. His words were simple, yet deep. Using that model, people need to know how to live on a Monday morning. Life isn't lived in a church building, but in neighborhoods, and work places, and schools and stores. Not everyone smiles because we smile. Not everyone believes in Jesus. Not everyone wants to do right. Not everyone is interested in being a servant. Selfish, sinful, rude and opinionated, is the world we live in. How do we live in that world? Yes, sermons have a part in all of this.

However, the biggest part in all of this lies with self. It is not up to the church, but up to me, to take the message and find my application to my world. It is up to me to have faith and to grow in Christ. It is easy to point fingers at the church, but come Monday morning, where is my faith? I have an obligation in all of this. It is up to me to have a relationship with the Lord that is real and genuine. It is up to me to feed my faith and to fight my battles against Satan. The key to keeping what happens on Sunday alive, is for me to drink the message deeply into my soul and then to believe it myself. If it is right, then I need to start living that way.

Between Sunday and Monday what I learned and what I now believe become convictions. Changes begin to take place. Maybe my Monday morning routine changes. Maybe I make adjustments about what clothes I will be wearing Monday morning. Maybe I put some distance between me and those that pull me away from that Sunday message. Maybe I plug in some spiritual activity on Monday that will guide my heart and my thinking. I might listen to some hymns. I might say some prayers. I might meditate upon what was taught on Sunday. I might read through a few of the verses the preacher used. Reminders. That helps keep things going.

What happens each Sunday can get us stronger and closer to the Lord, or it can simply dry up and blow away, to be forgotten and to leave us unchanged. So today, Monday morning, in the midst of your busy, busy day, implant Sunday. Keep Sunday from going away. Remember the songs. Remember the Lord's Supper. Remember the lesson. Remember the fellowship. Remember how right, good and strong you felt yesterday. This effort, this exercise, will also keep Satan at length. You are establishing some blockades to keep him away. You are building faith.

Don't try to live your lifetime today. Get through today. Do something worthwhile today. Honor God today. Bring glory to God today. When Monday ends, thank the Lord. Next comes, Tuesday. Here we go again. But we build upon Sunday and Monday now. And on and on. Faith building. Laying a foundation upon the rock. Protecting against coming storms. Making the work of the Lord useful and helpful and not in vain.

We all need this. I hope this helps. Even preachers who preach the message must deal with Monday mornings.

Roger Shouse

