



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)

October 18, 2014

Jump Start # 1192

Mark 6:3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters with us?" And they took offense at Him."

Our verse is about Jesus going back home to Nazareth where He grew up. He was born in Bethlehem, but grew up in the Galilean village of Nazareth. Going home-it's said once you leave, things are not the same since you left. You go back and look at the house you grew up in. As a child, that yard and the house seemed so big. Now as an adult, you realize that it wasn't all that large. The old home town changes when you come back. Stores close. New roads are built. Neighbors move out. In some ways it looks the same, but in many ways it's different. It will never be the same again. Jesus wasn't received well at Nazareth. He wasn't the local boy who did well. There wasn't parades in His honor. He was not the war hero that everyone loved. In fact, it was the opposite. His reception was about as bad as it could be. The crowds questioned where He got such wisdom. The text later tells us that He could only do a few miracles there. And our verse illustrates the magnitude of the problem when "they took offense at Him." He offended them. They were embarrassed by Him. They didn't like what He was saying and doing. They wished that He would stop. Just go back and be the regular Jesus that we grew up with. Be normal like the rest of us. These teachings, these signs, these grand claims, that He was the chosen one, that was preposterous to them. They knew Jesus, at least they thought they did. He was the local carpenter. They had purchased tables and chairs that He made. They waved to Him as He walked down the street. He left and now He's back. He's different. They didn't like this different Jesus.

Our verse tells us several things.

First, our verse tells us that Mary had other children. Their names are listed here. She had a lot of kids. The belief that Mary was always a virgin is disputed by this evidence. It is odd that Jesus is called the "son of Mary." Generally, the father's name was listed. It is thought that by this time Joseph had passed away.

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Second, they were offended by Jesus. Instead of being amazed at His teaching, instead of being thankful for His healing, they were offended. Offended by Jesus. The Jesus who never said anything wrong, nor who had to apologize, who never sinned. They didn't like this Jesus. The Messiah they thought would be like King David of old. Jesus wasn't like that. They knew this Jesus. He was one of them. David had armies. David would ride a horse. There would be banners waving, trumpets blowing, and people would line the streets to catch a glimpse of the passing king. That's what these people were looking for and hoping for. Jesus didn't fit the bill.

People are still offended by Jesus. He doesn't fit the bill for modern times. Folks are looking for a great guy who will wink at their sins. They are looking for a buddy. They want a Jesus to bail them out of trouble, and then leave them alone to do what they want. They want a Jesus who will let them do whatever they want to be happy. A happy, happy, happy Jesus is what folks want. And some churches today provide that. They will only preach part of the message of Jesus. Like a cafeteria, the best pieces are picked out and the rest are avoided. World famous Joel Osteen proudly admits that he never uses the word sin. Jesus did. A poll of many influential preachers in this country revealed that most of them have not preached on the subject of Hell in decades. Many no longer even believe in Hell. Jesus did. Touchy subjects such as same-sex marriage and divorce are avoided and not talked about. Give the people what they want is the theme in far too many churches today. The customer is always right may be a great thought for a store, it stinks when it comes to a church. What about Jesus? Have we left Him outside the door? Years ago when a person was sworn in court, they had to promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It's the WHOLE TRUTH, that some churchmen have left out. They don't tell the whole truth.

Offended. Offended by the message. Offended by what God expects. Offended by the commitment God wants. Offended by the righteous life God wants. Offended. This is true. You can't live like a sinner and die like a saint. Won't happen.

So what happens to you and I when we come across some principles in the Bible that smack us. What do we do when we see that we are not lining up with the word of God? What happens when we see that what we are doing isn't right according to the Bible? Do we find a loophole? Do we just ignore those verses? Do we change our ways? Do we walk away from Jesus, offended? It will happen. It will happen because we are not where we ought to be with God. If we were, then Jesus would not have been needed to come to the cross. We need God. We need God on His terms and in His ways.

There will be Bible passages that make you uncomfortable. Truth does that to a person. Guilt has a place in our lives. That guilt will lead you to either change your ways or it will lead you to walk away offended. The honest and good heart will be shaped, molded and changed by the word of God. It seeks to please God. It longs to be right with God.

Being a preacher, I'm told that I'm in the toe stepping business. It's not pleasant to make people uncomfortable. But when it produces that faithful and righteous living it is. No one gets their toes stepped on more than the preacher himself. He knows. If he listens to himself, he'll be changing along with everyone else.

Offended...what a shame. They missed the greatest opportunity, Jesus. Their closed hearts and narrow ways kept Jesus from making an impact with them.

Don't let that happen to you. You'll get your toes stepped on. That's ok. You need that. Just thank the preacher, and then thank the Lord and get about making adjustments in your life.

Roger Shouse

