



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)

November 2, 2014

Jump Start # 1213

John 14:2 *"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."*

Our passage begins a long section of dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. The end was near and He understood that. They didn't. There were many things to talk about. Our verse today reveals that Jesus was going away and in the next verse, He tells them that He will come again to take them where He is.

A few thoughts here:

First, in some of the older translations, the expression "many mansions" is used. It took me a while to get that ironed out in my thinking. The idea from many mansions is that we will each have our own "estate." I'll have my mansion behind a tall iron gate, you'll have yours, behind another iron gate and we will line the streets of Heaven with mansion after mansion. When my wife and I were first married, we were so poor, but we'd dream. We'd dream of that mansion in Heaven. In fact, we even drove around the wealthy estates in Indianapolis, I'd say, "my mansion will be like that one." A little later, she'd find one she'd like and proclaim, "My mansion will be like that." It was a lot of fun and dreaming for us back then. Later I learned that the passage and the principles of Heaven do not allow separation. I won't be behind my gate and you won't be behind your gate, rather, we'll be together. Fellowship demands togetherness. We'll be around the throne of God, together. A better reading of that passage is, "In my Father's house are many rooms..." We are in one room now. When we die, we simply leave one room and go into another room. We are still in the same house. Folks in one room can't see those in the other room, but we are all still in the same house. I like that idea. I like to think that dear brethren are simply in the other room. Remaining in the same house, God's house, brings thoughts of love, acceptance and fellowship.

Second, this passage shows us that Jesus doesn't keep secrets. We do. He doesn't. If it were not so, our passage says, "I would have told you." In essence, I don't tell you things that are not so. I do not make things up. I do not stretch nor exaggerate things. I do not keep secrets. If it wasn't that way, I would tell you. Jesus told us all things. We don't do that. We hide behind nice masks and pretend all things are well, when they are not. We tell people what we think they want to hear. We tell them things so that they will like us. One of the worst is lying in church. A guy sleeps through a sermon

and then tells the preacher at the door, "Great sermon." Really? One of these days I just may ask a guy who does that, which point he liked the best. Jesus told us all things. There are no surprises. We know what we must do to please God. We know. We know what we must do to go to Heaven. We know. He's told us. We know what's coming. We know what will happen to the earth. We know what will happen to us. We have been told all things. There is no need to speculate, guess or walk in darkness. What a blessing this is. What a benefit this is. God shares. God tells.

Thirdly, Jesus was leaving to prepare a place. That phrase also was fuzzy in my mind. I saw Jesus making beds, sweeping floors, dusting- doing all the things we do before company comes. We get things ready. When the family comes for the holidays, our house is prepared. We've stocked up on food, we've polished the place and we are ready for them to show up. Some how I saw Jesus doing that. It's a nice idea, but it doesn't fit with the concept of Heaven. Where Jesus was going was Heaven, but immediately, it was Jerusalem. Specifically it was to the Cross. That's the preparation that had to be done. We can't go to His place until there is a way to get there. We sing, "The way of the cross leads home..." That's it. That's it, exactly. Jesus had to go to the cross so we could be with Him. Without the cross, we aren't invited. Without the cross, our sins get in the way. Without the cross, there is no Heaven, not for us. Where Jesus went, wasn't to dust Heaven, He went to die on the cross.

That was the preparation. It had been prophesied for centuries. It was the hope of Heaven. Now it was time. Jesus was going to the cross so you and I could be with Him. It was a heavy price that He paid. It shows how much we really want to be there. It shows that there is nothing that He wouldn't do to help us get there.

God really loves you. God thinks about you all the time. One author wrote, if there was a refrigerator in Heaven, and I doubt there is, God would have your picture right there on it. It's amazing how busy I can get doing nothing important, and not think about God, yet there is hardly a moment, if ever, that He isn't thinking about me.

Jesus was opening the door to Heaven for us. He was making preparations. This tells us that we also need to be making preparations. We need to get ourselves ready. We need to be thinking more of the eternal than the present. We need to make choices that have an eye on Heaven. We need to be more spiritual in our hearts and in our attitudes. God must be first in all things.

Someday, we are through with this place. Someday, we will be in the eternal. Everything will be different. Jesus has done His part. God is busy doing His part. The Holy Spirit is doing His part. Now, are you doing your part? God won't take you to Heaven without some effort on your part. It starts with opening that Bible and reading about the Lord who loves you and has told you all things. It begins with faith. It doesn't end with faith. No, a changed life, a living hope, having an eye on Heaven, living righteously-those are on our end of things. That's what we must do.

We are one day closer to Heaven. Aren't you glad!

Roger Shouse