



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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Proverbs 7:6-8 *“For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, and I saw among the naïve, and discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense, passing through the street near her corner; and he takes the way to her house”*

Our passage begins the sad eyewitness to a wreck. I've seen different kinds of wrecks before, but what unfolds in the next few verses are the worst kind of wreck, a moral wreck. A young man is about to make a huge mistake. The section ends by saying, "it will cost him his life." It is a sad and sinful departure from God into lustful sexual immorality. This scene is repeated everyday in our country. It is glorified and viewed as entertainment by a sin-sick society that drinks everything Hollywood produces. It's a sad picture.

However, today, I want to talk about the opposite. It's not found in these verses but it's the glorious message of the saving Gospel of Christ. Because yesterday, I saw among the wise, a young man making an incredible choice to give his life to Christ. With tears in his eyes, which were shortly joined by tears in the congregations eyes, a young man with an honest and good heart, responded to the powerful preaching of God's word. This young man was baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins. He joins the thousands, worldwide who unashamedly bow their knees to Jesus. His love for Christ and his desire to be right and do right led him to the open arms of our Savior.

You won't hear about this story in the news. No, we hear about drunken college students causing a riot. We hear about fights at a high school football game. We hear about binge drinking on campuses and young people killing others in drunk driving accidents. This young man is pulling away from a culture that has no place for God. A culture that thinks it has outgrown God and is smarter than God and is demonstrating by it's foolish choices that it knows nothing. This young man is different. He is interested in going a different direction. He is interested in the things spiritual.

He was baptized, immersed into Christ as the Bible teaches. His submission to God and his obedient heart led him to that. Too many balk at baptism. Read the Bible. It's there. It's plain. It's simple. After the resurrection, without exception, everyone, and I mean everyone, that wanted to be saved, was baptized into Christ. Start in Acts 2 and follow it. All through Acts. It's in Romans. It's in Corinthians. It's in Ephesians. It's even in Revelation. Washed. Buried. Baptized. Sins removed. Raised new. Put on the new man. Crucified the old self. Those running themes are everywhere in the N.T. It's time folks stopped listening to their prejudiced preachers and opened the Bibles. Just read.

You'll see it. Don't hang your hat on the thief on the cross. He was begging for salvation. He'd do anything. If he was in your shoes, he'd be baptized. Jesus wasn't dead. He wasn't resurrected yet. The law had not changed yet. AFTER the resurrection, everyone was baptized who wanted forgiveness and Heaven. Not one exception. None. Don't listen to "water salvation," or "you're earning your salvation," hype. Really? It's not water, it's Jesus that saves. Had Jesus said, learn a language, we'd do that. He's in charge. He's the forgiver. Had He said walk a mile, we'd walk a mile. He DID say be baptized. He told the apostles to preach that and they did. Everywhere they went, they preached that. And yet some preachers today, who have graduated from seminaries that do not even believe God wrote the Bible, are telling folks you don't have to do that. Really? What memo did they read that changed that? More likely, what have they been smoking lately? Just read the Bible. Humble and broken hearts, like that young man last evening, respond to the preached word of God, repent and are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Just as the Bible says. When folks claim that they are saved without being baptized, they have no support of Scripture to stand behind them. It's just a hope. It's crossing the fingers. It's not what God said. Your faith, if it's real, will move you to do what the Bible says. And that Bible will tell you to be baptized and walk with Christ. It's there. Read it.

Now, if you haven't done this, why? Why don't you want to do what Jesus told you to do? Why don't you want to obey what the Bible says? Why not?

A young man gives his life to Christ. What a blessed scene that is. His choices, his friends, his outlook will all be shaped by that decision. With his great family, he'll grow and serve the Lord in grand fashion. The old Gospel still works. It always has. There is nothing broken about it.

Maybe it's time some of us just got back to doing what the Bible says and stop accepting the junk that churches are doing today. The fun and games, and shallow messages, and playtime that dominates far too many places don't cut it. Not with God and not at home. We need that real Gospel message. Our marriages need it. Our families need it. We need to be servants that forgive. We need to see the ugliness of sin and stop flirting with the Devil. We need to see that you can't mix the Gospel message with the Hollywood message. They don't fit. It won't work. We need to see that God wants all of our hearts, every day of the week, not just an hour on Sunday. Greed, indifference and a lack of Biblical understanding are killing this generation.

But yesterday, I saw a young man. With tears in his eyes, he said 'yes,' to Jesus. His choice made Heaven sing. I don't know if angels "high-five," but if they do, they were sure doing it last night. He's one more that Satan doesn't get. He's one more that God can count on. His choice reminded all of us, that God's way is right. It reminded us that we do love God. It reminded us that we need to pick up the pace and stay on the journey.

Thank you, Brian. So happy for you and your family. Your choice reminds us that God's way is still right and always the best. You have helped us.

And now, for the rest of us, whose side are you on? Isn't it time to get serious about God? Isn't time to stop dating God and get about doing what He says? Isn't it time to simply do what the Bible says-as a church, as a family, as an individual? Isn't it time to say, "God, you can count on me?" Sin isn't funny. Wrong will never be right. Millions may laugh their way to eternal punishment, but the faithful of God will continue to march on to Heaven.

I have decided to follow Jesus...how about you?

Roger Shouse

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