



# THE EXHORTER

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*“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](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Starts # 1229

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**Mark 12:37** *“David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?’ And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.”*

Our verse today comes from a setting in the Temple. Jesus was teaching. Twice He asked a question. The first time, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?" Then He quotes David saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand." Then the second question, our verse, "So in what sense is He his son?"

Tough questions. Jesus didn't answer it. He wanted them to think. He wanted them to work things out in their minds. This wasn't a question of trivia. This wasn't who can stump who. This question had everything to do with Jesus. Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the son of David. How can He be the son of David? The answer had to do with prophecy, position and understanding Jesus.

What I want to see from this verse is the expression, "And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him." The crowd was large and the crowd liked listening to what was being said. Those are the dreams of every public speaker—a large crowd that enjoys listening to what is said.

There are two central thoughts: The speaker and the listeners.

First, the speaker, Jesus

1. What Jesus said was interesting. He wasn't boring. He didn't use a bunch of stale facts and dry statistics. He didn't repeat things that they already knew. He made them think. He challenged them. He got them using their brains. Jesus was fresh. You can take a serious topic and make it inviting and interesting. People enjoyed listening to Jesus because He had something worthwhile to say. He wasn't screaming at the audience. He wasn't destroying them mentally.

The speaker has a responsibility to make things interesting. Preaching is communicating. The person that studies that, learns people and understands the importance of word selection, tone inflections, rhythm, the use of questions, illustrations, length, organization of thought, will do well. On top of that, the topic must be interesting. Jesus was the master teacher. He was interesting. What He said was interesting. Bored preachers, teaching boring topics in a boring manner, kills the audience. They can assume the audience just isn't interested, but the reality may be that they simply are not interesting. Work on that. Learn. Listen to some of the better preachers, both in and out of our fellowship. Study what works and what doesn't work. Don't become a sideshow clown who resorts to tricks in order to keep the audience spellbound. Jesus preached. The

power and influence was in His words. It's not the loudness of a sermon that makes it right. Hurting people's ears does not strengthen your arguments.

The people enjoyed listening to Jesus because He was interesting.

Second, the audience.

1. People enjoyed listening to Jesus because they wanted to hear Him. There is a responsibility upon the audience. The most interesting speaker gets no where if the listeners are bored and would rather be somewhere else. I must be interested. Herein lies some of our problems today. Our entertainment driven society, with 100 channels on TV, shows us how fickle and fleeting our interests can be. When watching TV, if I'm not liking what I see, I flip to another channel. Channel surfing ought to be an Olympic Sport. This has made our attention span short. Fewer and fewer people are reading today. We want visuals.

I went to hear a friend preach this week. He's good, very good. He connects well with the audience, knew his material and was very smooth in his delivery. What he said was interesting, practical and very helpful. It was good for me to be there. Listening to him taught me some things as well as demonstrating the effective nature of how to be interesting. I enjoyed listening. I enjoyed it because I wanted to be there. I enjoyed it because it was well worth my time. I enjoyed it because I left a better person. Those things are up to the audience and not the speaker. When a person comes because they are pressured, and they sit there bored, and they do not care what the Bible says, and they are stewing in a sour attitude, it doesn't matter if even the Lord was speaking that morning. They will not enjoy listening because they have made up their minds that they were not going to enjoy the experience. They leave unchanged. They leave believing that it was a waste of time. They wished that they were at home in bed or doing something much more worthwhile in their minds, playing video games. The heart of the listening is as important as the message of the speaker.

The seed that fell upon the honest and good heart, in the parable of the sower, is what produced a bountiful harvest. That heart was honest and it was good. It was ready to listen. So all of this tells me that my mindset has much to do with the success of a sermon to me personally. If I'm tired, bored, stressed, worried or hurried, then the sermon won't have much of a chance with me. It may be the very thing I need, and yet it fails because I failed. Do I come wanting to hear and learn? Do I come anticipating "enjoying" the experience? How I come, determines the outcome.

2. We must also realize that enjoying a sermon doesn't save a person. You may really like how the sermon was delivered. You may even remember a story or a quote from it, but unless it changes you and you obey Christ, you will not be saved. Years ago, preachers said that sitting in a church house will no more make you a Christian than sitting in a chicken house will make you a chicken. Just listening, just enjoying isn't enough. It's becoming. It's allowing those words of Christ to stir my heart to lead me to obedience and change. That's the true purpose of a sermon. It's not giving information. It's not a college lecture. It's changing lives for Jesus. Many a person may listen to a sermon, but nothing happens. The poor preacher often blames himself when it's the heart of the listener that lies at fault. Stubborn wills and pride often keep a person from changing. When God's word intersects with that honest and good heart, then and only then, men are persuaded to become like Christ.

Most preachers would rather hear, "That was helpful," than, "good sermon, preacher." What makes it a good sermon? You enjoyed it, that's fine. How about, you became better because of it.

They enjoyed listening to Jesus. Later, they wouldn't like what Jesus said. Some would walk away. Some would twist His words and accuse Him of blasphemy. But others, believed.

The making of a sermon is an art. The listening of a sermon can be life changing.

Roger Shouse

