



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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Luke 24:5-6 *“And as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee”*

Our verse today comes from Luke's account of the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Christ is God's exclamation point. It is the defeat of Satan. It is the crown jewel of the entire Bible. Many things can be said and studied about Jesus, but to not focus heavily upon the resurrection is to miss the main point. The resurrection gives us a living King. What better way to express it, "He is not here."

All four Gospels give great detail to the events surrounding the resurrection. Following Luke's lead, several women came to the tomb to pour spices upon the body of Jesus. This was a common thing, often done at burial, but with the haste and the Sabbath, they are now doing it on Sunday morning. It's early dawn, still somewhat dark. An eerie time to be in a cemetery. There are shadows and noises that would make the hearts of these women on edge. They come to the spot. The stone has been rolled away. Odd. Who did that, they must have thought. They went inside. It must have been very dark in there. The body was gone. Who steals bodies? Where would it have gone? Who took it? Romans? Jews? Then the appearance of two men in dazzling clothes standing near them. Standing NEAR THEM, Luke says. Where did they come from? Who are they? What do they want? Luke tells us that the women were terrified. They bow in respect and probably in fear. These Heavenly visitors speak. Our verse today is what they said.

Here is not here. What a great statement. They knew that. They had just been inside the tomb. Nothing. These two were confirming what they knew. These two knew something that they did not. We sing, "Up from the grave He arose," and so He did.

He is risen, remember? The women are given explanations now about Jesus. No one took Him. He came to life. He was risen from the dead. Then that simple word, "Remember." These two Heavenly guests then quote what Jesus said. Now it made sense. Now they knew. They remembered. Fear gone. Hope springs forth. From trembling to excitement. They make it back to the city, I expect nearly running, and tell the disciples.

What happened here is a powerful example of what we need to do to encourage others. People become frightened. They fear what the medical tests will reveal. They fear their job won't last much longer. They fear their marriage is slipping away. Fear is a terrible place to be. In the middle of the night we are awakened by a noise. There isn't supposed to be any noises. You grab a flashlight and take a look through the house. Fear.

(OVER)

Peter experienced fear many times. When in the boat with Jesus and the others, a storm caught them. So severe was the storm that they thought they were going to die. Jesus calmed the storm. The text says they became frightened. Frightened by a storm and frightened by the One who could calm the storm. On another trip on those waters, Peter asked the Lord if he could walk on the water. He started. He saw the winds and waves and became frightened. He started to sink. Jesus saved him. Then there was the trial of Jesus. Peter was outside in the courtyard with the enemy. Someone recognized him. Scared, he denied it. Frightened, he denied the Lord. Peter understood fear.

Notice the three things that these Heavenly guests did:

First, they stated a principle. He is not here, but He has risen. It showed that they understood the situation. It showed that they knew things that the women did.

Second, they asked the women to remember. This was not new teaching. This was something that they had heard. They now understood and remembered.

Third, they quoted Jesus. The proof. Remember what Jesus said? Everything is according to plan. This is exactly the way Jesus said it would be.

These same three simple things work today. Frightened by death-here's the principle. Then a reminder. Then the proof, a Bible passage. Frightened by the unknown...same thing, principle, reminder and Biblical proof.

Those things drive away fear. They calm an unsteady heart. They restore hope. They keep us going. Principle, reminder, Biblical proof. This worked with the women, because they had something to remember. They knew the words of the Lord. For someone who doesn't have this, these things will just add confusion. For the believer, there is hope. Our foundation is built upon the rock and that unmovable rock is Jesus.

We live in troublesome times. Fear fills the hearts of many. Opinions abound. What we need are absolutes. What is it that we can be sure of, count on, and know for certain? Principle, reminder, Biblical proof. In the midst of storms we forget. When scared we forget. In crisis, trials, and heartache, we forget. We need someone like these Heavenly visitors to settle us down. That's the role we all play in God's family. When some are shaken, others need to assure them. How? Principle, reminder and Biblical proof. When it's our turn to be shaken, we need to invite others into our lives who will help us by sharing the principle, reminding us, and giving us Biblical proof.

It is interesting that God was concerned about these women. He made sure that their fear was conquered through faith. He didn't leave them on their own to figure things out. He didn't leave them alone in that dark cemetery. God sent someone to them. He does the same for us. It may come through a Sunday sermon-principle, reminder and Biblical proof. It may come through a Bible class we happen to be sitting in. It may come through the words of a friend. It may be the leadership of the shepherds. God doesn't leave us in our fear. He's there. He helps.

Principle, reminder, Biblical proof. Pretty simple, isn't it? Pretty amazing, isn't it? Something that you can do.

Roger Shouse