



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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Jump Start # 1294

Titus 2:11-12 *“For the grace of God has appeared, bring salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.”*

In our verse today, the apostle reveals that grace teaches us to avoid two negative characteristics and to develop three positive qualities. Grace teaches us this.

Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires. Stop pursuing wrong. The gift of salvation is precious. It ought to change us. Without God's grace, ungodliness and worldly desires become a way of life for us. This is where we were before God saved us. These two negative qualities reflect a heart that is on it's own. It has no divine guidance. It does what it wants and that usually is wrong and leads to trouble.

Ungodliness is without God. Ungodly thinking. Ungodly talking. Ungodly defines many songs and movies today. Irresponsible. Indifferent. Selfish. Crude. Rude. Offensive. This is life without God. Living for today. Denying any absolutes. Refusing to be told by anyone, what to do. Loud. Obnoxious. Heartless.

Worldly desires is simply that. They are not the desires of Heaven. It's not a person who has his eyes set on the above. He is running out of control. He is governed by his passions. He is like an animal. Immoral. Drunk. Sick with sin. This was the prodigal when he came to his senses. This is where we were when God saved us. By faith we saw something different, something better. The righteous way was the best way. We turned and came to Christ. God saved us.

Now, this same grace tells us to avoid that former life and to fill yourself with righteousness, godliness and sensible living. Live right-that's righteousness. Right by God's standard. Right according to the Bible. Live Godly, the very opposite of ungodly. Live with God in your life. Make choices that are based upon God. And, live sensibly. The prodigal came to his senses and came home. Living with pigs isn't sensible. Wanting to eat pig food doesn't make sense. Spending all that was given to him wasn't very sensible. Running away from home didn't make sense. There was a lot of senseless actions by that prodigal. But then he came to his senses. He reflected. He saw. He understood. He came home.

Live that way. This is what grace teaches us. God gave us a second chance, so don't turn around and jump back into the mud of sin. God rescued your life, don't lose it again. Learn something. Be different this time. Be smarter this time. Allow grace to show you how to live.

Remembering that Paul is telling Titus to teach these thoughts to believers, we understand that Christians can fail to learn anything from their salvation. They can be no better off. They might start going to church some, but the insides are still a mess. This is where the Pharisees were. Jesus compared them to a dish that was clean on the outside, but the inside had last week's food dried on it. UGH. Disgusting. That was their hearts. They needed the grace of God. They needed the grace of God to teach them things.

So what this really comes down to, are you better now that you have been saved by God? Is your behavior, attitude, outlook, words, heart taught to be more like Christ? A person who gets baptized, but doesn't change his insides is no better off than the person who never came to Christ. A re-wiring of the house must take place. His thinking is different. He is different. He is a new person in Christ. Done are the old ways, the old thinking and the old habits. Done are the way he used to be. He's learning and changing all the time. He's getting stronger spiritually and his heart is becoming more of a servant. Less about him and more about others. That's what he's learned. He got that from grace. God has been good to him, so in turn, he tries to be like that to others. Hopeful, helpful, kind, sweet, spiritual-what a change that takes place.

It's tragic to see some who have never learned anything from grace. They are still the same ole' stubborn fool that they have always been. They become a part of a church family, but they are a pain. They are hard to get along with. They tend to be rude. They boast in telling it like it is, no matter whose feelings they crush. They don't get the big picture because they have never learned. They delight in trying to be the big shot in the church. And in all of this, they wound, run off, and keep the church from growing. So unlike Jesus, they are. They know a few verses, but they really don't know the message. Grace hasn't taught them a thing.

Paul was wanting the preacher Titus to share this with others. Grace teaches. Are we learning? Are we getting it? Are we any better?

Without grace, what a mess we would be in.

Roger Shouse

