



# 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](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

March 29, 2015

## Jump Start # 1282

---

**Mark 8:14-16** *“And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. And He was giving orders to them, saying, ‘Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.’ They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.”*

These verses are almost humorous if they weren't so sad. On this side of the cross where we are, these disciples seem really dense. Jesus is warning them about the influence of the wicked Pharisees and Herod, using the expression, "Leaven." They are discussing, while Jesus is talking. What they are discussing is the fact that someone forgot to bring the food. Like little children, they think more of their bellies than anything else.

What makes this passage humorous is that the chapter begins with Jesus feeding 4,000. Just a few pages before, He fed more than 5,000. So they only have one loaf, they have Jesus. What more did they need? Had they forgotten already? Did they think Jesus had run dry of miracles? Jesus was disappointed with them. He said, "Do you not see..." "Do you have a hard heart?" Jesus then made them answer two questions. After feeding the 5,000, how many BASKETS full did you pick up? They said, "twelve." After feeding the 4,000, how many BASKETS full did you pick up? They said, "seven." Then, "do you not understand?"

I think this shows that sometimes we forget God's earlier blessings in our lives. We count the loaves and get worried. We see that we do not have enough. We panic. We doubt. We question. If we only remembered, maybe that would get us through those moments. Could this be one reason God wants His people to remember the Lord's Supper on Sundays? It's the greatest gift and the greatest blessing of all. If God can take care of our sins and extend His grace to us, can't He feed us and take care of us in other ways?

This passage makes me wonder what that conversation in the boat must have been like? Were the apostles pointing fingers at one another? Were their whispers getting louder and louder? Did it get to a point where Jesus had enough. Enough of this blaming. Enough of this worrying. Enough of this doubting. Enough.

On this side of the cross, where we are, trusting Jesus seems easy. Count those blessings we sing. Every Sunday, a gentle reminder, Jesus died for us. Yet, how many times do we find ourselves in that boat with those disciples, counting our loaves instead of seeing that Jesus is with us. Our loaves may be our retirement. The market goes up and we are happy. The market goes down and we panic. We start counting loaves. We worry. We look up and we are sitting right with Peter and Andrew. The same happens when disappointing news comes. The medical tests are worse than we imagined. Scoot over John, I'm sitting beside you now. It's loaf counting time. The job future looks shaky. Here I come, Philip. Save me a spot in the boat. Aging parents have to go to assisted living. We're in the boat with the rest of them.

It doesn't take too much for you and I to start counting the loaves. We know so much more than the apostles did at that time in the boat. We have the whole picture. We have prophecies fulfilled. We have Heaven in sight. We have the epistles. We have Jesus explained. Yet, we find ourselves in that same boat, with them, counting how many loaves we have.

Forget the loaves and focus upon Jesus. You have Jesus, what else do you need? We can forget all the good that God has done for us. We can forget the blessings. We can forget the grace. We can forget the fellowship. We can forget the hope. All we see is one loaf. There is just one loaf. We are down to one loaf. How are we going to get by? What will we do? One loaf isn't enough. One loaf doesn't get us through the week. One loaf, means we are in trouble. Maybe we ought to stop looking at the loaf and put our eyes on Jesus, as Hebrews tells us. Maybe we ought to stop worrying and begin trusting. Maybe we need to remember. We all have a 5,000 fed and a 4,000 fed event in our lives. It wasn't miraculous. It wasn't as grand as those Bible stories, but we all have God in our life. God was there. God answered. God strengthened. God got us through. God picked us up. God forgave us. God encouraged. God comforted. He was there for Daniel, when the lions were surrounding him. He was there with David, when a huge giant faced him. He was there for the three Jewish men when they were ordered to be burned alive. He was there when Adam sinned. He was there when Jonah ran. He was there when the prodigal came home. He was there in the valley of the shadows of death. God was there.

Look back in your life. God's been there. So when you get down to one loaf, don't fret. Don't count. Don't lose faith. Remember. Trust God. Obey God. Count those blessings. God will be there for you.

I must admit that I have sat with Peter far too many times in that boat. When the darkness of the storm surrounds you, a person tends to forget. They get scared. They feel alone. They start counting what they have left. One loaf, or one Jesus. It is amazing that among the twelve, no one seemed to think about Jesus. No one remembered what Jesus could do. With one loaf, Jesus could feed the world. With no loaf, Jesus could still do it.

Maybe we ought to remind one another, during those stormy moments, to look to Jesus. Maybe we ought to help one another put the loaf down and reach out for the Lord's hands. Maybe one of us, can help the rest remember. A prayer can do that. A suggestion can do that. A passage can do that.

It's time to leave the boat, and trust Jesus. Trust Jesus with the terrorism threats in the world. Trust Jesus to help your marriage and your family. Trust Jesus to turn hearts and open eyes. Trust Jesus to get things back to where they need to be. Read His word. Follow Him. Believe. Trust.

Don't count how many loaves you have. See where Jesus is, and sit next to Him.

Roger Shouse

