



# 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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**Philippians 2:7** *“but emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men”*

Our verse today is about the Lord, our Jesus. Paul describes the nature of Jesus. He is using Jesus as the ultimate example. The Philippians were told to have the same attitude or mind as Jesus did. The driving thought is humility and serving others. Have a heart like Jesus. This would united them in the same mind, giving them the same love and purpose as outlined in verse two.

Paul tells us that Jesus was equal with God. That thought is hard for many to understand. They see Jesus as Junior to the Father. They see the Father as the one in control and Jesus works for Him. The expression, “Son of God,” feeds such thoughts. That is all taken away here. Jesus was equal with God. Equal in power, position, deity, wisdom, insight and love. As John began his gospel, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God.” Jesus is God. He has always been God. There has never been a time when Jesus was not God. He has always been.

Our verse is not about Jesus up there, but Jesus down here. In coming to earth, He humbled Himself. He became obedient. Hebrews says, “He learned obedience.” He clothed Himself like man. He was made like a man. He ate, felt, looked, walked, talked like a man. He was so man, that many couldn't see God. Many still have that problem. The miracles and His words showed that He was more than a man, He was God.

The expression I want to look at is “emptied Himself.” That has been an interesting thought for hundreds of years. Disciples in the third and fourth century debated that. Gnostics misunderstood it. Even in our times, some have struggled with the implications of an “empty Jesus.”

It is thought by some that He emptied Himself of God. In other words, Jesus left His deity in Heaven and was merely a man and only a man. The trouble with that is that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. He allowed others to worship Him. If He was only a man and nothing else, that wouldn't have been right. The demons knew who He was. They acknowledge his deity. So Jesus didn't empty Himself of God. He has always been God.

He emptied Himself of the glory of God. Jesus didn't walk about with a halo above His head, like the images of Him in the great artwork of the masters. He didn't leave golden footprints. He seemed more human than God. Years ago, I got to see the President of the U.S. given a speech. He was running for re-election. I took my youngest two out of school to be with me. It was a big deal. The President doesn't come to town very often. He seemed very Presidential. There was a helicopter hovering nearby. There were men in dark suits and sunglasses on tops of near by buildings. There were a lot of police presence. Guards, security and distance are the common things among the famous. Sports stars, rock stars and politicians all have them. They keep everyone at bay from them. You can only get so close.

Jesus wasn't like this. He didn't travel in caravans. He didn't have body guards. He didn't have people roping off the crowds from Him. He didn't have someone announce His name and then He rushed on to a stage and then hurried off, not to be seen. He didn't seem very Heavenly in His presentation. His clothes weren't unique. He didn't speak a language that few understood. He seem regular. He seemed like the son of Mary and Joseph. He didn't travel rich. He didn't seem uppity. He didn't act like we'd expect someone from Heaven to be.

Recently, Prince Charles came to Louisville. He gave a speech, toured Churchill Downs, waved a lot, got on a plane and left. The press was enamored with him. Crowds flocked to see him. Royalty came to Louisville. He played the part very well. He behaved just as we expected royalty to be. Now, had he gone to Enterprise, rented a car, stood in line at the grocery store as the rest of us do, dressed like the rest of us do, mingled with the rest of us, there would be many who never guessed who he was. Royalty doesn't do that. Jesus did. He emptied Himself. He became like a man. He was obedient like a man. He was humble like a man. He served others as a man does.

Jesus did just the opposite of what we do. We try to be the big shot. We try to impress others. We try to be bigger than what we are. You listen to a couple of guys talking about playing high school sports decades ago. The games are bigger, their parts were larger and their heads swell more than they ever have. We brag, Jesus didn't. We try to impress, Jesus didn't have to.

Jesus came to earth to be the sacrifice for our sins. His coming demonstrated that God cares. His coming proved that God understands. God has been there. God knows. God has experienced. Jesus was not kept from the dark side of life. He saw the gutters of the human heart. He was the ugliness of disease. The crippled was brought to Him. The sinful was cast at His feet. The crowds questioned Him. They challenged Him. They doubted Him. They accused Him. They laughed at Him. There was no distance between Jesus and the people. He touched. They touched. He saw. He felt for them. He wasn't the CEO that walked through the plant with a bunch of clipboard followers and was finished with his tour in forty minutes. Jesus stayed over thirty years. He wasn't in a palace, but in homes, their homes.

Jesus emptied Himself. He was even spit upon and eventually executed.

So when we sing the hymn, "Does Jesus care?" We know the answer. Yes, He does. He understands. He has been there. He knows. He left an example for us to follow.

My Jesus. Our Jesus. He emptied Himself, so we could be filled, not with ourselves, but with faith and love for Him. He became poor, that we might be rich. He did this for you.

