



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)

April 19, 2015

Jump Start # 1318

2 Samuel 18:29 "The king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was."

Is the young man safe? That's how other translations state David's concern. There was massive turmoil taking place in the capital of Jerusalem. The city was under siege. It wasn't a foreign army that was threatening the nation, it was the king's son, the rebel prince, Absalom, who was trying to take over the control of the nation. Some of this may have been the consequences from David's adultery. Bloodshed would dominate the children of this great king. David, who had fought the giant, killed lions, subdued the Philistines, is now forced to flee the city because of his son. Not since the days of King Saul had David ran, but now he must. His troops were posed to defend the city. A battle was about to take place. David's final orders were to be easy with Absalom.

The battle crushed Absalom's troops. It was a major slaughter. Thousands died. Absalom fled, got caught in a tree and was killed.

Our verse today comes from David. He is getting reports about how the battle is going. He is concerned about his son, the rebel. He wants to know if Absalom is safe. Shortly after this, the grime news reaches David. Absalom is dead. David cries bitterly. His heart is broken. He loved his son, even though the love doesn't seem to be mutual. David may have realized the regrets and failures as a parent in his home. He could conquer the world, but he could control his family. I don't think it is a stretch to believe that Absalom, given the chance, would have killed his father. David's men seem to think that was possible. That is why David is ushered out of the city.

That statement, "Is the young man safe?" is spoken and felt by every parent towards their children. I have little grandchildren now. They are the sweetest blessings from Heaven. Their bright eyes, curious minds and sweet hearts can just stop a busy day and makes one get on the floor with them and play. Parents wonder, "Is the young man safe?" First, it's physically. The little cough, brings concern from parents. We wonder if they are growing according to schedule. Then, there are the days when they are outside playing and the parent thinks, "Is the young man safe?" Then it's the school years and the parents wonder, "Is the young man safe?" Then they start driving and the parent really wonders, "Is the young man safe?" Then they start dating and the parent thinks, "Is the young man safe?" There are so many concerns and worries that can fill a parents hearts. The nightly news only heightens parents fears. Amber alerts, school shootings, bullying all makes parents want their children to be home and safe.

(OVER)

For the people of God, there comes another concern. It actually becomes a greater concern than the health and physical safety of the child, it's the spiritual wellbeing. Is the young man safe spiritually? A child that grows up strong and tall like an Absalom, and grows into a defiant rebel like an Absalom brings shame and heartache to parents. The Proverbs speak often about the grief of parents over children who are not following wisdom and are not respectful toward others. More important than your child excelling in sports or grades, or nailing a phenomenal high paying job is their spiritual wellbeing. This is much more than about going to Heaven when we die. It's about having the heart, the character, that molds one into a compassionate servant like Jesus. It's how he will view life and define success. It's how he will raise his family and treat his wife. It's how he will walk with the Lord everyday. One of the greatest sorrows across this land is seeing parents whose grown children do not worship God anymore. Something happened. They got busy. It wasn't important. For whatever the reason, they have gone a different direction. The sad look in those parents eyes can bring anyone to tears. Those grown children have no idea the years that have been sucked out of their parents because of the worry, prayers and concern over the spiritual state of their children. Is the young man safe?

It's never too late until the Lord calls us. Continue to pray. Continue to talk. Continue to plead with them. They'll fuss. They'll find lame excuses. But sometimes they listen. Sometimes there is enough honesty in their heart that that seed can get in there and they come home to the Lord. It happens.

For those of you that still have children at home, think for a moment about each of your children. Name them and then consider where you think they are spiritually. Even the little ones, include them. Is it a fight to get them to pray, be helpful, and to talk about the Bible? If so, turn it up a notch. Get busy. Don't shove it down them. Don't threaten them. Help them. Walk them through things. As they get older, don't always answer their questions. Get them to figure out the answer. Be there and drop some hints here and there. Get them to use those minds spiritually. Take them along with you and do things for others. Get down to the church building and help clean up on a work day. Let them see you pray and let them hear you say their names in your prayers. Show them that you love your mate. Make goodness good. Have folks over from your church family. Have visiting preachers sign their Bibles. Get them to draw pictures for the older folks. Memorize verses together. Talk about the sermon.

It seems to me that while David was out fighting the Philistines and bring peace to the nation, he wasn't home much and he wasn't seeing about the peace within his palace. Dads that travel must really work at this. You need to stay in touch with the kids. Call them and talk to them. Headship, as God gives that role to husbands, is not about controlling the remote, but it's about leading the family to Heaven.

Is the young man safe? Could you answer that for your family? Could you answer that for yourself?

Roger Shouse

