



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)

November 1, 2015

Jump Start # 1458

Judges 21:25 *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*

Our verse today is how the book of Judges ends. The four hundred years covered by in Judges was a time of turmoil and ups and downs. There is a cycle that is repeated over and over throughout Judges. The nation would leave God. An oppressing nation would punish Israel. They would cry out to God. A judge would deliver them. And in a short while, the nation would repeat the cycle again.

Four times in Judges the statement, 'There was no king in Israel' is found. Twice the statement, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" is used.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

1. This shows without a leader, without a shepherd, the sheep or the nation, tends to degenerate to doing what is fun, easy and profitable for self. Self becomes the standard. Self becomes the rule. This is why homes need parents. Not just adults to pay the mortgage and buy the food, but adults to be the standard. Allow a child to set his own bedtime and it will be chaos. Allow a child to decide if he wants to go to school and he will choose to stay home and watch TV. God has designed leaders to do just that, lead. The same principle is found within God's church. Without leaders, the church flounders. We tend to do what is right in our own eyes.

God's structure in the home and in the church is not a democracy. If a vote were taken at home, between paying the mortgage or using the money to go to Disney, the parents would be out voted. It's not a democracy. Kids will scream, "It's not fair." They say that because they don't get to do what they want. It is fair because they are too young to make the responsible decisions. Parents today must be the bad guys at times and set forth the rules.

2. Without a standard, everything is right and nothing is wrong. Anything goes. Your rules, your laws do not apply to me, because I make my own rules. Does any of this sound like what is going on in our streets today? An injustice takes place so the citizens riot. They burn buildings, they block traffic and get the crowd fired up to do wrong things. They do not see that they have broken laws themselves. Because someone else broke the law, then they can break the law.

The Jews did this at the trial of Jesus. They had a trial to make it look like what they were doing was civil and right. They could not find anyone to verify criminal chargers against Jesus so false witnesses were used. These

false witnesses were not consistent. "Thou shalt not bear false witness," was one of the 10 Commandments. They broke the law to try to find Jesus guilty.

The same happens when someone says something that isn't appropriate. They should not have said what they did. For some reason, that gives others the permission to gossip about that person. They have no problems breaking the rules about gossip because the other person said something that he shouldn't have.

Without a standard, everything is right and nothing is wrong.

3. There was a standard, it was not followed. Israel had the Law of Moses. That was the standard that defined the nation. That was the rule from Heaven. There was no need for everyone to do what was right in their own eyes because they had a rule. It was not followed. The law was supposed to be taught in the home. Each person was responsible for following the law. That alone, would have unified the nation and set forth the rules of the land. It didn't. It didn't because the people didn't. The law was there. It was ignored by the people.

What we take from all of this is that you are I are personally responsible for the way we live. The laws of our country may not be enforced, but we can still go by them. There may be disorder in the statehouse, but we can follow what is right. God's laws remain the same whether people follow them or not.

"I'm going to do what I feel like," is nothing more than living like Israel in the book of Judges. "You can't tell me what to do," is the same thing. "You have no right to judge me," is another indication of the same. Common expressions for a very old problem, are we going to follow and abide by what God says or not?

The child of God will do what is right, because that is what he is supposed to do. Doing what is right may not be easy, popular or even to his personal best interest, but it's right. Simple things such as not throwing trash out of your car as you drive down the road. Not a big deal, right? It's the principle. If I can ignore the rules about litter, I can ignore the rules about driving, I can ignore the rules about taxes, I can ignore the rules about safety. I can do what I want. There we are, back to the days of Judges. If a person can just obey the laws that they want, can't we do the same in church? Can't we do the same in marriage? Can't we do the same in any area? There we go, back to the days of Judges.

Do what is right. Do what is right because God is the standard. Do what is right because lawlessness or a law unto ourselves isn't right. If I can't do what the law of the land says, how can I do what the law of Heaven says? Maybe, just maybe that's the problem today. What God says doesn't matter to folks. They will worship the way that they want to worship. They will apply the passages that they want to apply. And by so doing this, we have traveled back to the days of Judges and find ourselves doing what is right in our own eyes.

The horror of all of this is someday we will stand before God. People who feel that they are right, because they have lived a life of doing what is right in their own eyes, will find out that they may very well be wrong with God. Right in our eyes may not have been right in His eyes. Then, for the first time, people who thought they were right will find out that they were wrong. Isn't this the very thing spoken about in Matthew 7:21-23, where Jesus says, "Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness?"

We must be sure that we are right with the Lord. There is but one way to do that and that is to follow and obey His word.

Roger Shouse

