



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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2 Peter 1:12 *“Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.”*

Reminders. They are a valuable part of our lives. We have notices on our phones that remind us of important meetings. Facebook will remind us of the birthdays of friends and family. Most of us learned our A-B-C's by repetition.

When it comes to teaching God's word, reminders are also important but they present great challenges to us. In our verse, Peter recognized that his readers knew what he was telling them. This wasn't new information. The reminders are necessary because we forget.

There is a challenge to the audience that hears things that "you already know." Because you know these things doesn't mean everyone else knows them. Every generation must be taught. Teaching often covers the same ground that others have learned years ago. How we react and respond to such things tells a lot about us. We can be bored because "we've already heard these things before." We can be impatient and even critical with the teacher because we are not being taught new or challenging things. I find this spirit alive and well in far too many places. It is interesting that we do not have any trouble watching the same movie over and over. When the new Star Wars movie comes out, there will be some who will watch a dozen or more times. Every holiday season many of us enjoy watching the same favorite shows, including cartoons such as Frosty and Rudolph. Over and over we will watch these shows. We can quote the lines. We know exactly what will happen. The same goes for music. We like certain songs and enjoy listening to them over and over again. When we go to a concert, we like to hear our favorite songs. The new stuff is ok, but play our favorites! Should it be any different with hearing fundamental lessons over and over. Sermons about Noah or the fiery furnace or Gideon's march, although well known by many of us, ought to bring fond memories and a certain comfort to us.

Sometimes older members can be a little harsh on the young preachers because they are presenting lessons about authority, the church, salvation, or worship. These young preachers are doing just exactly what they ought to be doing. Thank them for taking us back to those solid truths. We need reminders. We can forget the details. But don't jump on them simply because you know and have heard these kind of lessons before. Remember, you are not the only one in the audience. Remember, it's not all about you. Remember, we need folks to help us remember.

Second, there is a challenge to the preacher and teacher of these truths. Teaching the same type of lessons can be boring to the teacher if he is not careful. Lessons on the basics are needed all the time. But make them fresh. Make them challenging. Help a new generation to see what God is saying. Jude said to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered." It's been delivered. But return to it. Stay with it. Teach it over and over. Approach it from where people are today. Understand your audience. Help them to see things through their eyes.

I've been reading a PhD. Dissertation that was written in 1966. I read part of it before because I found sentences that I had underlined. But there are things I had forgotten. So, I'm reading it again. It seems to make more sense to me this time than the first time I read it. Repeating. Reminding. Re-reading. Those are the building blocks of our faith. It doesn't take very long to read the entire Bible. So a person has read it. Is that it? Obviously, NO. He must read it again. He must read different sections again. He will focus upon and look for specific things with each reading.

Remember the hymn, "tell me the old, old story..." The story is old, simply because it took place a long, long time ago. But it can be old because many of us have known this story for decades. But tell it to me again. Never tire of hearing Biblical truths taught and preached. Never groan when the preacher announces that his lesson is about the Cross.

Peter reminded his readers of things that they already knew. We need to do the same. It's good to do that. We need to do that with our sermons, our classes and our private studies. Be glad when you hear that ole' familiar lesson. It means the gospel message is still being sent out.

Roger Shouse