



# 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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## Jump Start # 1505

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**Matthew 5:47** *"And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"*

Recently, I talked about the sermon on the mount in a class. We were studying the Life of Jesus. The sermon on the mount is a defining declaration of the Lord. It stands as a document that identifies what citizens in the kingdom are like. Jesus was looking for something other than the norm. Average doesn't impress the Lord. Multiple times in the sermon Jesus would say, "you have heard...but I say to you..." Jesus was raising the standard. Instead of quoting some dead rabbi or referring to some dusty documents, Jesus used Himself. "I say to you..." was revolutionary, radical and caught the attention of those in the audience. Here, a thirty-something, was telling them what to do. When the sermon ended, the reaction was, He speaks as one having authority.

Our verse is taken from that sermon. It is found in the section about treating others. Loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us is from this setting. Again, don't just do the norm. The standard is God. He sends His rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. The guy that curses God receives blessings from God, whether he realizes it or not. God is good to all. God loves all, even those that do not love Him.

It follows then, that the followers of God, would act like God. They are going to be fair, kind and generous, even to enemies and those who are not among them. Our verse deals with "greeting" one another. That was much more than simply saying, "Hi," to someone. We do that to strangers all the time and nothing deeper is meant than, hi. The greetings that Jesus had in mind, included care, concern and including others. Throughout this sermon, Jesus often illustrated the negative side of what he was talking about by pointing out what others did. In the next chapter, He would tell His disciples not to pray like the Gentiles did. Here, in our verse, Jesus uses the Gentiles again. They will greet one another. They will shake hands and hug one another. They have a love for one another. This isn't something that only God's people do. Many do that. Doing that doesn't indicate that one is close, right or even following God. What Jesus is interested in is doing more than the Gentiles. The Gentiles would never greet foreigners. They would not greet Jews. In developing this principle, we come across this profound question, "What do you do more than others?"

What do you do more than others? Ouch. That's painful. That stops us and makes us think. What are we doing more than others. Others go to worship. Others are kind to neighbors. Others read their Bibles. Others support their congregations. What are you doing more than others?

(OVER)

Is my faith and my relationship any different from those that barely know the Lord? Am I consumed with fear, worry and bothered by stress like the world? What do you do more than others? Am I tripped easily by sin over and over again? What do you do more than others? Do I keep my faith to myself? What do you do more than others?

That question tends to shame us. It makes us wish that Jesus hadn't said that. Most times that question makes us feel guilty and like we are not doing enough. That's how I have looked at it for years. But there is another side to this. Here it is:

We are trusting the Lord when sailing through storms. Our times are troublesome. Many days, things look dark. But for the people of God, we hold to God's unchanging hand. We know everything will be fine because God is upon the throne. We do not fear what man can do to us. Our hope is in the Lord.

We are busy worshipping God and raising Godly families. That's what we are doing. We make sacrifices to put God first. We adjust our schedule to put God first. We are spending time developing character in the hearts of our children. We are seeing them grow up to be truthful, respectful and spiritual. We don't have time for "children's church," nor entertainment driven worship services. We are serious about the Lord. We want to know and we want to grow.

We have set our eyes upon Heaven. We no longer fear death. We can't wait to get there. We sing about Heaven often. We love to learn more and more about God and His will. Jesus fills our hearts. This isn't a Sunday religion. Everyday we are found praying to the Lord. His way has become our way.

We are working hard in the kingdom. We are sharing the story with our friends. We are busy teaching, preaching and doing what we can in the kingdom. We support the kingdom generously. We want the kingdom to grow. We love God and His people.

What do you do more than others...don't beat yourself up. Consider where you are and what you are doing. His disciples are doing more than others. His disciples have a heart like His.

Roger Shouse