



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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February 21, 2016

Jump Start # 1524

Hebrews 11:24-25 *"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin"*

Moses is given much space in the powerful Hebrews 11 chapter. It is a chapter of faith. Each person had to make choices. Each person suffered. Each person gained approval through their faith. This statement about Moses, our verse today, reflects three important thoughts.

First, he chose. His decision was made when he was grown up. It was his decision. As an infant, his mother made a choice to hide him. But now it was his time to make a choice-be Egyptian or be Hebrew. He chose the Hebrews.

Second, his choice was not based upon what felt good. It was based upon what was right. Standing with God and His people meant ill-treatment. It excluded pleasures. Moses made his choice based upon God.

Third, the pleasurable sins of Egypt didn't last. They were passing. Moses chose the permanent over the temporary. He chose what would last. He chose the future over the present.

Our thoughts today are taken from the expression "passing pleasures of sin." The thrill that sin offers doesn't last. It never does. The drinker needs another drink. The drug user needs another high. The fun of sin too often covers the wrong, the damage and the eternal separation from God. However, that fun never lasts very long.

The pleasures of sin does not last. But there are some things that do last. This is the irony of this expression. The pleasure doesn't last, but often the temptation does. Some folks battle the same temptations most of their lives. For some, it's the bottle. Others, it's porn or greed or selfishness. They are constantly struggling with these issues. They never seem to go away.

This is where relationships often get strained and patience runs thin. Patience is much more than waiting for traffic lights to turn green or waiting in the doctor's office. True patience involves people. It's being patient as they struggle with issues over and over again.

Those that do not have those struggles simply do not understand why these people can not move on. Why are they still struggling with these same things. These struggles do not always have to be with moral sins. It could be worries. It could be fears. It could be doubts. "Here we go again," some will say. The same questions are asked and answered. The same situations are explored and solutions proposed. The same troubles analyzed and suggestions made. But, after just a short while, here we go again. Some things pass, and others do not.

(OVER)

When our patience has run thin with what seems to be reoccurring situations and problems, we tend to get short, bossy, and very tired of dealing with the same things. This is especially hard for parents because there are days when you feel like announcing, "Push number one for this problem, push number two for this issue," because you have covered that ground already. You are ready to move on. You don't see why this is such a problem. But it remains. Some things just do not go away easily.

This is also hard for shepherds of God's people. The same folks can continue to struggle with the same things over and over. For some families, it's financial problems. They are always just one paycheck away from losing everything. They are helped. They are talked to. They are shown how to make budgets. Books are given to them. But here we go again. For others, it's their faith and walk with the Lord. They are just one step away from throwing in the towel on Jesus. They are encouraged, taught, shown, helped. But just as soon as things are looking up, they are again looking down. They don't show up. They begin questioning their faith, again. Here we go again! For others, it is the bottle. They know it's wrong, but they just can't seem to get very far from it. I suppose this is why so many shepherds are bald. They've been pulling their hair out, dealing with the same things in the same people, over and over again.

The pleasures of sin does not last. However, the struggles of life never seem to end for some folks. These constant struggles has led some to say sharp and mean things, not knowing the situation. The lack of patience has led some to be forced to find another church. They are tired of dealing with these things and they feel that you have worn out your welcome. The doors are closed and you are no longer liked there.

All of this is similar to understanding chronic health issues. I've known folks who get headaches on a regular basis. I know folks who have severe back troubles. When you don't have those things, it's hard to understand what the person is going through. The immediate thought is "go take care of it." That sounds great, but how? Some things do not just go away, especially those inside, internal, mental issues.

Grief is like that. A mate passes. The funeral takes place. There are flowers, food and hugs. Within a month, everyone has moved on and are doing well, except for the immediate family of the departed. Their world has stopped. Nothing is the same anymore. An empty place at the table, silence in the home, and a huge hole in the heart are things that a person just doesn't "snap out of." Those who have never walked that path have a hard time understanding. Some will make this a "faith" issue. Some can be very opinionated and judgmental. Grief doesn't just go away. It can be managed. It can be dealt with, but that often takes time.

Guilt is another thing that just doesn't go away quickly. Sure a person can get forgiveness, especially from God. He is like that. He wants to forgive. He is merciful and good. We can even apologize to those that we have hurt. However, the damage, the shame, and the guilt can remain for a long time. It makes one feel like standing in the corner, every corner. It's hard to get back to normal, after you have trashed trust and let others down. This is hard for others to understand. "They are forgiven aren't they? What's their problem?" The problem is guilt. It can hang around for a long, long time.

These thoughts remind us that we need to be understanding and patient towards others. This is what God wants and above all, He has certainly been patient with us. We have a hard time understanding what others are going through. Not everyone thinks nor feels the way we do. We expect everyone to see things just as quickly and as clearly as we do. They don't. We expect people to snap out of the things and be great by morning, like we are. They may not respond that way.

The pleasures of sin pass away. There are other things that tend to linger around. Be helpful, rather than part of the problem. Be understanding, as best as you can. Don't always talk. Don't always think you have to come up with a solution. Offer to pray. Offer to just sit with them. Show your care and your love.

It would be wonderful if worries, temptation, fears and troubles passed away quickly. They often come and stay. They can be dealt with through Jesus. They will not last forever. Heaven has no place for those things. Be kind and be gentle toward those who struggle.

God is good.

Roger Shouse