



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)

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Jump Start # 1609

Job 2:10 "But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity.'"

Our verse today are the words of a husband to his wife. I doubt this was said in a public gathering. God has allowed us in on the conversation. It has been a long and tough day. Job and his wife had to bury all of their children, ten of them. All of them died at the same time. They were grown. They had their own homes. And now, they were all gone. I have had to preach funerals of grown children whose parents sat in the audience. The image is hard to get out of my mind. Those frail, elderly folks, looking at their child in a casket, who they thought would see them through their final years. Seeing those broken hearts and knowing that nothing I say can really lessen the pain that they feel. But on this page in our Bibles, Job and his wife did not lose one child, they lost them all.

The affliction that Job experienced was a test. Was Job truly righteous or was his faith being bought by God's blessings? Nothing is said about this being a test of Job's wife. Nothing is said about Job's wife being blameless and upright like Job. He was tested. She was part of the test because it involved her. Job worshipped. Job didn't point his finger to God. Job's wife collapses in faith. She did, what Satan thought Job would do, curse God. She had enough. Her grown children were all dead. Her husband's health was gone. He was sickly and afflicted. They had been robbed. Their servants were dead. There was nothing to live for in her faith. Just die. Give it up. She had enough.

Her empty and faithless advice to her husband, "Curse God and die," led to our verse today. This is what Job said back. Her words demanded a response. Her words were not encouraging, helpful or faithful. He rebuked her. She was speaking like a foolish woman. A fool, who doesn't know God, would say what she did. We can be shocked what comes from the mouth of those who we thought were believers.

From all of this, there are some great lessons to be learned.

First, the level of faith between a husband and wife often are not the same. We assume that they are. We assume the wife of the preacher or the wife of an elder is just as powerful and strong as her mate. Our passage shows other wise. The preacher or the elder may be committed and dedicated to what he is doing in the kingdom, but his wife may not be. She may go along for the ride, but having her way, she may not be so engaged as he is.

Second, adversity affects us differently. Some can get through it and seem to be ok. Others, it seems are crushed by it. Here in the same house, Job seems to be holding strong to his faith. His wife, Mrs. Job, has had enough. No more. She has buried her children and now she is watching her husband slowly die, at least in her mind. If things do not turn around, she will be all alone. She will have nothing. Our level of faith makes us react differently to the trials in life. But also, God has wired men and women differently. We do not respond

the same. For instance, there has been a fender bender. The wife would come home in tears, promising to get a second job to help pay for the expenses. She is crushed. The husband comes home and he is ready to pound the face of the guy that hit him. He's mad. He wants lawyers. He wants justice. Different responses to the same thing. This blending of the genders misunderstands that. Children realize this. When they fall and cut themselves, it's to mom that they run. Mom will kiss them, hug them, and carefully clean the cut and put a band-aide on it. Dad, on the other hand, would say, "That's nothing. Walk it off. Be tough." Yet, when something breaks, they will go to dad. Why? Moms and dads are wired differently.

We must be careful with the advice we give someone. What works for you, may not work for someone else. We handle adversity differently, based upon our faith and our wiring.

Third, sometimes those in our own house can give us bum advice. Some within our very family can lead us away from God. Curse God, was the advice of Job's wife. Really? Curse the Holy One? Curse the Creator? Curse the one who blessed you with children? Job understood exactly when he said, "shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" Job had received buckets of blessings from Heaven. He had been blessed with a huge family. He had thousands of camels, sheep, oxen and donkeys. He had many servants. He was considered the "greatest of all the men in the east." Indeed, God had blessed him. Job understood these things came from God. His words honor God. He didn't think that these things came from his hands. Without God, he wouldn't have any of these. In the children's song about the "Wise man and the foolish man," the prayers go up as the blessings come down.

Job's wife either didn't see it this way, or didn't care. Curse God, was the advice that came from Job's very family. Our mates can help us get to Heaven or they can stand in the way. "Do we have to go to church today," may not be said from the kids, but from a husband, who doesn't want to go. The choice of questionable movies. The use of alcohol. The lack of attendance to worship. The limited prayers. Our very families can be the biggest obstacles in serving God. Family reunions can be nothing more than an attack upon our faith. Those we grew up with can gang up on us and assault the faith that we have. The insults. The loaded and unfair questions. The loud accusations. We'd expect such treatment from atheistic professors. But here it is from our own blood. It is not uncommon for children to want to come to Bible classes, but the parents don't. The kids love it. The parents don't. The kids would be there all the time. The parents find excuses to avoid going. In time, the kids grow and they stop asking to go to church. In time, the kids become like their parents, faithless and indifferent to God.

Jesus warned that the members of our own family would become our enemies. That happens. It happens every week in some homes. Did Job's wife curse God? Had she already done that in her heart? Was she finished with God? We don't know. Job would have no part in what she was wanting. He would not curse God and join her. He reminded her of God's blessings. He stood for God. That's what we must do to our family. They may not understand, appreciate, nor accept what you say, but with God we have cast our lots. Some families plan things that puts a believer in a situation of having to make a choice, attend worship or be with the family. The pressure is strong. The family loads on the guilt. Some go along with family. They can't say "no," to family. Their influence weakens. Their light doesn't shine as bright. Family has won over God. There will be more choices just like that coming down the road. The family won and now they will continue to try to win more. Stand your ground. Have convictions. Believe. Excuse yourself to go worship and then catch up with them. God or family? It shouldn't have to be a choice, but too often it is.

Finally, for all the times that Mrs. Job had been around her husband, all the worship, all the prayers, she was now speaking like one of the foolish women. What we believe really comes out in a moment of crisis. We can put on a good show. We can talk a good talk. But now at the cemetery, what does one believe? Now, sitting beside her husband, who is in bed sick, she spoke like a foolish one. We can lose it in a moment of anger and cuss. We can get so upset that we speak like a foolish person. Our family witnesses us. The kids hear us. We lose ground because we lost our cool. Your faith is only as good as you use it. Sunny days, when you feel wonderful, it's easy to be a Christian. It's during those stormy nights, when we feel like the rug has been pulled out, that we truly see what we are made of.

Jesus asked Martha, after she had buried her brother, "Do you believe?" Do we? Do we act like we believe? The trip to the hospital...the car accident...the company down sizing...the rejection letter...the trip to the funeral home-those are the times when our faith gets us through or we feel left on our own. Do you believe?

Job and Mrs. Job-a study of trouble in paradise. A contrast in faith. A difference in trials. Lessons for you and I to consider.

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