



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 # 1637

2 Kings 6:17 "Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

Our verse today is one of the great passages of the Bible that we wish everyone could grasp. Wouldn't it be marvelous to see what God sees? How things would be different if we could see from Heaven down instead of earth up.

The king of Syria had a problem. It seems that whatever he planned to do against Israel was somehow known in advance in Israel. It was as if there was a spy or mole in Syria. Even the secret things that the king said in his chambers were known. It was revealed that in Israel was a prophet, Elisha. God had given him the ability to hear what was said in Syria. The king decided to capture Elisha. He surrounds the city with a great army. This is where our verse is found. Elisha's servant sees the Syrian army and he sees no way out. God had sent help from Heaven. The mountains were full of horses and chariots. God's army was ready. The servant couldn't see them. Elisha's wonderful prayer, "O Lord...open his eyes that he may see." Indeed, he did see. God protected Elisha.

Open our eyes Lord. Can you imagine what a day would be like if we could have Jesus' eyes? In the synagogue, Jesus saw the bent over woman. She had been that way for 18 long years. Still worshipping. She had not given up on God. It would be hard not to notice her. Moving slowly. Bent in half. Yet, Jesus SAW her. He called her to Him. He healed her before all the crowd. Jesus saw her.

If our eyes could see, we'd look past the glitzy trinkets that Satan dangles before us each day. We'd recognize that they are cheap. We'd recognize that sin has consequences and from Heaven's side of things, sin doesn't seem so appealing.

If our eyes could see, we'd notice people today that need encouragement. There is the child who is having a bad day. There is a neighbor who is sad. There is the co-worker who is stressed and bothered. There is the church member who has questions. Open our eyes that we may see. All around us are Lazarus' laid at our gates, hoping and wanting someone to help them. Most are too busy. Most are too occupied with their own worries and problems. It is those whose eyes are opened that see.

(OVER)

If our eyes could see, we'd notice the good that others are doing. It's easy to think that no one is doing anything. It's easy to conclude that no one cares. No one cares about this country. No one cares about the church. No one cares about this family. But with open eyes, you'll see that's not the case. There are folks who are doing things that you are not aware of. There are those who are pouring hours into preparing to teach Bible classes. There are those who are sending cards. There are those who are out visiting others. All around are those who are doing what they can. Often, and most times, we don't see what they are doing.

If our eyes could see, we'd notice the great things that the Lord is doing. This is one of the hardest things to see. God answering prayers. God forgiving sins. God sending blessings down. God using angels to fulfill His work. All around us, probably every day, things God is doing that we don't see, recognize nor understand. I do believe when this life is over, we will be amazed at all that God has done. There are people in our lives who have made a difference, did God send them? There were things that have made us stronger, more dedicated and closer to the Lord. What all did God have to do with that? If only our eyes could see?

Sometimes our eyes can't see, but we are just not looking. We look at problems instead of help from Heaven. We see things that are wrong rather than what is right. It's easy to get distracted. It is that way physically and it is that way spiritually. Distracted drivers is a huge problem anymore. Driving and texting is a wreck ready to happen, yet it is done all the time. Distracted. Satan will try to get you to take your eyes off of the Lord and Heaven. He wants to distract you. This happens so easily in worship. It's the simple things that can do it. A crying baby. A young person who is shuffling papers. Someone going out to the bathroom. We lose our attention. We lose the train of thought. We have become distracted. Satan wants us to do this spiritually in life. Get distracted in your marriage and don't pay attention to your mate. Get distracted by sports and work and have them fill your heart and your time. Get distracted with world events and national politics. These things become the basis of our conversations. These are the things that people get excited about.

It is interesting in Acts 6, when a complaint arose about some members being neglected, that the Apostles came up with a solution and moved on. It didn't seem to take six months of meetings and then a committee and then a report before things got done. They told the church to pick seven godly and trusted men and let them take care of it. As that section of Acts ends, we find a verse that reminds us that the church continued to grow. That doesn't happen today. A problem and everything stops. A distraction and we can't go on. That's the way Satan wants us to operate. So, he will continually toss distractions our way. Problems with the church building-distractions. Problems with a family-distractions. Problems with the sound system- distractions. Everyone rallies around these distractions wondering what we will do and how much it will cost, and the work stops. Every thing stops until the distraction is dealt with.

Have you ever notice how many times there were distractions and interruptions in the life of Jesus. Constantly. Problems here. Questions there. Come. We need You. Answer this. Do this. Distractions. Interruptions. But never did Jesus take His eyes off of His mission. He was God focused. His eyes could see.

Satan will throw distractions at you personally. All of this is to get your eyes off of the Lord. The house has problems. Work has problems. The car has problems. Even the dog has problems. Distractions. They take your time, energy and money. They can pull you out of the game of life. They can you get so consumed that you can't go on. Our momentum gets stopped. We become bogged down. We limp along. What we need is simply, "Open our eyes, Lord, that we may see." In a hundred years, the house, the car, the job and even the dog, won't matter. What will matter is our walk with the Lord.

Open our eyes Lord, that we may see. Pray that today. See if it helps you. Don't lose sight of what is really important. Learn to be a Mary in a Martha world.

Open our eyes...

Roger Shouse