



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 # 1669

Galatians 6:10 *“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”*

Doing good is characteristic of Christians. Three times in Titus the plea to be engaged in good deeds is used. The example of Jesus, the story of the good Samaritan and the overall concept of loving all people and being compassionate drives God's people to help others. Christians are "do gooders." They are to make a difference in the lives of others.

Three things come from our verse today:

Christians must have open eyes. This is how one makes the most of opportunities. It is easy to miss opportunities or to let opportunities go by, simply because we didn't see them. Look for them. Keep your eyes open. There are ways to help every day. Little things and big things. Something as easy as stopping by the hospital on your way home from work to visit a sick friend. It's as easy as mowing your neighbor's yard when he is out of town. Someone in our congregation handed me some money recently and told me to go buy four Bibles for a mother and her three children that started attending with us. They love the Bibles. They don't know who did this for them. Someone with open eyes saw an opportunity.

Christians must have a willing heart. It's one thing to see opportunities, it's something else to act upon them. The easy thing to do is to say, "I wish someone would do something about this." We are that someone. Helping others puts them at the top of the list and ourselves at the bottom of the list. If we wait until we feel like it, the opportunities are gone. Opportunities show up on a Saturday morning when we'd rather sleep in. Opportunities come when I have a full schedule. The willing heart is the key. Selfishness kills the good that can and ought to be done.

Christians must have the resources. To see what needs to be done, but to be unable to help, doesn't do anyone much good. Resources of time. Resources of money. Resources of talent. Put all of these together and lives can be changed. The good Samaritan could help the wounded man because he saw him, he cared for him and he had some resources that allowed him to help. He used his oil. He took the wounded man to an inn and left money for his care.

(OVER)

Had the Samaritan been living paycheck to paycheck with a credit card maxed out, he wouldn't have been much help. He had resources. Would it be wise for us to set aside some money for good Samaritan causes? If we wait until we pay off debt, the kids are out of college, and we are in a better position, the opportunity will be long gone. Opportunities come suddenly. They come unannounced. I have seen more than once, occasions where at the end of services some money is being collected to help someone, and right then and there, thousands of dollars are donated. Folks had resources. People were willing to give. It's amazing.

Doors are opened when good is done. The very hearts that may be closed to the listening of preaching, may be touched and opened by the goodness and generosity of those who are doing good. When people help out without any expectations back, that moves people. We don't do good with the understanding that now you must come to my church because I helped you out. That leaves the impression that you now owe me. That leaves the impression that we are buying your commitment or salvation. Do good with no strings attached. Do good without saying anything.

My wife and I went to a new place to eat last night after services. There were a few there from our congregation. When I got ready to pay for our food, I was told that someone had already paid for it. One of our members did that. What a surprise. What a delight. What a generous and kind act. Doing good. Making a difference. It doesn't always involve money. Sometimes, it involves muscle. Someone needs help moving. You show up. A neighbor has a lot of yard work. You jump in and help out. A storm causes a lot of damage in an area and you are there with a chain saw, pickup and time. It's shoveling the driveway of a senior citizen. It's helping an expectant mother with a baby shower. It's blessings from Heaven that come through you.

Most of us have a long list of people who have done things for us in the past. Most of us preachers can look through our library and see books that have been given to us by others. Doing good-that's how Christianity is witnessed. Your belief in the trinity, the one faith, the inspiration of the Scriptures are all important and powerful doctrines, but those don't help a guy who is down on his luck. They don't do much for a two man job when there is only one man to do it. Stand with what the Bible teaches, but get out and get busy helping others. This is where it's at.

God has a wonderful way of providing opportunities. Find what you are good at. Find what you can do. Then, go do it. Don't come back tooting your horn or telling others that you were the only one who showed up. Don't do that. That only ruins the good that you did. Just do it. Buy the older couple's meal and don't say anything about it. Work behind the scenes. Let God get the glory. That's missed sometimes because we are wanting a shout out, a big thank you or at least a slap on the back. If that's why we do things then our motives are misguided. It is never about us, but always about God and doing what we can to be His eyes, His feet and His hands.

Let us do good...shall we? Let's start today!

Roger Shouse

