



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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January 8, 2017

Jump Start # 1715

Psalms 39:4 *“Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am.”*

This week we are going to look at reminders of eternity, in a series I am entitling, "Whispers of Eternity." We have a dual nature, physical and spiritual. We are created in the image of God and within us is a soul that will never die, even though our bodies do. The world about us, the way we live, the emphasis upon the material and the here and now can shove the spiritual aspect of us so far into the background that we rarely think about it. Occasionally, usually at the funeral home, we wonder if this is it. But with our busy schedules with work, kids, appointments, coming holiday plans, ballgames can easily make it possible for us to rarely think of the eternal. I expect there are some who never think of the eternal. There are those who bought into the idea that there is no God and this is it. For them, this is as good as it will ever get. Those that worship God and are readers of the Bible understand and are reminded.

Our verse is a great one to set us on this journey. It's more than a statement, it's a plea and a prayer. Lord, the Psalmist asks, "Make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days." David, who wrote this, may have been wanting to know some specifics, like, how long am I going to live and how is this all going to turn out. But for us, this passage reminds us that our days here on this planet will come to an end. People are living longer and longer all the time and medical research has made great strides against diseases that were once considered fatal, but still, with all of that, we come to an end here. Our days will end. His prayer was that God would make him know that.

There are several ways God does that for us. It's not that this is a secret of Heaven. We know this but do we recognize this and do anything about this? That's the question.

Here are a few ways that God lets us know our end.

First, the Scriptures teach that. Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointment for men to die once and after this comes judgment." God tells us so. In another Psalms, Moses tells us to number our days. Our days are not infinite. Our days can be counted.

Second, all around us are reminders of "the end." Every newspaper, every news cast tells us of the fatality of man. Car wrecks, wars, disease, crime, disasters-death happens all around us and all around the world. According to current stats, more than 151,000 people die every day world wide. Most we don't hear about. Most we don't know. But there are the few that we know. There are church members that we worshipped with that pass away. There are co-workers and family members that pass away. There are those who die way too young. Those grab our attention. They shock us and stun us. They remind us that we, too, have "an end."

(OVER)

Third, as we age, we are given reminders that the end is coming. We think we are twenty, but our bodies remind us that we are 60. We have pills to take in the morning. We have medicines to take at night. We put on our glasses, hearing aides and the more the years stack on, the slower we move. We are wearing out. We tire more easily. We can't remember things. Some days, we simply do not feel well. We attribute this to getting older, but it is a reminder from Heaven that the end is closer than we may want to believe.

With these reminders all about us, there ought to be something that we do with knowing our end is coming. We can choose to ignore these reminders and live on as if nothing will ever happen to us and then one day it will. Ready or not, it will. We can become angry and bitter because of these things. Or, spiritually, we can use these reminders from God to help us prepare for the eternal. We do not last here. There is an end. But it is not the end of us. We will live on. That's the value in these reminders. It helps us to shape our hearts and walk closer to the Lord. They remind us to use our time wisely. They help us to make a difference in the lives of others.

Knowing the end will come someday, what needs to be done? Have you thought about that? Do you want to think about that?

There are some things you can do financially that will help your family when your end comes. Get a will. Write out instructions about what you want done at your death. Get your important papers in one place and then let others know where they are.

With the end in mind, connect with the Lord. Pray. Read His word. Become what He wants you to be. Be a spiritual person. Be ready, as the parable of the wise and foolish virgins tells us. Get rid of the secret sins in your life. Be transparent with God. He already knows. Stand pure and holy before the Lord.

With the end in mind, get about doing the things that really matter. Maybe you have tossed around the idea of serving as a shepherd or a deacon in God's church. Do it. Maybe you have always thought about teaching a class. Do it. It's time to start doing and stop just thinking about things. The end will come. Every cemetery is filled with those who never got about doing what they wanted to. Fear, too busy right now, not sure, has kept many boats tied up to the dock. Spiritually, far too many churches have men who could do more in the kingdom if they understood their end. Why not? Why not now? If not now, when? There may not be a better time than now.

With the end in mind, speak what needs to be said. Say it kindly and with gentleness, but say it. Say what needs to be said to your family. Say what needs to be said to your co-workers. Say what needs to be said to your brethren. Don't be ugly. Don't be rude. But, likewise, don't be quiet and still. Are your teens dating questionable people? When do you plan to say something? At their wedding? It will be too late. Afraid they will get mad at you and blow up? What will happen when two years into the marriage, they begin talking about a divorce? Say something. Got a loud mouth at work who thinks he knows everything about everything, especially, the Bible and God. His constant rants are usually off base and without any evidence. Say something. Got a church member who is always complaining and always negative. They forget to count their blessings. Say something. It's easy, afterwards, for someone to proclaim, "I just knew that marriage wasn't going to make it." Then, why didn't you say something? Got someone who is heading down a dangerous road with this thoughts, say something. The time will come when you won't be able to say anything. This is something we preachers need to think about. Dump some of those nice pretty sermons and say what really needs to be said. Say it kindly. Say it helpfully. Say it Scripturally. But, please, say it.

Lord, help us to know our end. The whispers of eternity.

Roger Shouse