



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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Galatians 6:9 *“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”*

Now, our verse. There seems to be four components to this passage.

First, there is the togetherness. It is expressed by the words, "Let us." I like that. Sometimes we preachers like to tell the audience what to do, but we do not include ourselves. Paul did not say, "You need to..." He said, "Let us." This thought is used three times in Hebrews 10. There we find, "Let us draw near..." (22); "Let us hold fast..." (23); and "let us consider how..." (24). Let us. We are in this together. The work is too much for any one of us. We need each other. Every organization, every team, and every church needs the spirit of "let us" to be successful. The quarterback can't make it without linemen, receivers, coaches, equipment men, administration personnel, and even the guy who sells the tickets. Different roles, but all connected. So it is in the church. Some preach. Some shepherd. Some invite. Some serve. Some support. Everyone has a role. We need to lose the "me" verse "them" way of thinking. It's us. It's "let us."

Second, don't lose heart in doing good. The "losing heart," means to become discouraged. We'd say it this way, "I don't feel like it," or, "my heart is not in it anymore." That person has "lost heart." In Luke, Jesus told the disciples to pray at all times and not to lose heart. John 14 begins with the thought, "Let not your heart be troubled." Why would one become discouraged in doing good? That's hard for some to see. Others, know this. They have experienced it. The losing heart seems to be connected with the final expression in this verse, "grow weary." That's the cause of losing heart. They became tired. Tired of always being the one who takes meals. Tired of being the one who is always teaching class. Tired of being the one who is always the encourager. Tired of carrying the load. Tired of shepherding. Tired of being the "faithful few." Why don't others do it for a change? Why don't the young folks step up? If I don't do it, it will not get done. Boy, I know that song. I've sung it too many times, myself. From this weariness comes discouragement then comes the Elijah syndrome. Remember ole' Elijah, hiding in the cave to escape Jezebel's assassins? He was ready for God to take him. He was the only one, he thought. No one else was doing anything. He must have been singing, "Gloom, despair and agony on me," in that dark cave. Pitiful me. Woe is me. God had to remind Elijah that there were thousands who had not bowed their knees to Baal. He didn't know about them. He wasn't the only one. He was not stranded on the island of misfits, as he so believed.

(OVER)

Losing heart will cause one to quit. He will walk away and never come back. It's good to take a break. It's good to get away. It's good to catch your breath, refocus, recharge your batteries, but get back in there. You are needed. You are doing good. You are making a difference. Your efforts matter. Your example is helpful and encouraging. If you stop, you'll be just like the ones you complain about. No, there won't be a banner with your name on it stretched across the auditorium on Sunday. No, there won't be a banquet in your honor. No, you probably won't even be mentioned in the bulletin or get a shout out from the pulpit. That would take away from the good that you are doing. You do what you do because it's the right thing and it's necessary.

Third, in due time we shall reap. Payday is coming. Payday comes after you have first worked. The reaping is what the five talent man witnessed when his master praised him for doing good. Reaping may come in several forms. We first think of Heaven. The crown of righteousness that awaits us. That's the truest sense of reaping. But there are other forms of reaping. It's seeing children learning and doing well because you have taught them. It's family members who are changing because you have influenced them. It's seeing people in the audience who came because you invited them. It's seeing a young man preach because you spent time with him and encouraged him. It's seeing marriages saved and thriving again. It's seeing people conquer their addictions. It's seeing the church reaching others and becoming stronger because you poured hours into leading them. Sure the benefits are Heaven, but there are many, many other benefits right now. Most of us are where we are today because of someone else. A parent, a friend, a preacher, an elder, poured hours into us. They wouldn't quit. They never gave up on us. And today, we stand tall because of their work. We are the harvest of the work of others.

There is a "due time" that comes before the reaping. Farmers understand this. They plant in the spring and harvest in the fall. They have to wait. There is no short cuts that allows them to plant and harvest in the same week. Due time means simple that. It takes time. Patience. Waiting. Still doing good. In time it will show. It will show in grown children. It will show in mature Christians. It will show in stronger faith.

Finally, all of this is based upon not growing weary. IF we do not grow weary. IF. A big IF. Satan is counting on you not making it. Satan is hoping that you will get weary. He wants you to become discouraged. He wants good to stop. Keep going, is what Paul is saying. Hebrews reminds us that we have not endured to the point of shedding blood. Yes, you are tired. Keep going. Yes, there is so much to be done. Keep going.

The next verse connects to all of this. "While we have opportunity, let us do good to all..." While the door is open. Get up. I know you are tired. Get off the couch. Another study. Another phone call. Another meal to make. Another class to teach. Another chance to do good.

Some day the opportunity will be gone. The person will move on, things change and the window of making a difference closes. Someday we will not be in the position to do much good. Health and age will take it's toll upon us. I have been preaching about 40 years, 36 of those have been full time. For the first time in my life, I have been thinking about when will it be time for me to call it quits. "While we have opportunity," won't always be there. The end is closer than it has ever been for me. This is why we must do good.

God has made us in such a way that all of us can do good. Not everyone can preach, nor do we need everyone to preach. Not everyone can say the right words of encouragement. Not everyone is gifted at inviting folks to services. Not everyone can teach. Not everyone can cook a meal and take it to someone. But we all can do something. Even the one talent man had one talent. That may be all you have. That's fine. Don't compare yourself with others. Don't complain about what you can't do. Just get busy and "let us not lose heart in doing good..."

Off the sidelines and into the game of life, that 's what God wants. It's easy to point out the problems. Help be a part of the solution. Don't wait for others. They are probably waiting on you. Jump in. Get involved. Do what you can.

That's the thoughts. Now, let's do it.

Roger Shouse