



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

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***1 Timothy 1:19 "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."***

I had a discussion with a Christian recently who pointed out several Christian families across the country that he knew specifically had a grown child who was homosexual. His question to me was "Why?" I think he was looking for a contributing cause or a finger to point. Maybe he thought these parents were too strict. Maybe sermons were too harsh. Maybe there wasn't enough open discussion about sexuality. Maybe...maybe...maybe. I think he was disappointed that I didn't jump on his bandwagon. I just didn't see the connections. I told him that I knew of hundreds of Christian families, many from the same congregations that he was trying to blame, that did not have homosexuality among them.

I think a greater question and discussion is why do Christians leave the faith to return to the sin of the world? That baffles me. For a person who never understood, that's one thing, but for a person who "tasted the Heavenly gift" and has "tasted the good word of God" and then chooses to fall away, that's hard to understand. Peter also addresses this topic, when he says that they are again entangled and overcome. Peter claims "it would be better for them not to know the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away." Our verse today describes some who have rejected the faith and have suffered shipwreck. They crashed. They crashed spiritually.

There have been many famous shipwrecks throughout history. We remember the Titanic. The Spanish-American War started with the bombing of the Navy ship the Maine. There was the shipwrecks at Pearl Harbor. Gordon Lightfoot made famous in a song the shipwreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald. The T.V. show, Gilligan's Island, was based upon the shipwreck of the S.S. Minnow. Paul stated that he was shipwrecked three times. Once he spent the entire night in the water. The greatest shipwreck of all, is the crashing of one's faith. One turns his back on what he once believed. He has changed his mind. He no longer wants to continue the course that he is on.

There are many reasons why this could happen, but none of them make much sense.

- It happens to those who are new and young in the faith. They haven't grown. As the parable of the sower illustrates, the young faith withers away.

**(OVER)**

- Some have never fully committed themselves to Christ. They kept the doors opened to the world that they supposedly left. They have kept ties with friends and habits of the world. They have tried to balance being a Christian and being a person of the world. It never works. Much too often, they simply return to the world.
- For some, things got messy in their marriage and there was a divorce. Then they met someone else. Their emotions and heart stood at the crossroads with what the word of God taught. They chose their emotions and heart. They went for what made them happy.
- For others, it was the pleasures of sin, plain and simple.
- For others, they never really believed. They went along with things for a while, but they never were fully convinced. They were easily swayed by smooth talking falsehoods that appealed to what they were really looking for. They rejected the truth and followed a lie.

It's tragic when one shipwrecks their faith. Not only are they tossing all hope aside, but they are paving the way for those who come after them to follow in their steps. The next generation, won't even take a look at the pure doctrine of Christ. They will be raised without ever knowing it.

Moms and dads and preachers and elders must do all that we can to keep shipwrecks from happening. Honest questions, need honest answers, even if they are blunt, painful and hard. Teaching. Showing. Living. That's the answer to keeping the faith alive. It must be lived every day. It must be the core of all that we do. Every decision, every choice, every attitude must be filtered through our faith. There is never a time and never a place that our faith is out of line. There is never a time and never a place that we are not Christians. On a date, in an office meeting, at the ballgame, buying a car, selling stuff on EBay-first, last and always a Christian.

Spiritual shipwrecks can be prevented. A person must want to stay with Christ. A person who is looking for the door out, will find it. This is true with a job. This is true with a marriage. This is true with our walk with the Lord. When a person focuses upon how miserable they are. When all they see are problems. When a person feels that they are missing out, then they will find that door and use it. Maybe that's why we sing, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one." Instead of looking at what we don't have or can't do, maybe we ought to look at what we do have and what we can do. What a blessing it is to be in the Lord.

A long time ago, my son Jordan and I were in a canoe. We had no idea what we were doing. We were trying to go but were having trouble. We torpedoed another canoe and it turned over. A woman went into the water. We were right at the shore. She was fine. It was funny then and it's even more funny now. Shipwrecks.

Are you doing all you can to keep your faith going? Do you have your eyes open? Satan is trying to turn you over. He wants you to quit. Stay with it. Don't turn your back on what you know is right and true.

Roger Shouse