



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 # 1836

Genesis 3:1 "Then the Lord God called to the man, and said, to him, "Where are you?"

Our verse today surrounds a simple three worded question, "Where are you?" It is the first question that God asked in the Bible. The question has a lot of background and much depth to it. The question takes place in the garden of Eden. There was just Adam, God and Eve. We can't imagine that world. No one to instant message. Nothing to share with others on Facebook. Your list of friends included, either Adam or Eve and God. That's it. No co-workers. No neighbors. No in-laws. No nutty cousins. More than that, no real history. No genealogy. No, "this is where you grew up." No high school reunions. No grandparents. No, "you look like your mother." No keeping up with the Jones. No one to compare the other with. Just Adam, God and Eve. If there was a mess, it's pretty easy to figure out who made it-either Adam or Eve.

The text gives us the impression that there was a wonderful fellowship between mankind and God in the garden. The previous verse says that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. God was on earth. God was walking on earth. Jesus, in the first century, wasn't the first time God came to earth. One can only imagine what it would be like to walk with God in the morning. Can you see God stopping and pointing out a flower or a song bird and being delighted that Adam like them. You can see the smile on God's face as He showed them different things that He created. "I made this just for you," happily confesses God. Fellowship, togetherness, friendship-the picture we see here is what we long for and hope for in Heaven.

And in this grand and beautiful scene, something changed. Satan came. The Bible doesn't tell us where he came from. Don't waste volumes of paper and hours trying to chase down those ideas. He's here. He's been a liar from the beginning, that's what Jesus said. It wasn't that he once was good and then turned bad. From the beginning he has been wrong.

Eve is tempted. You won't die. You'll be like God. The fruit sure looked good. She took and ate. Adam ate. Immediately they had rebelled and violated the will of God. They knew that they were naked. They tasted guilt and shame for the first time. And for the first time, they hid. They didn't want God to find them.

This is where our verse is found. It is here that God asks, "Where are you?" He was not asking about location. He knew where they were. He's God. He knows all things. If He knows how many hairs are on our head and if He knows when a sparrow falls, He certainly knew where Adam was hiding.

(OVER)

Where are you-not asking for a location but a reason. Why are you hiding? You have never hid before. Why are you afraid of Me? What's happened? What's changed? God knew. God knew what they had done. Where are you is really asking, "Why?" Why are you hiding? Why did you do this? Rather than a location, God was asking for a confession. What did you do?

The first question God asks in the Bible-Where are you?

I expect that God could continue to ask that of us:

- Where are you when My people gather to worship? You weren't there. Where are you? Again, God knows. What He wants to know is why? Why are you not with My people? Why are you not worshipping Me? What is so important that you can't get to the church building? Too tired? What were you doing yesterday? Did you even think about the next day? Did worship ever enter your mind on Saturday? Why not? Had to work? Really? Have you tried to get around that? Had to travel? Really? No other flights? No other times you could go? Was on vacation? Are there no places to worship? Did you give that any thought? Where are you?
- Where are you in your relationship with Me? I never hear from you? You never think about Me? You never mention Me to others? You seem to be drifting. You seem obsessed with stuff. Your heart is a mess of worry and misery. Why don't you walk with Me? Why don't you spend some time with Me in My word? I can help you. I can give you a peace that you cannot find anywhere else. I can forgive you. I can lead you to quiet waters and green pastures. I wish you trusted Me more. I wish you really believed in Me. Where are you?
- Where are you when you are trying to figure things out? Disease, depression and death seem to follow you. It seems that you are so eager to try new things and to listen to the latest advice about things, yet you never seem to turn to Me? Your marriage is messy. Your kids are growing apart from Me. You seem so busy that you are missing the important things. Where are you? Why won't you let me help you? Why won't you let me guide your heart and your home? Why are you so determined to do things without Me? Why do you fight Me? Why do you listen to others more than Me?
- Where are you when it's time for Me to call you home? Do you know what happens when you die? I've told you. Do you know who gets to spend forever with Me? I have showed you. Do you know why some will not be in Heaven? I've told you. Why do you listen and believe serpents when they have done nothing for you? Why do you trust the words of serpents more than My words? Why do you think that I have not been fair with you? Why do you think I have been against you? Where are you?

I fear that someday, some will be asking that very question to God. They will ask, "Where are you, Lord?" And there will be no answer, only silence. A life that is lived without God will lead to an eternity without God. And when we need God the most, He won't be there, because we hid from Him.

Where are you? A serious question for Adam. A greater question of us. The first question still needs to be asked. Can we help you? Can we study the Bible together? Can we look to find answers to your questions? We welcome you to worship with us. We welcome you to know God. Don't be afraid of Him. Don't hide from Him.

He is looking for you. Won't you come out, and come to Him?

Can we help?

Roger Shouse