



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)

January 21, 2018

Jump Start # 2009

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him"

Our verse today are Peter's words to the Roman soldier Cornelius. Peter was called to speak to this gentile who was a worshipper of God and a friend to the Jewish community. Among the things Peter says about Jesus is that "He went about doing good."

Peter could pull many events from his memory about this. He had seen Jesus doing good. When the synagogue official's young daughter was dying Jesus went. She died, but before the eyes of her parents, and Peter, James and John, Jesus commanded the girl to arise and she did. Hope, life and joy was restored.

Peter could remember the day that it was getting late and a large multitude was hungry. The disciples suggested sending them home. Jesus commanded that they sit in groups of fifty and one hundred. He then multiplied a poor boy's snack to feed more than 5,000 people. The people were satisfied. Good was done.

Peter could remember the time an angry Jewish crowd brought a woman into the temple who had been caught in the very act of adultery. A very embarrassing situation. The leaders were demanding her death. Jesus wrote something in the dirt and said that those who were without sin cast the first stone. The crowd left humiliated. Jesus with the woman, told her that He did not condemn her but that she should sin no more. A life was saved. Jesus did good.

Peter could remember the long journey to Jerusalem for the final time. Lepers were cured on the way. Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus and included this tax collector among the people of God.

Nearly every page of our Gospels and for Peter, a mind filled with so many memories, of the good that Jesus did. The bent over woman. The woman with the issue of blood. The demon possessed. The blind. Lives were made better because of Jesus. Satan was on the run because of Jesus. Multitudes believed because of Jesus.

There is a link and a bridge that we ought to see here. If we are cut from the same cloth and are conformed to the image of Jesus, shouldn't we be a people who go about doing good? Shouldn't people know us for our good deeds? In Titus, we are reminded to be zealous for good deeds. The Galatians were told, as we have opportunity let us do good to all people, especially the household of faith.

(OVER)

Doing good. Is that how you and I are known? Is that what we are about? Do we point lives to Christ? Do we help restore hope and joy? Do we make lives better? Are we making a difference? I was watching a college basketball game the other day. There were so many time outs because the coaches were fussing about rules that the game became slow and tedious. The refs were looking at video replays. They were explaining things to the coaches. I finally gave up watching. It was too slow for me. Just play the game. Some are like this in life. They spend so much time in the huddle discussing how best to do this and that, nothing ever gets done. We can be known as a people who are always arguing about the rules. We can be known as a people who are long on talk and short on doing.

I've known many in my life who stood in the Lord's shadows of doing good. The list of things that they did and the number of people that they helped was so long that they even forgot some of the things that they did. They'd see a church family in a restaurant, and they made sure to pay the bill for the other family. They'd help a college kid with his expenses. They'd fill a teenager's car up with gas. They'd bring groceries to the home of a family that just moved into the area. They'd sit with someone in the surgery waiting room. They made sure that a older neighbor's driveway was cleared of snow. They'd give books to young preachers. On and on and on the list continues. They went about doing just what Jesus did, doing good.

A person tends to remember someone who has done good for them., especially when it wasn't expected. The world is full of those who complain, those who demand and those who take. Finding those special few who go about doing good is very unique, except it ought to be the norm among God's people. There is an old thought that rings true, you must show that you care before someone will listen to what you say. Doing good is one of the best ways to show that you care.

All of this comes down to what we see in the mirror. What good are we doing? We can talk a good story. We can have great ideas. But are we going about doing good? Are we making a difference in people's lives. Some have ready excuses. It's expensive to do good. It is. Filing a guys gas tank up costs. Buying groceries or paying for a family's meal costs. But isn't that one reason why we have been blessed? We have so we can help. You don't have to bankrupt the farm to do good. You can do what you can.

Others quickly proclaim, 'But some will take advantage of you.' They might. You may have to put borders up on some and even stop some good. Jesus stopped feeding the multitudes. Some went home. Some didn't. Not everyone will take advantage of you.

Some will boast, "No one ever did that stuff to me." Maybe not, but don't you wish they did? That's the golden rule right there. And still, there is not one of us Christians who has not been helped along the way by another Christian. We all have. Every one of us. The good you do may be just the think that someone needs in their faith and in their heart to keep going. It's more than food or gas or a ticket to a game or a gift card, it's showing that you thought of them and you cared. That's what really matters. That's the real difference.

How did Jesus build that base of followers? Have you ever thought about that. No website. No Facebook. No positive feed back for others to read. No pamphlets handed out. No business cards. No videos. Jesus went about doing good and the word spread. People are hungry for good, especially when it comes in their direction. Luke 12 tells us that there were so many thousands that they were stepping on one another. The feeding of the 5,000-why were there so many? They wanted to see Jesus. The crippled man who was lowered through the roof, that happened because the house Jesus was teaching in was packed. There was no room on the inside. Crowds-massive crowds, because Jesus was doing good.

Touching lives and making a difference-it makes us wonder if we have forgotten that.

Roger Shouse (used by permission)