



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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Jeremiah 6:15 "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; they did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down," says the Lord."

The nation of Judah had fallen to a low state spiritually. Prophet, priest, as well as most of the people, had abandoned the Lord and sold themselves into the selfish worship of idolatry and sin. Our verse today magnifies the depth that their empty hearts had fallen by stating they were not ashamed and they did not even know how to blush.

The blush factor is something that is learned. Little toddlers can run through the house without a stitch of clothes on or even a diaper to the laughter and the horror of parents. But that child later learns to be embarrassed. Blushing or embarrassment comes from a conscience that is sensitive and working. That, in turn, comes from a sense of moral right and wrong. There are some things that a person just doesn't do. But when the moral conscience is no longer working, then there is no shame, no blushing and no embarrassment.

Our times are there. There ought to be a lot of blushing and embarrassment, but it's missing. Instead, there is praise, and enjoyment in the very things that offend the people of God. Let me give you three examples.

The Greeting Card Industry: I went the other day to pick up a card to encourage someone. I found a nice card with a cute flower on the front. It would be great. I opened the card up and it was rude, offensive and embarrassing to me. I looked around for others. The card racks were full of pictures of immodest women, alcohol or rude comments. It took a long time to find a decent card that was truly decent. The display of cards reminded me of late night middle school boys at a summer camp. Crude bathroom jokes that are immature and out of place. But those cards dominated the store. Why wasn't there any decent cards? It's what the public wants. If the crude cards weren't selling, the industry would shift. They make what sells. It's what people want. There is no shame and no blushing, except by me, when I pull out a card that I thought was decent, but it's not.

Actors at award shows. It is interesting that folks who spend a lifetime pretending to be someone other than who they are, become experts in politics, economics and world policy when they are to give an acceptance speech for some award. The use of foul language is all too common. The rude things said. The offensive stabs at those who have faith.

(OVER)

The hypocrisy of disrespecting others beliefs, while demanding respect for behavior that God calls sinful, is alarming. Another actor used primetime to curse the president. Maybe some do not like him, but no shame and no embarrassment for using bad language and then receiving not just approval but loud ovations for doing that. Encouragement rather than embarrassment. Praise rather than punishment. Approval rather than offended.

The Porn industry. Jason, our other preacher, and I did a sermon recently on Paralyzing Addictions. I grab some stats on the porn industry. The numbers are off the charts. This is a huge problem in America, our churches and in our hearts. What is sad, is so many videos are not made by sleazy porn stars, but are self made, homemade videos that are submitted and circulated by porn sites. There are more videos made by amateurs than by the porn stars. This means couples, neighbors, folks we work with, are filming themselves having sexual relations and sending them in to be viewed by the world. They do it for money. They do it for instant fame. They do it because it is exciting. They do it without any shame, embarrassment or even blushing. They do it knowing that thousands of people world wide will be watching their video. The growing number of self made videos has exploded so rapidly, that people have to be unique, unusual and different in what they are doing on the videos. And, we return to the words of our passage, is there no shame, no blushing?

The times we live in are dark morally. The conscience for many no longer works. Immodest in dress, immoral in thought and indecent in talk is what is becoming normal. It's every where, even in greeting cards.

We must stay close to God's word. It is easy to be pulled into this moral sewer that we live in. It's hard to walk through mud and stay clean. It's easy to start using words that we'd never use before. We are hearing them everywhere. It's easy to be suggestive in talk and in dress. These are the times we live in.

To counter this, and to remain as God wants us to, we must work even harder. It may get to a point that we make our own greeting cards. It may be a time that we watch very little TV, because there are a thousand channels and nothing worth while to watch. It may be a time when we see the great value of spending more time with one another. Encourage one another. Remind one another. Put the phones down and get to know those in our fellowship.

If we find ourselves being embarrassed less and less, then possibly we need to spend more time with the Savior. Get that conscience up and working again. The more Bible that is in our hearts the more that we become sensitive to things that are wrong. The more Bible that is in our hearts the more we blush at things that are wrong. The more Bible that is in our hearts, the more that we walk closer to the Lord.

Unable to blush. Not ashamed. Let that never be said of us.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)
