



# 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***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

October 28, 2018

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**Galatians 1:24 "And they were glorifying God because of me."**

In this first chapter of Galatians, Paul tells us his story. Word came that "he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy." That thought leads to our verse today. The brethren rejoiced that Paul stopped his persecution. They were rejoicing that he was a Christian. They glorified God because of Paul. In his words, "because of me," they were glorying God.

That ending expression, "because of me," is worth thinking about.

Because of me, could be spoken of arrogantly and proudly and in that way, it would be misused and wrong. Many of us have to fight the "me" in each of us. We want our way. We want our opinion heard. We think we are always right. And, we think that if we dropped out of the picture, the church, even, the world would stop. How could they survive without me, we think. It doesn't take too much of that to sicken everyone around you. The only person that really wants to hear our accomplishments are ourselves. So, we must be careful with the "Because of me," thinking.

Because of me, could also become very negative. Because of me, the shepherds in the church must have special meetings. Because of me, everyone is upset. Because of me, a big stink was caused in the congregation. "Because of me," can turn into something that is not so pleasant.

As Paul used this, not in a negative fashion, and certainly not to boast, but to illustrate how he changed. He once was a threat, and now he was an apostle. He once tried to kill Christians, and now he was willing to be killed to support the faith. That change, brought much joy and happiness to the brethren.

You could say:

- Because of me, the work in this congregation and in the kingdom continues, because I support it financially. It takes money. It takes money to buy the seed so the sower can plant. It takes money to print. It takes money to support the preacher. It takes money to make CD's. It takes money to send the message out. Because of your part, because of me, this is accomplished. You may not be the voice on the CD, but because of you, it was possible to make those and someone may just have been helped because of that.
- Because of me, a child has learned some basic Bible principles, because you taught a Bible class. You took this task very seriously, and you spend time at home cutting out things to decorate your classroom. You studied your lesson. You came to class with joy and enthusiasm. The kids love you. And, they learned. Years from now, some will remember you. Some may even teach a class when they are older because of what you have done. Because of you, others are learning and growing.

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Every quarter, the call goes out for teachers. Often, too often, an auditorium is full of adults and no one moves. No one volunteers. No one wants to teach. You have and you will. Because of you, a difference is being made.

- Because of me, what you have done, a heart was encouraged, because you took the time to send a card to someone. There has been someone missing because he has been ill. There has been a new family that has been visiting. There is a young family with a new baby. There is a new Christian. So many opportunities. You took the time while at a store to purchase a card. You wrote a couple of sentences and mailed that card. It happened to be just the thing to brighten up a heart. It reminded someone that they are loved, noticed and cared for. The card isn't much. It's basically a cup of cold water, as Jesus spoke about in Matthew 10. But because of you, and your thoughtfulness, someone's spirits were lifted and they were encouraged.
- Because of me, what you did, a young preacher feels more determined to devote his life to preaching God's word. You found around the house some old books that you don't use much any more. Rather than tossing them, you boxed them up and gave them to a young preacher. He doesn't have much. He doesn't know much about these books. You explain what they are and talk about the authors. You share with him how those books helped you long ago and now you want to help him. There is a connection and his heart is happy to receive such kindness.
- Because of me, what you did, the church building looks nice. You noticed some weeds growing here and there and you stopped by one day and pulled all the weeds. You planted a few flowers out front. You donated all of this on your own. You did not want a shout out. You came quietly when no one was around because you simply wanted to do what you could. You can't lead singing, preach or a lot of things that goes on in the congregation, but you can certainly pull weeds. And, if you can pull weeds as your gift, you will do that. No one ever said anything to you, mostly because no one knew it was you who did it. But because of you, the place looks nicer. It's attractive to people driving by, and it makes a statement that we care about the appearance and we certainly care about what we do. Because of you, the place looks nicer.
- Because of me, what you did, worship was so exceptional on Sunday. You led singing. You poured a lot of time into picking out the right songs. You practiced and practiced, so everything would be just right. Or, was it you who led the prayer on Sunday. You too, put a lot of thought into what you were going to say. It was heartfelt and touching. Or, was it you who led the table talk before the Lord's Supper. Your thoughts were so good. Or, was it you who preached. Your topic was just what was needed. It was powerful, passionate and practical. Because of you, we worshipped. Because of you, we saw Jesus. Because of you, our hearts were stirred, encouraged and strengthened.
- Because of me, we worshipped. Maybe you cannot lead singing, but you sang from the pew. Maybe you can't lead prayer, but you were praying along with others. Maybe you can't preach, but your Bible was open, as well as your heart. Your presence, your smile, your spirit, helps make our fellowship meaningful. Because of you, we are a family of God.

Because of me. Three little words that makes us reflect upon what we are adding to the whole. We are a team. It takes all of us. It takes a lot of "because of me," to be who we are. Am I doing my part. Can it be said, because of me, someone is made better?

Because of me...sure is something to think about, isn't it.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)

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