



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 # 2208

Psalms 65:8 "They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy."

Our verse today speaks of standing in awe of God. Being impressed. Astonished. Even, being curious about God. It seems that in some ways that has been missing in our times. We study God. We know God. We follow God. We obey God. We defend God. We quote God. But we no longer stand in awe of God.

One reason for this is because we have answered every question and explained every situation. We feel that we know why everything happens. When it comes to evil-we explain why it exists. When it comes to suffering, we have shown what causes it. We have explained death and we know what happens when we die. We understand God's wrath and need for punishment. We've even explained Heaven and what it will be like. Every question, we've found an answer. We never walk away with a "I don't know." The God moves in mysterious ways is rarely claimed anymore, because we have grasped how and why He moves. And, with all of this, a sense of standing in awe of God has slipped away. God has become academic. He is the theme of a lecture. He is explained to the point that we feel we know everything there is to know about Him.

There is little to day dream about God. There is little to stand in awe of God. There is little to be curious about with God. There's nothing to wonder about, because someone will have an answer for that. The child like faith, the trusting eyes, the walking hand in hand, is shaped around our knowing everything there is to know.

Standing in awe of God. Let's bring it back:

First, it is amazing that God even things about us, let alone loves us and wants us to be with Him. Aside from our family, both physical and spiritual, how rare is it that others even think about us. I doubt our neighbors think very often about us. Our co-workers don't spend much time thinking about us. The governor, the President, doesn't even know we exist. Our doctor, who we trust to help with our lives, has so many patients that he doesn't think about us unless our charts are in his hand and we have an appointment. But there is God. Today, He will send blessings your way. Today, He will hear your words. Today, He will open doors of opportunity, protect you, and be with you. Why us? Why you? Why me? Because that's what God does. He loves us. We are not very important in the history of the world or even in the moving of things throughout this day. We could understand God thinking about kings and presidents and world leaders and industry giants. But you and me? Us? That's a marvelous thought. Our words can reach the heart of God instantly. Our concerns concern Him. That is amazing.

(OVER)

Second, God is about to splash the creation with amazing fall colors. The trees will burst with red, orange and yellow leaves. No painting can capture what God does with nature. The colors are vivid and breathtaking. People will travel to parks on the weekend to look at the trees. Then shortly after that, all those wonderful leaves will fall to the ground. The trees will look dead all through winter and then in the spring, tiny buds will open with the brightest green that brings life and color which ends a drab winter. It is amazing. The colors God uses are spectacular. We stand in awe. There is nothing like it. No creation of man can come close to what God does.

Third, it is inspiring what God can do with a life. For instance, here is a man who is a person of the world. He is a by-product of his times. He's hard working and fun loving. He's a bit rough on the edges. His language can be spicy and crude at times. He drinks like others. He leans toward the selfish side of things. He's not much different than any one else. However, his life intersects with the Gospel. He learns about Jesus and begins to worship. He gives his life to Christ and obeys the Gospel call and is baptized. Immediately, through study of God's word, a transformation takes place. He stops drinking. He catches himself before he says things that are wrong or offensive. He becomes more forgiving and kinder. He finds ways to serve in the kingdom. He grows in faith and knowledge and as he does, he is molded inside and out by God. He is observant. He is helpful. He walks with compassion. There is a joy and a peace that abides with him. He is not the same person any more. It is amazing what God has done with this person. He has truly changed and changed for the better. He is no longer obsessed with money and stuff. He prays often. His words are sprinkled with spiritual concepts and his heart is so thankful. Those that have seen this change take place are amazed. We stand in awe at what God has done. And to think, every day, all over this world, God is doing the same to others. Lives are changing and people are being shaped by the Gospel of Christ. And through that more lives are being helped and compassion and forgiveness fills the air.

Fourth, there remains mountains of things that we do not understand that God is involved with every day. Many of these things pass our eyes without much notice. Some we simply call coincidence. Things happen. Lives intersect. God is moving and shaping things all along. The heart of the king is like water in the hands of God. He can move it as He wills. The king probably never realizes it, but God is there doing things so His will is accomplished. God is not on the sidelines of life merely watching and occasionally cheering us on. Rather, he is defining many of the very plays that happen on the field. He is actively involved. We don't understand it, see it or even realize it. Boy meets girl. They start dating. One brings the other to worship services. Lucky chance we think. In time one becomes a Christian. We rejoice. How much did Heaven have to do with that, we will never know. A family moves to a congregation. In time, the man is appointed an elder of God's people. He influences hundreds of lives over the next few decades. Just a good thing that happened, or all planned by God. We may never know. A young man offers a Wednesday night invitation. He liked the experience and was encouraged greatly. He takes a turn in his studies in college and decides that he wants to preach. For the next forty or fifty years he is preaching God's word nearly every weekend. Just a good thing, or was God moving things so that could happen.

We stand in awe of Him. Don't ever lose that. God is not like us. God is not just a better version of us. He is the Almighty. We need to stand in amazement because of who He is.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)
