



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 # 2154

Exodus 33:11 "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to a friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent."

This interesting verse is layered with great lessons. There is so much to see and learn here.

First, the way God treated Moses. He spoke to him face to face. He spoke as someone who is a friend. This speaks of love, trust and relationship. God didn't speak to Moses as a child. God didn't speak to Moses as a beast. Moses was playing a very important role and God needed him to understand and stay true. Moses was a leader and God needed him to help the nation. Now, the down side of this is that we can turn this upside down and speak too casually to God. He is God. He is always God. He is holy, righteous and just. We must remember that as we speak to Him.

Second, young Joshua was learning from Moses. At this point in history he probably never thought that he would be filling Moses' shoes some day. Before them was the wilderness for a generation. Before them was a faithless generation that would all die before they reached the promise land. But there is young Joshua, watching, learning, helping Moses. It would be Joshua, not Moses that leads the nation into that new land. It would be Joshua, not Moses that leads the battles against Jericho and other fortified cities. Young Joshua couldn't do it at this point. He had a lot of learning and growing to do. Where we find him is at the tent of Moses. He would not depart from the tent. He stayed to help. And, while he was helping Moses he was growing, changing and learning. God was molding Joshua.

He would not depart from the tent. That's a great expression. It speaks of influence, love and friendship. In many ways you and I need to visit the tents of spiritual giants. We need to learn from others. We need to hang around others. Herein is a great problem. Too often we are not in the right tent.

Some stay in their own tent and are not influenced by anyone. They just do whatever they feel like, never learning, never improving, just maintaining the same spiritual level most of their life. All around them are the tents of others that they could visit and get better, but they never see it.

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Some go to the wrong tent. Instead of going to the tent of Moses, they go to the tent of temptation, the tent of worldly friends, the tent of wicked family members. They do not depart from these tents. And, because of that, it shapes their character and changes their attitudes. They become more worldly in their thinking. They take their foot off the spiritual accelerator, and find ways to start compromising to do things that temptation and their worldly friends want. Less time for worship, because they spend too much time in the wrong tent. Less time to be around quality people, because they are stuck in the wrong tent. Less time to please and obey the Lord because they won't depart these tents.

Thirdly, if we are living righteously as we ought to be, there will be those who wish to visit our tent. They recognize spiritual strength. They have questions that need to be answered. They have situations in which they need advice. They like hanging around, because good people are a delight to be with. Their language isn't spiked with offensive words. Their choices don't border on wrong things. They are encouraging, complimentary, helpful, and a benefit to others. You may have a young Joshua in your life that just wants to hang out with you. He may want to come and spend a few hours with the preacher, just asking questions and learning. He may want to have lunch with one of the elders. No particular problems, just wanting to spend some time with a godly person. You need to be open to the Joshuas in your life. We don't know what the future holds and who knows what God has in store for those young Joshuas. Your time spent with them can make all the difference. Mentoring others and encouraging others is some of the greatest things that we can do. Often the young Joshuas won't find that help at home. They need you to be there for them.

Joshua would not leave the tent of Moses. What a great thought. It makes a person really think about who has been in our life, who has really helped us and it makes us think about who we are currently helping.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)
