



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 # 2327

Judges 8:4 "Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing."

Our passage is one of great encouragement to all of us. It makes for a great sermon title, "Weary yet pursuing." We are reminded of the N.T. passages about weariness. Jesus called all those who were "weary and heavy laden" to come to Him for rest. Paul told the Galatians not to grow weary in doing good.

Weariness comes in different forms.

First, there is the kind of tired one gets from just staying up too late. The remedy here is simply go to bed early.

Second, there is a weariness from over exertion. You've worked hard all day, and you are tired to the bone. You helped a friend move and you are paying for it the next day with sore muscles. We had some of the grandkids over this past weekend. Two granddaughters, one 4 and the other 2 love to play superhero and the giant. They are the superheroes and guess who is the giant. The game always ends the same way. The superheroes throw pillows, shoot nerf balls and slay the giant. The giant falls and the superheroes jump on top of fallen giant. Amazingly, they love this game. Amazingly, I sure feel it. Again, a days rest and most of us are feeling fine.

Third, there is a weariness that comes mentally. This kind of tired doesn't go away when you sleep. In fact, this can keep one from getting good sleep. Tired of problems. Weary of dealing with people who do not care. Tired of the red tape, bureaucracy, corporate politics, and the run around that forces you to make dozens of phone calls and be put on hold for what seems to be forever. Righteous people get tired of wrong being praised and goodness being mocked.

Fourth, there is a weariness that comes from carrying guilt, shame and wrong in our hearts. You try to mend fences with others and you try to apologize and forgive, but some do not want that. They don't want things to get better. They want to remind you of your mistakes and they want to hold you hostage for things that you want to put in the past. They won't let go of things. They constantly remind you of how you hurt them. Nothing you do can make it right. You are weary of the trouble.

Fifth, there is a weariness that comes from family problems. Kids that don't get along. Kids that rebel. Grown children that act like they are three years old. So much drama. So much gossip. So much complaining.

(OVER)

Is there nothing good? Is there nothing that we can agree upon? Weary. Tired. Spent and done.

I tend to believe that we are a weary people. We always seem to be in a hurry. There never seems to be enough day in our day. Our eyes and our faces show the marks of weariness. For some, it gets to such a point that they want to quit. They want to quit school. They want to quit church. They want to quit the marriage. And, what they generally say right off the bat is, "I'm tired." I'm tired of going to school. I'm tired of getting nothing out of worship. I'm tired of trying to make this marriage work.

But our wonderful passage shows the spirit that we all need to have. Tired, yes. Quitting, never. Weary, yet pursuing. Gideon and his band of 300, dramatically downsized from what they started with, were pursuing the enemy. They were fording rivers, and in hot pursuit of the enemy. They were beat. They were tired. They were weary. But one thing they were not, they were not giving up. They were still on the move. They were pursuing.

And, that must be us. We may be tired, weary and worn out to the bone, but we aren't stopping. We have a mission before us and that is get this family of ours to Heaven. We have a job to do for the Lord. There are times we may feel that we are the only ones doing what we should. There may be times when we just want to sit down for a while. But we must pursue. We must go until the Lord stops us. The work is too great. There are too many who need to know. There is much to do.

The spirit of Gideon lives in us when we look to the good we are doing rather than how tired we feel or how much there is to do. You write a card to someone to encourage. You take some food to someone who needs it. You spend a nice text to someone who has been in the hospital. You go out of your way to be kind, thoughtful and helpful. You're there to teach. You're there to help out. You're there to add a smiling face to the congregation. Sure, there are times you think, "Let someone else do it this time." Sure, there are moments when you think, "I just don't feel like it this time." Sure, you wonder, "Does it do any good?" But you know the answers to this. This is why, weary, you pursue.

This is the spirit of the preacher. Tired of writing sermons, class material, articles and having to teach them. There are moments when he thinks, "I'd just like to take a month off and do nothing." But he won't. Weary, he pursues.

This is the spirit of the shepherds. Always looking ahead. Always working to make things better. Always trying to help us even when we are not trying ourselves. Weary, they may think, I could just step down and not do this. But they won't. Weary, they keep pursuing.

This is the spirit of the man and woman who loves the Lord. They are weary of teaching with little results. They are weary of showing kindness only to have it received with rudeness in return. They wonder if the kids will ever get what this is all about. Weary, yet pursuing.

We must leave this place better than we found it. This is true of our families. This is true of the congregation. This is true of our world. There still needs to be some lights shining and some salt shaking. Don't quit, because others are counting on you. Don't quit, because you'll be disappointed if you do. Don't quit, because what is awaiting us is worth any troubles here.

Weary, yet pursuing. It reminds me of, "Onward, Christian soldiers..." Onward we go!

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)