



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 2331

1 Peter 4:4 "In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you"

Peter, in our verse today, shows the reaction the world has to your faith. Your faith defines your choices. It leads you to righteousness. And, in following Christ, you've made a course correction. You no longer run with the crowd. You no longer drink with the crowd. You no longer act like a fool. You belong to Jesus and it shows. And, they, the world, are surprised.

The King James states, "They think it strange". The New English uses the expression, "They are astonished." They are astonished that you make those choices. They are astonished that you do not believe that the world and Christ can merge together. They are astonished that you take things so seriously. You can almost here people saying, from Peter's day to ours, "Can't you have just a little fun?" Or, "Do you really think all this stuff does you any good?"

Those that cannot answer that will find themselves back with the world. They will conclude that it really didn't make that much difference in their lives. But those that stumble back to the world, never really had both feet in to begin with. They may have dated Christianity, but they never made a real commitment. They like the people at church and they like the idea of going to Heaven, but they were really bought into this idea of letting the word of God richly dwell within them. They never took up their cross and followed Him. At a distance, and a sampling here and there was enough for them.

Does all of this stuff really make a difference? What good is all of this doing for us? We need to explore that statement. It's more than turning us into nice people. That's good, but that's not it.

First, our faith in Christ is changing us from the inside out. There is a noticeable difference. We have re-wired the house and we are thinking differently these days. Gone are the selfish excuses and doing just whatever we feel like doing. We've taken on the nature of Jesus. We forgive for no other reason than He has forgiven us. We go out of our ways to be a servant to others. We expect nothing in return.

What good has all of this done for us? It's made us more like Jesus. The world cannot understand nor appreciate the great value in this, but we do.

Second, our faith has given us a real hope through Jesus. It's not a cross your finger wish that the world has. This is something that is certain, real and will happen very soon. Heaven is not a pipe dream. It's going to be our home and very soon.

(OVER)

We don't walk through the day with our heads hung down, worn out and with nothing to look forward to except mindless TV. Not us. We are marching to Zion. We have a purpose about us. We do not fear death. Success for us is not in the size of your TV screen or the square footage of your house, but in being forgiven and being Heaven bound. We know that we will be resurrected. We know that there is no end to our story. Death is nothing more than going through a door into another room and in that room is where we want to be.

Third, our faith has made our marriages better. We understand that marriage is not about what I get out of it or my happiness. That's all selfish. Marriage is about two people honoring God, first by being true to their commitment and then by working together to make a difference in the lives of others. The world flies through marriages, one after the other. Our faith has included God in our relationships. As we get closer to God, we become closer to each other. Love, grace, forgiveness and thinking the best becomes the foundation of our hearts and our homes.

Fourth, our faith has connected with the best people on the face of the earth, God's people. They may seem common to the world. They may seem insignificant to the world. But, to God, these are His people. We worship together. We pray together. We sing together. We view each other as more than just friends, but as family. We love the people of God. Perfect, we are not. However, we all have the heart to follow the perfect one, Jesus Christ.

Fifth, our faith has changed our attitudes. We no longer think like the world does. We no longer define things like the world does. Gloom and doom do not dominate our days. We are not depressed, losing heart and worried to pieces. We no more know the future than anyone else does, however, we know the One who controls all things. It will be fine, because God is already there even before get there. Being on top, being number one, isn't so impressive to us anymore. Our ambition is to please the Lord.

What has all of this done for us? It's made us godly, Christ-like, disciples. It has made us responsible, dependable and accountable. It has made us pure and righteous. It's made us into exactly what God wanted, a people after His heart.

The world doesn't get it. The world may be surprised at our choices. But, I am more surprised that the world wants to continue on the dead-end street that is mean, hateful, selfish and going no where. I'm surprised that people continue to want to drink themselves sick with alcohol. I'm surprised that people continue to talk abusively to each other. I'm surprised that people never mention God except to curse His name. I'm surprised that people, knowing that they are going to die someday, continue to live without any hope or future. I'm surprised that people buy into the empty theories of evolution that lack evidence and common sense. I'm surprised that everyday people die and are cast into eternity and they have no clue where they are going or what's about to happen.

Is it doing you any good? It sure is. If I could go back, the only thing I would change is that I would have started this journey much sooner in my life. I wonder if the same could be asked to a person of the world? What good is living without God doing you? Ignoring God won't make Him go away!

Is it doing you any good...sure is something to think about.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)
