



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)

June 2, 2019

Jump Start # 2352

Acts 8:31 "And he said, 'Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."

This past weekend I was in the Kansas City area preaching to a wonderful church about the subject of parenting. Six lessons and I probably could have doubled that had we had the time. We need help with our homes. We can't get enough help. The home is important to God. The first couple, Adam and Eve, were married to each other. God formed a home around that relationship. They weren't neighbors, business partners, cousins, but a family. They belonged to each other. Throughout the Bible, God has a lot to say about the family. Of all the things in creation, He chose the husband and wife illustration to teach us about Jesus and the church. As the Bible ends, it is the Spirit and the Bride that are inviting us. I don't think we'll ever get to the point where we have had too many classes, sermons and articles about the family.

The world is tail spinning in regards to the home. It doesn't even know what to do with the unborn. Marriage is viewed as a joke. Sex before marriage is looked upon as the same as test driving a car. Go to any restaurant and there is mom, dad and the kids and everyone is looking into their phones and no one is talking to each other. Kids are bounced around from parents who can't stay married and neglect, abuse and the lack of God is at epidemic levels. Our kids are bullied, mocked and ridiculed from neighborhood kids who have no culture, manners, nor sense. This is our world today. There is no going back. We will never have the days of Mayberry, or, the Waltons again.

And, all of this brings us to our verse. It has nothing to do with home and family, but there is a powerful principle that points us that way. Our verse comes from the Ethiopian who was reading Isaiah. He had been to Jerusalem to worship and was now traveling back home. God sent Philip to him. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. He did not. He said, our verse today, "How could I, unless someone guides me?" He needed some help. He needed someone who understood, to explain things to him.

And, it is that concept that we need in our homes today. We can assume that our children will just pick it up on their own, but that's not likely the case. We can also assume that sitting in worship, listening to sermons and going to Bible classes is all that they will need. That, too, is likely not the case. What is being preached and what is being studied may not be exactly what they need at the moment. God expects dads to take the lead and bring them up in the instruction of the Lord. This, again, as we said a few times ago, is part of being the head of the house. It's not about giving orders, but leading that family to Heaven.

(OVER)

Now, consider some topics in which your children need guidance.

The subject of Biblical love. We know, "For God so loved the world." That love. Not an emotion and not a feeling, but a choice. To love as Paul defined it in 1 Cor 13. Love that wants the best for others. Love that serves and asks nothing in return. Love that gives. Love, that is like God. Now, unless you teach them and guide them in this, they will learn about love, but it may not be Biblical love. It may be solely based upon self, feelings and what good they get from it. If they don't feel like doing something, they won't. That's how the world operates. If you don't feel like going to work, don't. If you don't feel like going to church, don't. If you don't feel like staying married, don't. Do whatever you feel like doing. You won't find that stuff in the Bible. Now, your kids are going to learn about love. Either they will learn the right way from you, or the wrong way from someone they are dating. And, if they learn the wrong way, don't be shocked when marriages fall apart.

The subject of the Bible. Your children will learn about the Bible. Again, either from you and the correct way, that it is God's holy word that is to be honored, treasured, obeyed and followed or from a college professor who dismisses it as a bunch of tired old myths strung together to control people. The Biblical concepts of marriage, judgment, Hell, inspiration are no longer even believed by those who claim to be preachers. Yes, your child will learn about the Bible. He'll either follow it closely or from a distance or not at all. He'll use it, make it the foundation of his life or he will go through life without thinking about it at all. Does it matter about baptism? Does it matter about worship? Does it matter who we marry?

The subject of the church. Your child will either learn the correct Biblical concept from you, or, he will just find a church that has no accountability, stands for nothing and operates at the whim of those in charge. Faith and feelings are not the same. But, without any guidance, your child may not know. The church is not a democracy. Worship is not designed to be entertainment. Preaching is important to God. You know that, but does your child? Oh, he'll have an opinion about church. He may think it's a bunch of traditional, out of touch ideas that are not useful. Now, where would he get such ideas? Will he see the value of fellowship among God's people? Will he see how powerful worship can be?

The subject of trials and death. Your child will see these things. Often, it begins with the death of a pet. We had many funerals in our backyard when the goldfish and hamsters died. How do you answer their innocent questions? Do you tell them that their pets are in Heaven? Do you paint a picture of Heaven that is about self and not true to the Scriptures? Do they grow up longing for the roller coasters and the chocolate fountains that they believe are in Heaven? How about tough times? They don't make the team. Their friends move away. A grandparent dies. Many, many thoughts are running through their minds. They have questions. They have ideas. If you do not guide them, they will get their own ideas. It may come from some books that are full of error. They may come from talking to friends who do not know the Lord.

Parenting isn't for cowards. To raise them well is to raise them right. To show them to be honest, and have a heart of a servant is so important. The Ethiopian understood that he needed someone to guide him. Don't wait until it's too late. Don't let them grow up without knowing what is right.

If you do not teach them, they will learn on their own. Either they will learn the right way from you, or the wrong way from the world. So, let's turn off the TV tonight, and sit around and talk. This is how it's done. It takes time. It takes more than just one conversation. And, it takes you, the parent.

Someone will guide them...who will it be?

Roger Shouse
