



# THE EXHORTER

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***“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](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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***2 Samuel 11:1 "Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem."***

Our verse today is the background setting to David's adultery, cover-up, deception and murder. "Then it happened in the spring," is how this chapter begins. Then it happened, is David's rapid tailspin and spiritual and moral crash. It happened just like this. In the spring, kings go to battle. But this king, David, stayed home. Had he gone to battle, this probably wouldn't have happened.

In the spring, back then, kings go to battle. Today, in the spring, (and fall) (JAS) our preachers go out to preach. It's Gospel Meeting time. Many congregations will invite a guest preacher to come and preach several evenings in a row. This custom has seen a few adjustments here and there but by in large it remains basically the same for generations. In the spring, the preachers go to preach. I'll be one of them. The next few weeks I will be gone more than I am home. Let's talk about the Gospel Meeting concept.

First, the preaching of God's word is always good. When honest hearts intersect with the pure word of God, good things happen. Now here are some thoughts to consider. There was a time when a person could be shown in one lesson what God expected and they would be converted immediately. That doesn't happen much anymore. There was a time when someone could hear a lesson about the purity of God's church as compared to what's going on in denominations. They would go home mad. They would stay up all night looking in their Bible. They would come back the next night, with a changed heart and ready to obey Jesus. Today, that person would go home mad and never come back. Most conversions today are the result of personal Bible study that covers a few weeks. That being the state of things today, preachers and congregations need to rethink the purpose of the meeting.

From a preacher's standpoint, it helps knowing what is going on in a congregation and what type of lessons the shepherds would like to have. Too often the thought is, "Bring your best sermons." What I think are my best sermons may not be what that church needs. I develop lessons for my home congregation. I am among them and I know what they need. So, some communication back and forth will make for a good meeting.

(OVER)

Second, preachers need to understand that during the week folks get tired. They have to work. Kids have to go to school. So, long, long sermons wear very thin with the audience. Some preachers get this. Some don't. By the end of the week, those poor mamas who have been wrestling with their babies all week long look like they have been run over by a truck. Let's drop the egos. None of us are so great that times stops for us. We'd like to think so, but that's not the case. Bring lessons that encourage. Bring lessons that deal with life. Bring lessons that answers the need of the hour. Great historical studies about origins, histories of translations, religious movements long ago may fit better in Bible classes at the home congregation, but not for Gospel Meeting material. The preacher is not show casing himself. He is there to help a congregation. One of the best helps is to water weary hearts and encourage others.

Third, learn and share from each other. I love to sit down with a visiting preacher and ask him about what he is doing back in his home congregation. I like to hear about how they attract visitors. I like to hear about how they spruce up the building. I like to hear about how the shepherds are connecting with the people. Ideas. Suggestions. And, when I go to places, I like to look around. I like to get ideas and see what others are doing. It's great for the host preacher and elders to take the visiting preacher out to lunch and to just talk, share ideas and help each other. Sometimes we forget that we are on the same side of the kingdom. There is no competition among us. We want all congregations to grow, flourish and make a difference in lives. Keeping things close to your vest, seems selfish. Talk about classes. Talk about what excites you in the Lord.

Fourth, what is done before and after the meeting often can really help the meeting. Talk it up. Print up things to pass out. Give the building a real spit shine. Think of ways to get more out of the meeting. And, then when it is over, don't just go on like it never happened. Pull some thoughts from that meeting and use them in sermons, classes and other avenues. Keep talking and building upon the foundations that were presented.

I believe some churches have meetings every spring because they just believe that they are supposed to. They don't know what is expected, what is to happen, nor what is supposed to be accomplished. The week comes and goes, and nothing much changes. The following year it will happen all over again and just about the same results will happen again.

Put some thought into why you are having a meeting. Pick out a preacher that you feel will fit your needs. Don't just have the same ones over and over, year after year. Bring in some fresh faces. Consider different ways of presenting the meeting. Rather than a week long meeting, try a few days. Try a weekend. Try a one day meeting. Wrap a theme around it and try to freshen up the idea. Put some thought, energy and effort into making it a real highlight of the year.

In the spring, the kings went off to war. These days, in the spring, (and fall) the preachers go off to preach.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

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