



# 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*

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## Jump Start # 2321

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**Matthew 10:42** *“And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward.”*

This passage is amazing. There is a reward given for the one who provides a cup of cold water. A cup, not a case of bottled water. Not a barrel of water. Not building a well. Just one cup and there is a reward attached to that.

What is impressive about that is that a cup of cold water seems like nothing. Anyone can do that, and I think that's the point. Not everyone can fly a plane. Not everyone can hit the home run. Not everyone can throw the touchdown pass. Not everyone has the stomach to do surgery. Not everyone has the know how to fix a broken car. Not everyone can do home improvements. Not everyone has the gardener's green thumb. Not everyone can cook. For some things, it takes years and years of schooling and experience. Other things requires vast amounts of money. But here, in this passage, it's a cup of cold water.

What is also impressive is that just about anyone can do that. A small child can get a cup and get some water. An aged person can do that. In Bible times, it meant going to a well. But today, it's a matter of going to the sink or the frig. A child who is still too young for school, can fetch some cold water. It doesn't take four years of college to get cold water. One doesn't have to have a large amount of money to get a cup of cold water. Anyone and everyone can do this. But do we?

Here are some thoughts:

First, we can overlook the simple because it is simple. We often want the grand, the big, the impressive solution. Rather than give a cup of cold water, let's find a way to eliminate all thirst. That's a big task. That may never be done. But in the mean time, that one cup helped one person. We can do this with evangelism. Acts 8 is a great place to see this. Philip was preaching in Samaria. Great things were happening. God pulled Philip away to go meet the Ethiopian. From the crowds, Philip went to one person. How he may have ignored this call because of all the people that were being reached. But God saw the value of one person. Give a cup of spiritual water to one person. That one person is as important as the great crowds.

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Second, we often try to do the one big thing that will be remembered for a long time. The impressive gift. The one thing that no one expected. Large. Grand. Unforgettable. But here, it's one cup of cold water. It helped for the moment. The thirsty person would likely be thirsty again, maybe even later in the day. A week later, especially a month and a year later, that one cup of cold water would likely be forgotten. It didn't last. This is not the type of gift that compels someone to send you a thank you card. "Thanks for the cup of cold water" is not a greeting card you find in the store. It helped for the moment.

Third, a cup of cold water is more than just cold water. There are other things just like this. Holding a door open for someone to walk in. Helping an elderly person in or out of the car. Taking someone's grocery cart for them so they don't have to walk it back to the store. A smile. A hand shake. A kind word. A compliment. Helping someone pick up something that they dropped. An applause at the ballgame or concert. Allowing someone to have the parking space that you wanted. Sharing your umbrella. Moving over in church so someone can find a seat. Handing someone a song book opened to the right page. Helping the person next to you find a verse in their Bible. Writing a nice review to a place that excelled in service. Forgiving someone. Letting a person who made a mistake feel like it was nothing. Being kind. Lowering your voice. Letting others talk. A cup of cold water is nothing more than encouragement. It's thinking about someone other than ourselves. It's kindness in action. It's love shown. It's doing the right thing.

Fourth, although we probably have forgotten, most, if not all of us, have been given a cup of cold water by others. Look at that list in the third point. Many of those very things have been shared with us. We are people who have tasted the cold water of others. It happens every Sunday morning when you walk into the church building. Eyes light up. Smiles spread. People come to greet you, shake your hand and share their hearts with you. I love the preaching of Dee Bowman. He's one of my heroes. He has a way of making Christianity attractive. What he does so well, is stand in the pulpit, and before he says his first word, he looks this way and then that way and just smiles. Everyone smiles back. He's a master of that. We don't realize it, but he has just dipped his cup in cold water and given each of us a good drink. I've seen preachers with frowns on their foreheads, screaming at the audience and it makes everyone feel afraid. Not my good brother Bowman. By the time he is finished with that sermon, you'd think everyone in the audience was his best friend. Cold water. We all have received it and we all know how good it is.

Fifth, those that are really good at encouraging, just do it naturally. They don't write things down or have it on their to do list. They just see opportunities to smile, share, dip that cup in cold water, and they just do it. All day long. Every day. At work. In the neighborhood. In the home. At the church house. They just do not think about themselves. I've seen a preacher take off the very tie that he was wearing and give it to someone who really admired it. Cold water. I've seen a brother in a restaurant, see some others from the church sitting in another booth, and without saying anything to them, he picked up their bill, paid for it, and left quietly. Cold water. I've know folks to come over to a home where there was some sickness. And, they mowed, trimmed shrubs and cleaned the place up. Cold water. The list can go on and on. I've known so many folks who were naturals at giving cold water. And, what people remember, is not so much the cold water, but the kindness, the thoughtfulness and the love. It lifted spirits. It helped encourage. It reminded them that they were not alone, nor forgotten.

Cold water-do you have a cup with you? You might find someone today who could use a little drink.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)