



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 # 2093

2 Chronicles 16:12 "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians."

Asa was one of the early kings of Judah. He was the great grandson of Solomon. He served a long, long time, forty-one years. He is the first of the good kings. He did many great things to get the nation back on center with God. He tore down the idols that his father had set up. He removed his mom from being the queen mother after she set up a horrid idol. When a massive million man Ethiopian army invaded, he sought the Lord and they devastated the invaders. He was compared to David, the greatest king in the Old Testament.

Asa made two mistakes late in his reign. When their fellow brothers, Israel, invaded, he did not seek the Lord. Instead he took money out of the Temple treasury and paid the Syrians to fight on his side. When a prophet rebuked him for not seeking the Lord, Asa put the prophet in prison.

Then our verse today. Asa had a personal problem, diseased feet. He did not seek the Lord, nor ask the Lord to help him. Instead, he consulted physicians. In just a few years the disease would take his life.

Asa is a reminder to all of us not to take our foot off the accelerator of our faith. There isn't a time to coast. There isn't a time to stop. We must never retire nor quit. Asa did. The end of his life was marked with continual wars because he failed to seek the Lord.

I find it interesting that when the nation was at war, he sought the Lord. However, when there was a personal problem, he sought the doctors. Could we also stand in the shadows of Asa? National problems, we pray. Church issues, we pray. But a problem with our feet, we don't seek the Lord. I wonder why? I wonder if this was not so much about his feet as it was his faith. He had seen the Lord fight battles for him. The Lord was on his side.

- Is it possible that we take God for granted? Could it be that we just assume that He'll be there for us. Could it be that He has come through so many times in the past, we just know that He'll do it again. And, in this thinking, we don't rely, pray or seek the Lord. We assume. Before showing the disciples how to pray, Jesus said, "...your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him" (Mt 6:8). Well, if God knows, why pray? He knows. He'll do what is right. We trust Him.

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Yet, immediately after saying this, Jesus told the disciples to pray for their daily bread. Doesn't God know that we have to eat? Why pray for food? He knows we need it. Because it shows us that we are dependent upon Him. It illustrates that we need Him. It connects His blessings to our lives.

It's easy to just assume God will take care of it. Maybe Asa would have lived longer had he prayed about his feet.

- Is it possible that we don't include God into our private matters. A war in the nation is one thing, but foot problems is something else. National verse personal. Well known verse private. Are we that way? Great to pray for the elders, the preachers, the lost, the church, the sick, the leaders of our country, but what about that pain in your back? What about those headaches? What about your concern about your memory? Now, if it were a biggie, like cancer, we'd pray. But for our feet? Praying to God about my toes? Really? What about praying for our purity? What about praying for our faith? Maybe, had Asa prayed about his feet, God would have healed him. Seeking doctors is not wrong. It's wrong when we seek the advice of doctors and we don't seek God. It's not doctors or God. It's both. It's both, but God comes first.
- Is it possible that we think we can work things out without God. Foot trouble seems like nothing compared to facing an army of a million soldiers. God kept Asa alive in the war. But the foot thing got him. How many marriages crumble, because we fail to invite God into our hearts to help us. How many parents struggle with their kids because they have failed to invite God into their home. Thinking that we can work things out on our own speaks of profound arrogance. Foot disease seems so insignificant. Asa wasn't taken down by arrows. He wasn't poisoned. He wasn't troubled with a bad heart. It wasn't a brain tumor that got him. It was his feet. Sometimes it's not the big things, but the little things that get us. It's not the major crisis, the big problem, but the little things. We find a way to muster faith and courage to face the million troops that attack us. But it's the little foot thing that gets us. It's living every day for Jesus. It's getting up and going to work and raising your family. It's not deciding to move across the country for a new job, but rather, it's what show I am going to watch on TV tonight. It's not dealing with chemo, but remembering to pray every day. It's paying attention in worship. It's remembering to be kind and forgiving, even when I'm tired and do not feel like it. The little things are important. For Asa, his feet was the beginning of his end. For us, it might be skipping services, just because we're tired. For us, it might be just too occupied with this world to know God's word.

Most fall away not by a major blowout, but by a slow leak. We don't pay attention to the basics. We gloss over the details. We get casual and sloppy in our walk with the Lord.

Asa had foot disease. He didn't seek the Lord. I wonder how many have a spiritual heart disease. They are discouraged, plagued with worry and fear and rather than seek the Lord, we seek physical cures. We take a vacation thinking that will cure our discouragement. It doesn't. We take up hobbies, thinking that will take away the worry in our hearts. It won't. We try this and that and everything but the Lord. And, like Asa, our heart disease will kill us. It doesn't have to, but we must realize that we need help. We need to see that we have a problem. We are diseased. Things are not supposed to be this way. But doing nothing, or doing the wrong things, only leads to our death.

Asa didn't seek the Lord. Will you?

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)