



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 # 3026

John 6:15 "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."

Our verse follows the miraculous feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle, aside from the events at Calvary and His resurrection, that is found in all four Gospels. His birth is not. The walking on water is not. The raising of Lazarus is not. It's the feeding of the 5,000.

The crowds were now filled in their bellies and their eyes were witnessing a prophet among them. They wanted to honor Jesus and make Him a king. He was like a modern Moses. Moses fed the people and Moses delivered the people from the oppressive Egyptians. Jesus has now fed the people. Surely, now, He will deliver them from oppressive Rome. They came to take Him by force and make Him king. Once that was done, it would be on to Jerusalem to cleanse it from Romans and then on to Rome itself.

But this passage reminds us of several important Biblical lessons:

First, some people who think they know Jesus, really misunderstand Him. This crowd did. Jesus would be a king, but not this way. Satan offered it to Him if He would only bow down before him. But that wasn't the way. He would be a king, but it would be God's way, not theirs. It would come after a cross and a resurrection. He would sit down at the right hand of God.

Sadly, some who misunderstand Jesus the most, are those who stand behind pulpits on Sundays and write books about Jesus. They misunderstand His mission. They misunderstand who He was. Some try to get us to believe that Jesus would accept sinful practices. They mold and reshape Jesus to fit their agendas. Rather than accepting Him as God reveals Him to us, they want to manufacture a Jesus that supports and sustains what they want to do. Take Him by force and make Him, are the methods still used by some today.

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Second, forcing someone to do something they don't want to usually doesn't go well. Parents know this when it's bedtime for the little ones. They'll try every trick to stay up later.

Putting someone in the eldership who does not want to be there usually is a disaster. Forcing Jesus to be a king wasn't the way to do it. Jesus never used that method on us. He doesn't force you to believe. He doesn't force you to obey. He wants you to choose.

Third, Jesus simply left. There are times when that is the best solution to problems. Just get out of there. He didn't try to change their minds. He didn't try to calm them down. He didn't try to reason with them. He didn't offer ideas why their way wouldn't work. No, He just left. There are times when a person must just get up and leave. Later, a discussion can take place. Later, reasons can be given. How important this is for our times. Social media has become an electronic bullhorn used by bullies to get what they want. There are those who are not interested in discussing things. They want to tell you why you are wrong, and that's it. And, when the ears can't hear, because the heart is closed, there comes a time to simply leave. Jesus withdrew Himself. We can save ourselves a lot of trouble if we followed Jesus with this.

Fourth, Israel's history of kings has not been a good story. It was during the days of Samuel that Israel wanted a king like all the nations around them. Visible. Leading troops into battle. Figurehead. And, they got what all the nations already had and that was deceiving, corrupt, immoral kings who sold the nation away. There were a few bright spots here and there, but most of them were not. Most were stains on the pages of history. Wanting a king was not a good thing for Israel. And, what they missed most of all was that they needed a Savior more than they needed a king. They needed to rid their lives of sin more than purging the streets of Romans. Their problem wasn't Rome. Their problem was sin.

So many want a friend in Jesus. I want someone who will accept me as I am and allow me to do what I want. Friends may do that, but Jesus won't. Others, want Jesus to be there to pull them out of the messes they have created. Get my feet back on solid ground and then I won't need Jesus anymore. At least, not until the next pickle arises. Some want the Messiah, but not the Lord. Some want the parables of Jesus, but not the commands of Jesus.

You can try to force Jesus to be what you want, but it won't work. You can't change Jesus. You can't make Jesus do what He was not supposed to do. Jesus came to seek and save what was lost. That's His purpose. That's His mission.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

*****Please keep Chris in your prayers that he will come to repentance before it is too late.**
