



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 # 3024

Psalms 13:6 “I will sing to the Lord, because He has looked after me.”

The writer A. Z. Tozer made this observation, “Christians don’t tell lies, they just go to church and sing them.” OUCH! That hits close to home, doesn’t it? In our hymns we are making promises that the Lord hears. Maybe we look at these as merely words in a hymn, but either we mean them or we are singing empty words.

Singing is an important part of our worship. Many services have what is called an “invitation” song, in which we are pleading and wanting those who are not right with the Lord to make that change. We are inviting them. But that invitation song can be viewed as the two-minute warning, a time to put on coats, gather up book bags and get ready to leave. The song is sung, but it’s lacking the heart and the prayers for someone to respond to the Lord.

Singing lies in church, Tozer saw something in his day. Our verse today builds a bridge directly from the events of the day to the praise in the heart. God has looked after me, therefore I will sing. I will not just sing any ole’ song, I will sing to the Lord. This is viewed as praise and thankfulness. God has been good to me.

How can we do better in our singing? There are a number of ways. One doesn’t have to have a nice voice or even understand all the aspects of written music on a page to do better. Here are a few of my thoughts:

First, try to sing without looking at the words. Singing from memory makes you think more and it makes you focus upon the words better. Read through some of the hymns. There are some wonderful and powerful thoughts in the hymns. Our hymns contain beautiful poetry and compelling stories that led to the writing of those words. Do some digging and learn about those stories. They tend to bring more depth and meaning to those hymns. The story behind “It is well with my soul,” will bring tears to your eyes.

(OVER)

Second, envision singing directly to the Lord, which you really are. Some of our hymns are pointed toward us. Some are specifically directed to the lost. But, many, many of those wonderful hymns are intended to be praise to the Lord. Now, this may be hard for some of us. Some do not like to sing around others. Some cannot stay in pitch nor carry a tune. That's me. Yet, I sing. I have a cool metal pen holder that sits on my desk. It's a Roman soldier who is bowing on one knee with his arms out stretched. It's in his hands that one places a pen. But the image, is of you and I in worship. That's us, down on one knee, arms out stretched, head bowing in respect and reverence. I keep that there as a reminder for me. That's the concept of worship. The focus is not upon how wonderful I sing, nor how great one preaches. It's about humbly recognizing the greatness of our God.

Third, make singing a natural part of your day and your life. I don't necessarily believe our passage surrounds a worship service in the tabernacle or later temple. I'm not sure if it is even intended for an assembly of people. David felt this way, so he sang. For us, it might be in our cars. It might be as we go about doing things in the house. It might be quietly as we are at work. The singing of the hymn was something that was not kept in the church house and only on a Sunday. The cheerful heart will sing. The thankful heart will reach out to the Lord. The more we do this about our day, the more it will help us to stay connected to the Lord and the more it will help us with our attitudes and our words.

Fourth, view singing as something that pleases God. For ancient Israel, the burning of that sacrifice was a pleasant smell to the Lord. Hebrews calls the fruit of our lips as a sacrifice of praise to God. The Lord wants you to sing to Him. In our worship, singing isn't filler, used to kill time until the real important things happen. Don't think of it that way. Singing is important. The happy heart sings.

Try to have some folks in your home and do some singing. Learn some new songs. Bring in some great song leaders and have classes to improve congregational singing. Have some special services that surround our singing.

Then, as we sing those words, let's put some action to them. Don't be guilty of singing lies, as Tozer said. Our singing can help us, challenge us and teach us.

Sing to the Lord, what a wonderful thought that is!

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
