



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 #3104

Psalms 27:3 "Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident."

On Sundays I have been teaching a class called the Majesty of Worship Through Psalms. Each week we take a look at one of the Psalms as it opens our eyes and hearts to the greatness of the Lord. The majesty of the Lord is not restricted solely to our time of worship. This Psalm expresses that idea greatly.

This was written by David and likely during the time when King Saul was after him, but there were so many periods in David's life that the enemy raised his head and arm against him. The lion and the bear. Goliath. Saul. Philistines. Absalom. David's life was filled with people trying to hurt him. This chapter is no different. The words are obvious: evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh; my adversaries; war arise against me; foes; false witnesses have risen against me; breathe out violence. This all comes from this chapter.

We live in fearful times. And, fear has a way of crippling our walk with the Lord.

- When we fear others not liking us, we wear masks to hide the real us
- When we fear not being included, we compromise so we fit in better
- When we fear being different, we blend in
- When we fear the unknown, we worry

And, none of those reactions and responses are healthy, spiritual or taking us in the direction that we ought to go. What can we learn from these things?

First, being afraid is common. It is significant to notice how many times the disciples were afraid as we look at the Gospels. They were afraid of storms. They were more afraid of the one who calmed storms. Demons, disease and death all created fear. When Peter saw the winds and the waves as he was walking on the water, he became afraid. He sank as his faith sank.

(OVER)

Going to the hospital for tests as doctors chase what is making you ill, can be frightening. Those midnight phone calls are frightening. Rarely are they good news. Losing your job is scary. Moving is scary. Are we making the right decision? Have we thought of everything? Putting your parents in assisted living is scary. Coming home to an empty home after you have buried your mate is scary.

Second, trust in the Lord is wrapped around His word and what He has done for you. David in Psalms 27 says, "you have been my help." David could lean upon personal experiences. The bear...the lion...the giant—there were many victories that God had given to David. It was not within him, nor his strength, but his help was the Lord.

Now, how about you? Remember those scary moments when you prayed so hard to the Lord? I have seen this in my life. There have been surgeries, serious car accidents, and one of my children was working as a bank teller when someone pointed a gun to their head and robbed the bank. Looking back, we have been helped by the Lord. This is where confidence rises. This is where you know you can go onward. This is when you know God will be there for you.

Third, spiritual confidence puts your focus upon the Lord and not your problems. Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world, is what John wrote. When we look at the Lord, we will make it. When we look at our troubles, we get scared and fail. Fear and faith are opposites. The greater the fear, the less the faith. The greater the faith, the less the fear.

What we tend to spend our time dwelling upon will tell whether we are feeding our faith or feeding our fears. Prayer, God's word, worship, surrounding yourself with God's people, all of these things strengthens our faith. The enemy came. They encamped around David. He boldly said, My heart will not fear. He said that because of his faith in the Lord.

What we are needing these days is a bucket full of spiritual confidence that is based upon the Lord. We shall overcome. We will make it. Not pep rally slogans, but faith driven actions and choices that are centered upon the Lord.

Will the enemies get the best of you? Sometimes they don't have to attack us. Just being in the neighborhood is enough to get us rattled, shaken, doubting and fearful. Taking our eyes off the Lord, the enemy has accomplished his purpose. There is a lot of noise these days. But that doesn't matter. Our faith is in the Lord.

My heart will not fear...can you say that?

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
