



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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2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

In a short while I will be at a wedding. I am officiating this one. Great couple. Great Christians. It makes everything just right. They are in love with each other and they are in love with the Lord. They both have the hearts of servants. While I wait, I know that they are busy, anxiously trying to get all the final details just right. It will be beautiful. I have been in their shoes when my children got married. So many last minute things to do and then everything seems to fly by so quickly. What took months of planning goes so fast once the ceremony begins.

As I was thinking about this, another moment came to my mind. One day Jesus is coming. The parables of Matthew 25 vividly illustrate this. He is the groom that appears at midnight. He is the master who has gone away but after a while he returns. The promise of the Lord's coming is featured throughout the Scriptures.

One of our hymns sums up this idea with the words, "There is a great day coming, a great day coming." Will Jesus be excited about coming? Will the Lord be sad about coming? The day is approaching when the Father will tell Jesus that it's time.

In some ways, Jesus will be very happy to come. He will bring the righteous home to God. His people, who have honored Him, been faithful to Him, praised Him, remembered Him, and walked with Him, will never again be tormented by the forces of evil. His people will never again be mocked, ridiculed or made fun of. His people will not be hunted down and persecuted. Satan will no longer afflict the people of God. Jesus will pull us out of this storm we call life and bring us safely home, never to leave again. Back with God where we belong.

However, in other ways, there may be a sadness to the coming of Jesus. This great world that God created long ago will be burned up. There is a lot of beauty to the earth. Spring flowers, fall leaves, soft snow of winter, the deep green grass of summer—all created by the hands of God. I was sitting

(OVER)

on my back deck the other day with a few of the grandkids and we were listening to all the different kinds of birds. So many different songs that they chirp in the mornings. The colors. The smells. The sounds. The textures. The tastes. What a wonderful world God made. It's the only home we have ever known. This old world has been the masterpiece of God for centuries. That same ole' moon up in the sky, is the same moon that Jesus saw. It's the same moon that Adam saw. Mountains and valleys, rivers and oceans, tall, tall trees, no artist could create an image as our God has. When Jesus comes, this world will come to an end. I just wonder if there is some sadness to that from Heaven's perspective.

More than that, when Jesus comes, it will be the eternal death for so many people. Millions have lived and died without ever knowing the Lord. The Bibles they owned remained closed. The church buildings they passed, they never entered. They ate food without being thankful. They received blessings from Heaven without every realizing God sent them. They spent a lifetime doing what they wanted in the way they wanted to do it. Their sins mounted. Their sins were ignored. Their sins were didn't matter to them. And, they died the way they lived, without God. And, the coming of Jesus ends all hope for those who are not ready to meet the Lord. There are no revivals on the other side. There is no invitation songs on the other side. There is no making things right on the other side. All of those things belong on this side of life. The coming of Jesus brings an end to all evangelism. It brings an end to all church services. It brings an end to all sermons.

Is Jesus anxious about coming? Is Jesus reluctant about coming? Is Jesus excited about coming? The greater question is how do you feel about the coming of Jesus? And, more than how do you feel, are you ready for that to happen?

The hymn, "There is a great day coming, a great day coming," ends with "there is a sad day coming, a sad day coming." Great or sad is based upon what you are doing with Jesus.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
