



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)

August 28, 2022

Jump Start # 3093

Hebrews 12:3 "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart."

There it is in our verse today. That little expression used by Jesus, and later used by Paul. Here we find it in Hebrews. That little expression? “Lose heart.” Jesus told us to pray at all times and not lose heart in Luke’s Gospel. (Luke 18:1) In Galatians 6:9 the apostle said, “let us not lose heart in doing good.”

Three different times and three different places, Heaven tells us not to lose heart. That must have been a problem. It was. And, it is. To lose heart is to become discouraged. To lose heart is to take our foot off of our spiritual accelerator. To lose heart is shift from passion to going through the motions. To lose heart is to be in a place that God doesn’t want us to be. Losing heart is not a good thing. It is not the destination that disciples of Jesus long for.

Why was losing heart such a problem then? And, have things improved through the centuries? Do we lose heart as easily as the early Christians did? Great questions to ask. Great thoughts for a Bible class. Great things for shepherds to put some time to.

Now, let us put a few thoughts as to why some lose heart:

First, our journey is just that, a journey. The newness wears off. The day to day stacks up. Weeks roll into months which become years which turn into decades. Here we are still at it. I’ve met folks who have been Christians for seventy or eighty years. That’s a long time. That’s longer than school. That’s longer than most of us work at a job. That’s longer than most marriages. Losing heart can come from those who have been at it for a long time.

Second, the opposition is intense. That is the atmosphere of our verse today. Jesus endured. He didn’t just endure, but He endured hostility from sinners. We know His story. After the beginning of His ministry, He was challenged. He was questioned. He was accused. He was blamed. They tried to trap Him. They tried to trick Him. They tried to get Him to slip up, mess up, and fail. That’s all before Calvary. He also endured the nails. He endured the cross. He endured as a sacrifice. The enduring Jesus is placed before our not losing heart. It’s a reminder. Another day with co-workers cussing as often as they breathe. Another day of someone attacking your faith. Another day of having to have your guard up. Another day of someone watching your every step. Another day. And then, another day. And, yet, another day. Endure like Jesus. Do not lose heart.

(OVER)

Third, we can lose heart because of the expectations that we assumed came with being a Christian. We thought everyone would love to hear about worship. They don't. We thought everyone would want to know about our faith. They don't. We thought our own family, at least, would be excited for us. They were not. In fact, many wish that we were not a Christian. We've questioned our methods. We've wondered if something was wrong with us. Why won't anyone that I invite come to services? They don't want to. That's just hard for us to understand. We show someone a verse which makes things so clear. Yet, they don't believe that verse. They don't care about verses. They are interested in doing what they want to do. We sure didn't think it would be this way, but it is.

Fourth, fighting the devil never seems to end. Everywhere we go, he's there. The guard must be constantly up. So many things can pull us away from the Lord and take our attention off of Him. Satan never gives up on you. He never lets you alone. On vacation, he's there. At work, he's there before you are. He beats you home. For a moment, we can resist him and he'll run. He's a coward. But sooner or later, he comes back and the fights on.

All of these factors can make a disciple weary. I'm just tired, some say. But echoing through our hearts are the words, "Do not lose heart.' Keep going. Keep strong. Stay in the battle.

There is no victory for those who lose heart. There is no consolation prize. There is no T-shirt for almost making it. It's all or nothing. So, when we see one of us looking a bit tired, weary and worn down, pause for a moment and help that person. Lift their spirits through encouragement. Build their faith through Scriptures. Say a prayer for them. We don't want any to lose heart.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
