



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)

Nov. 13, 2022

Jump Start # 3051

Titus 2:8 "Sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

I was watching a college basketball game the other day on TV. A shot was missed and several were jumping, reaching, trying to grab the rebound, as others were trying to tip the ball in. It was tight under the goal. The ball went in and the score counted. In the replay, it showed that one of the defensive players actually tipped it in. He tipped it in the wrong goal. The other team got points because of what he did.

And, in this section of Titus, twice Paul brings up a similar concept. Don't help the enemy. Don't give the enemy ammunition that they will use on you.

The first mention is toward younger wives. The older ones were to teach the younger ones. They were to be shown and taught to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God would not be dishonored. There it is. God's word dishonored. This wasn't being done by pagan priests. This was not being done by fools or infidels. This happened because the wrong team put the ball in the basket. You gave the other team points. You helped the enemy. You partnered with Satan. How was this done? By not walking the way we are supposed to walk. Rather than being sensible, one is foolish. Instead of pure, one is impure. Rather than working at home, they are idle at home. And, instead of being subject to their husbands, they were in rebellion. God's word is dishonored this way. You claim to believe it. You say you follow it, but your actions don't show it.

The second way this happens is from our verse today. Rather than being sound in speech, we are offensive, unfaithful, unkind in our speech. That gives our opponent evidence. It supplies him with the weapons he needs to use against us. It proves his point. And, as he speaks badly about us, all he'll have to do is point to us. There's all the proof I need, he says. Listen to the way they talk. Instead of shaming the opponent, we are put to shame.

Putting the ball in the wrong goal. Some things for us to consider.

First, our enemy doesn't need our help. We don't want to help our enemy. In basketball, tipping the ball

(OVER)

in the wrong basket is a mistake. It wasn't intended. Here however, our choices determine whether we are faithful to God or flirting with the enemy. Our enemy is strong and powerful. It takes all that we have to resist him and to walk faithfully with the Lord. Don't help him out. Don't give him justification by allowing him to use us as exhibit A in his defense. Make it hard on the enemy by being true to God. At work, in school, in the community, that calls upon us to watch our words, pay attention to our attitudes, be careful what we post and like on social media. Put up a fight. Resist the devil and he'll go the other way. Are you a complainer? The world is listening. Are you one who walks through life with a long face and a heavy heart? The world is watching. Are you one who leaves your faith at the church building? The world notices. Don't help the enemy. Make it harder on him, but living faithfully to God.

Second, we have opponents, enemies and those who would like to see us fail. When someone says, "I have no enemies," that may be from the standpoint that he hasn't hurt anyone. But if one is walking as we should, we will have enemies. The world loves darkness and hates the light. Jesus said we would be hated because he was hated. When a Christian says he has no enemies, maybe his light has gone out. Maybe the world doesn't recognize him as a Christian. The opponents of Jesus tried to trap Him and trick Him and twist what He said. They'll do the same to you. The opponents of Jesus were not honest and fair. Our opponents will not be honest and fair. We have enemies. Don't score points for the other side.

Third, scoring for the wrong team hurts our team. The game I watched on TV was a blow out at the end. One team beat the other easily. But imagine that tipped ball by the wrong side determining the outcome of the game? How excited the other team would be and how sad your team would be. And, in spiritual matters, how discouraging it is when one of us acts more like the world than often the world does. That happened in Corinth. Someone was so immoral that even the Gentiles knew it was wrong. A month of sermons can be lost because one of us simply isn't committed enough to know who we ought to be following. Demas left Paul. That hurt. Alexander was harmful to Paul. That hurt. And, when we talk, think, dress, drink, and act like the world, it hurts. It hurts the good that a church is trying to do in the community. "Oh, I know that guy," says someone at work. "He cheated me when I bought his car." Impressions are formed. People judge the whole church by the actions of a few. And, the right actions can open doors and hearts to conversions. The wrong actions can convince someone that I want nothing to do with those kind of people.

Helping the right side or the wrong side...sure makes a person think, doesn't it?

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
