



# THE EXHORTER

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*“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](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

March 10, 2023

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- ***Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."***

A while back I was talking with someone who struggles with many mental issues. His medicine helps. It's hard for me to understand the road he travels. He loves the Lord. After that, I was talking with someone who just had a funeral in their family. There were many similarities to what I have just gone through. I could understand the feelings and found many things in common. Two conversations within a short time of each other. Both people needed Jesus. One struggle I could relate to. The other, I had no clue.

That made me think of this verse. God is help in trouble. Here are some thoughts:

First, all of us have trouble. It may not be at the moment, but sooner or later, trouble always finds us. Health issues. Financial issues. Family problems. Church problems. Stress at work. Tired, twisted and rung out is how we often feel. We gather on a Sunday, smile at each other, but deep within so many of us are hurting. We do a pretty good job of covering up our hurts and pains. Most never know, but we do. And, then the song leader joyfully leads us in "I'm Happy Today." That, for many, is more of a wish than a reality. We can think that we are the only one that is hurting. Truth is, more are hurting than not hurting. We just don't know that.

Second, our troubles are so different. James tells us that there are various trials. There's not just one kind of trouble. Physical troubles. Emotional troubles. Feelings hurt. Relational troubles. Health troubles. Family troubles. Work troubles. All around us, are all kinds of troubles. Now, I might think that my troubles are a lot worse than yours are, and, they just may be. However, to you, it's still a mountain that stands before you. Some troubles pass quickly. Some seem to last a lifetime. And, we can focus on our troubles to the extent that others feel neglected or ignored. We pray about our troubles and we can forget about praying for the troubles of others.

Third, God is the help for all of us. That clicked for me the other day when I was having all of those discussions. Different people. Different troubles. Same God. The person with family problems doesn't need one kind of God, while the guy with financial troubles needs yet another type of God. One God for all. I went to the dermatologist the other day to look at a scab that just wasn't healing. He decided to do a biopsy of it. All is fine. Now, why didn't I go to my eye doc, or the dentist for my scab? That's not what

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they do. That's not their expertise. When my car engine makes a funny noise, I don't drop by the tire shop and have them look at it. They are all about tires and wheels, not engines. When the ice maker in the frig stops working, I don't call the cable company. I don't take my laundry to the post office. We've learned to navigate this world by finding those who know what to do. Experts. Experienced. Spiritually, our Lord can do it all. It's the same Jesus for the family that is grieving, as it for the man who is struggling with debt, as it is for the person who needs to forgive. Different troubles, same God. That's amazing to me. God can handle any and every problem. There is no trouble, whether it's the weather, it's wars, it's personal, it's church related—God can do it all. God has the answers for all. He is the help that we all need.

You and I may not understand where some people are coming from. They may have problems that we have never heard of before. We may not even know where to begin to help them. But God does. God is always the answer. God is always first.

Fourth, we find that we have a common bond with each other. All of us have been helped by God. Not all of us have been helped by the church, or by the family, or by our friends. But God is there for His people. If you have sought Him out and humbled yourself, He has and He will help you. And, that connects us together. Maybe what God did for you was different than what He did for me, but we both have been helped. We both have been blessed by God. Together, we can join our voices in praise and thanksgiving to the God who has wonderfully made things better. I may not know your pain and you may not know my pain, but together, we understand pain. And, I may not have been blessed as you have and you may not be blessed as I am, but together, we have been blessed by the Lord. God hasn't favored one over the other. God hasn't specialized in just one type of problem. He's seen them all.

And, to how our verse ends, God is a present help in trouble. God doesn't make things worse. He makes them better. What He wants and expects, may be hard. It may not be our choice of things to do. But, following Him is always the best thing to do. Many a person has regretted not listening to God and walking away from God. I've yet to met the person who felt like following God was a waste of time. Nope. God is good. God is help. God is there.

Great reminders as we journey through this crazy world we live in.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

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