



# 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))

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***John 14:3*** *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

We were at a home the other evening with several disciples. We were singing. It was so rich and rewarding. It came at a very needful time for our church family. There has been a lot going on and this was a wonderful comfort and help to us. Just hymns to our Lord, so powerful and so meaningful. In the hymn, “There is a habitation,” the song ends with a question and a wonderful idea. It says, “When shall I dwell in thee?” When shall I dwell in Zion? In other words, When shall I be in Heaven? What a thought that is.

Here are some things to consider:

First, as one ages, the appeal of this world wanes quickly. Ballgames, amusement parks, parties, start to lose their glimmer in the heart of a disciple. The wrong of this world becomes wearisome and heavy. The obsession with the here and now, and the glitter of the superficial and things that do not matter gets old for the disciple of Christ. When shall I dwell in you? More and more, “this world is not my home,” becomes our anthem. We don’t belong here. We don’t fit in here. The movies, the music, the attitudes, makes us feel like we are indeed aliens and strangers as Peter put it. **(1 Pet. 2:11)** There comes a tug on our hearts to be with the Lord. When shall I dwell in thee?

Second, although we have this strong desire to be with the Lord, there are things the Lord needs us to be doing while we are here. We are just not sitting on a bench waiting for the bus to come and take us to Heaven. No, not at all. We are busy in the kingdom. There is much to do. We are on the battlefield, the front lines of war with our Savior. The battle for what is right. The battle for our families. The battle for our congregations. We must leave this place better than we found it. The Lord needs us to be the light in this dark world. The Lord needs us to raise another generation that will have hearts that follow Him. There are people to be taken care of. There are things that we need to teach others. When shall I dwell in thee? Until the Lord calls us, the work carries on. The Lord needs us to be His hands and feet. We’ll work, till Jesus comes, is another stirring hymn that helps us with, “When shall I dwell in thee?”

**(OVER)**

Waiting patiently is hard. I remember talking to a Christian who was well into her nineties. She often wondered, "Why am I still here?" She was ready to go, but the Lord wasn't calling her, not yet. "When shall I dwell in thee?" was constantly on her mind. The answer I told her is that maybe it's not about you, but me. Maybe the reason you are still here is that the Lord wants me to take care of you. He wants me to be a servant.

Third, once we are there, all the storms, all the battles, all the trials and troubles that we have gone through won't matter. We will be with our Savior forever. While we are down here, lots of things bothers us. The weather, the traffic, people, things that break, promises not kept, sin. The list is long of the things that irritate us, disturb us, wreck our days and puts us in a foul mood. But those things won't be on the other side. A perspective that helps us is to remember that these things are only for now. It's like sitting in a dentist chair. You may not want to be there. You may be nervous. But it doesn't last long and just like that you forget about it and move on to other things. Once we are in Beautiful Zion, God's home, none of these unpleasant things will impact us any longer.

Down here we are governed by time, seasons, weeks, months and years. Over in the other place, Heaven, time doesn't mean anything. What seems like a long, long time for us, is nothing to the Lord. If a thousand years is like one day, as Peter tells us, then in God's perspective, Jesus died just a couple of days ago. And, the flood, well, that was a week and a half ago. Daniel, that was just the end of last week. Perspective. Time. When shall I dwell in thee, in just a little while.

The song speaks of a longing that fits into our verse today. The two promises of Jesus. First, that we shall be with Him and secondly, that He is coming. God taking us home. God taking us to His home. What a pleasant thought that is.

I remember seeing this cartoon years ago of two old people sitting in rocking chairs. One said to the other, "I'm getting so old, all my friends in Heaven are going to think I didn't make." It may seem that way to us, but not from the other side.

When shall I dwell in thee? Keep walking. Keep working. Keep serving. The Lord will stop you when it's time.

Roger Shouse

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