



# 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*

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November 12, 2023

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***Matthew 22:16 "And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any."***

The character of Jesus not only shines forth in this passage but it reminds us that others recognized it. Jesus, the truthful teacher. Jesus, accurate with God's word. Jesus, not partial to any. They came to this conclusion from watching Jesus and in their dealings with Jesus. The suspicious eyes were always on Jesus. Any slip up, any mistake, any misspoken word and the wolves would have pounced on Him. The radar gun was always pointed at Jesus. Always.

I want to look at the end expression, "not partial to any." Here's how others word it:

NIV: you pay no attention to who they are

KJV: for thou regardest not the person of men

ESV: you are not swayed by appearances

CEB: you don't show favoritism

Jesus was the same to all. He was the Savior to all. This is something that the Pharisee mind could not understand. They didn't operate that way. They shunned those they felt were "outside." They wouldn't be caught dead going to a tax collector's home. Not Jesus. He did that. And, Samaritans, the Pharisees wouldn't even put their big toe in that area. Not Jesus. He went there and had a conversation with a woman at the well.

This verse ought to be a great reminder to us:

First, others are watching us and they are drawing conclusions about your character. Right or wrong, they make these conclusions from what they see and what they hear. With Jesus, they knew He was truthful. How about with you? Do co-workers see you as a hard worker? How about neighbors? Are you friendly? Impressions are made from the evidence that we provide. It's hard to assume someone is descent and kind when all they see is the opposite. Jesus is truthful. They knew that.

(OVER)

Second, they understood that Jesus was the same with all people. He did not have a double standard. He was not partial, swayed or showed any favoritism. He was hardest upon that inner circle of disciples. Jesus went to the home of a very rich Zacchaeus. Jesus was also in the home of Mary and Martha. We don't find Jesus name dropping or being impressed with the size of the homes, or how they were furnished. But we sure do. However, when we start bending rules and looking the other way because of who it is, then we are no longer faithful and truthful with God's word. The children of preachers and elders should not be held to any higher standard than what is expected of all children. Too often the preacher's kids are grilled over and over while the kids of others get away with murder. Jesus wasn't like that. He showed no favoritism. People pick up quickly on double standards and bending the rules for some. That inconsistent "good ole' buddy system," doesn't fly well in the eyes of the Lord. And, in many congregations it's that sort of things that ruins it with the kids. They see the double standards. They understand how unfair it is. And, when we do things like this, we only hurt ourselves. God doesn't play favorites.

Third, our evangelism is often hurt by attitudes that are swayed by appearances. When we try to only teach people who are "like us," then we close the door and our hearts on a world of people that Jesus loves. Samaritans were a lot different than Pharisees. They worshipped differently. They believed differently. Even among the Jews, there were major doctrinal differences between Pharisees and Sadducees. A church adopts a country club mentality when we only accept others who are "like us." White, black, Asian, white collar, blue collar, unemployed, tattooed, pierced, blue jeans, flip flops, uncombed hair, spent time in jail, expelled from school, broke, divorced, had an abortion—the world is broken and messy. Finding, "nice people" is not what evangelism is about. It's bringing the lost and the broken to Jesus. It's not about filling our church buildings. It's not about us. It's about connecting people, all people, any people, to Jesus.

Jesus made people comfortable around Him. We ought to do the same. Drop the stares. Stop the whispers. Slide over in your pew and allow someone, anyone to sit beside you. Put a smile on your face and welcome into your heart the world that is broken and needs Jesus.

Our passage states, "Teacher, we know..." They knew Jesus was truthful. They knew Jesus was fair. They knew that Jesus didn't play favorites. How about those in your world. Do they know that about you?

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

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