



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)

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Jump Start # 3654

2 Peter 3:18 "but grow in th grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."

Do you know the difference between a tree and a wood fence post? Both are made out of wood. Both may be made out of the same kind of wood. Come back and visit that site a year later and the fence post will look about the same. The tree will have grown. The fence post is dead. There is no more growth in it. In time, it will only deteriorate. The tree will keep reaching upward and the roots will keep expanding under the surface. The tree has life. The tree changes. The fence post is lifeless.

Our verse shows that our faith, like that tree, ought to be growing. Reaching upward towards the Lord and getting roots deeper and deeper. Through the years our faith changes us, that is, if it is growing. A faith of depth will be reflected in several ways.

First, as our faith changes there is a change in what we pray for. Young in faith, we pray for the day, health, the weather, our families. All great things to pray for. But as faith grows, our prayers, like those tree roots, become deeper and deeper. We pray for the wellbeing of the congregation. We pray for changed hearts. We pray for open hearts. We pray for opportunities to serve the Lord. Richer in faith, our prayers change.

Second, our outlook changes as we grow in faith. Less fear of death. Less concern about politics. Less obsession with stuff. Troubles come. Storm clouds gather. But deep faith reminds us that we've been through these things before. Deep faith takes us to the amazing lessons in God's word of how God fought battles and rescued His people. Our outlook becomes a longing to be with the Lord. This world holds less and less that appeals to us.

Third, as our faith deepens, there is a change in our character. We become more gentle as our Savior was. We become more forgiving as the Lord was. We listen more. We become less interested in ourselves and more involved in the lives of others. It's hard to walk with Jesus very long and not start acting like Him. The roughness of our tone is polished off. The pride in our hearts is tossed to the side. As faith grows, we change.

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Fourth, as our faith deepens, there becomes a greater interest in God's kingdom. We become concerned about how others are spiritually in the congregation. We become interested in how the kingdom is expanding in far away places. We find more and more ways that we can help the kingdom. Teaching, preaching, leading becomes important to us. We become great encouragers to those who do those things. We don't allow petty things to annoy us any longer. We find ourselves extending grace more often. A deep faith has opened our eyes up to what is really important.

Grow in the Lord. Deepen your faith. That is accomplished by spending time in God's word. That is helped by worship and Bible classes. That is developed by doing things with God's people.

Deep faith changes a person. Interesting that the final sentences of Peter's final letter includes growth. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. Deep faith—such is the backbone that holds a congregation together and keeps it on the right path. Deep faith—that is what will get you through the darkest of nights. Deep faith— is the very thing that will remind you of God's eternal promises.

A faith that doesn't change us, likely, won't save us.

Keep growing...

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
