



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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Proverbs 15:29- “The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.”

In this contrast we see the actions of the Lord toward the wicked and the righteous. Isa. 59:1,2 state, “The Lord’s hand is not too short that it cannot save; nor is his ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

The emphasis of this Proverb is not so much the behavior or actions of the wicked and righteous, as it is the relationship to God. The Lord is far from the wicked. That leaves the thought of being on your own. Too far to hear....too far to help...too far to do any good. We understand this concept when describing relationships. We say “I am close to that person.” That doesn’t mean location, or distance, but rather intimacy, friendship and knowing a person. God is far from the wicked implies that there is very little relationship. The wicked do not know God. They do not understand God. They are not close to God. The relationship is awkward and “distant.” There is a reason for this. The wicked have chosen not to know God. God is there if a person wants to seek him, know him, and become close to him. Paul told the people of Athens, “...he is not far from each one of us”. (Acts 17:27) In the presence of the Holy God, the wicked would find very little in common. They would be most uncomfortable around God because they remain wicked. It is sad to travel through life on your own with no greater than you to help, to guide, or to be there.

For the righteous, it is just the opposite. The Lord hears their prayers. He is near enough to know what they are saying. This implies closeness, a relationship, and help. It is to the Lord that we pray. It is from the Lord that we seek help. The Lord is our rock. The Lord is our shelter. And where is the Lord? He is close enough to hear the prayers of our lips.

What comfort this ought to bring us. We are never alone. We are not left to figure everything out. The Lord is near. The Lord hears. This is comforting to hurting and grieving hearts. This is great to know for those who are troubled and weary. God is near. He is just a prayer away. The walk in righteousness brings us close to the righteous God.

We sing, “Nearer, still nearer, close to thy heart....” What a blessing God is to us.

Roger Shouse

