

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 38

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Metal Refining Artist Unknown

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Dentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Thirty–Eight

GODLY REFINEMENT

September 30, 2018

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FAITHFUL PATIENCE

Hebrews 12:5–15

⁵and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him; ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. ¹²Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. ¹⁴Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: ¹⁵looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled (KJV).

THE REASONS FOR SUFFERING

Hebrews 12:5–6

⁵and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him; ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (KJV).

It is inappropriate to assume that every injurious trauma that happens to us is godly correction. There are three sources of harm that can come to us in this life.

1. At the Fall evil entered the world and the corruption associated with it is a general cause for disease, weather disasters, war and the like. These are not our fault.
2. Mistakes we make are also causes that harm us such as accidents. These are not necessarily our fault either. Accidents happen and some of them cause us harm.

3. Willful sin will bring God's correction if we are truly a child of His, that is a born-again believer.

This third reason for harm coming into our lives is the focus of this section of the letter to the Hebrews.

As difficult as it can be, sometimes God is discipling us to refine us and make us more like Christ. It is so important to realize this; that the apostle explains it as a normal experience of believers. We must view it a loving correction or refinement. It is evidence of Divine love. Our Lord disciplines us as His children because like a loving father He wants us to stay away from practices that will bring harm to which will stop us from moving to maturity. Sometimes He must bring trauma into our lives to alter our path if He views it as leading to destruction.

Proverbs 3:11–12

¹¹ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; Neither be weary of his correction: ¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (KJV).

GODLY CHASTENING

Hebrews 12:7–9

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live (KJV)?

The apostle applies the lesson from Proverbs to them. He says *It is for chastening that you endure*. The effectiveness of the discipline God is giving them depends upon how they receive it. This is moral training. The word *chasten* means “moral training,” “to train up a child (Proverbs 22:6).” He reaffirms that God is dealing with them as with sons and sons are chastened.

This is punishment for the sake of correction. God disciplines because He needs to use corrective measures. If you do not realize and admit your sin when the punishment comes you will not receive its benefit. God is chastising them because they are sons, and they need to pass through this chastisement with patient endurance. Now Paul provides the principle which is; *for what son is there whom his father chastens not?* Having established this principle, he next presents a two-pronged argument.

The first step in the argument, which says, if they are never disciplined, it will show them to be illegitimate and prove they are not true sons. However, since they have all become *partakers* of sonship because of this chastisement they must receive this punishment. This is the bonafide evidence that they are sons. For this reason, the chastening should be accepted and should be incorporated in their day-to-day living. That is, to realize its effects and alter their thoughts and

behavior to accommodate God's correction. Because if chastening is absent, it shows they are illegitimate; they are not God's children. An illegitimate child does not have the rights of an heir. Illegitimacy leaves one without rights as an heir to the father's fortune and deprives him of his father's care. Under Jewish law, to be *mamzer* (to be illegitimate) meant three things: no right of inheritance; no right to marry into Jewish society; and no right to be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

The second aspect of the argument is to refer to a human father's discipline. In spite of that discipline, we learn to give our human fathers reverence and respect. The application of the illustration is *and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?* Since the believers were willing to subject themselves to human fathers, how much more should they be willing to subject themselves to their Heavenly Father and, therefore, exercise patient endurance by voluntary submission? Undisciplined children or children who refuse it will not enjoy a relationship with God the Father.

The object of their submission is *the Father of spirits*, which emphasizes Him as the Creator referencing the immaterial part of man. It is the immaterial part of man that continues to live after physical death. The result is that they shall *live*. One product of divine discipline is the abundant life now enjoyed in fellowship with God the Father. This is enjoyment of life while the believer is still on earth. While we live forever we can look forward to eternity with our Heavenly Father knowing His will and love for us as corrected sons.

EARTHLY FATHERS ARE IMPERFECT

Hebrews 12:10

¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness (KJV).

Sometimes our earthly fathers administered the discipline inappropriately or not at all. Most did the best they could do for the time they had responsibility for our growth and development. Their efforts are contrasted with our Heavenly Father's discipline. It is always right, perfect and designed to be good for us. We will also share in His holiness.

Romans 8:28–29

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren (KJV).

Discipline is not generally enjoyed but if it is received with the proper attitude it brings great reward. Sharing in holiness is a reference to our sanctification or growth in becoming more Christ like. This leads to spiritual maturity and completeness as God would have us become. We become more like Him or in His image.

ENDURING CHASTENING

Hebrews 12:11

¹¹ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (KJV).

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. These words anticipate our objection, because of the grief and sorrow that comes with correction. The immediate question we ask ourselves is how could this be for profit and advantage? The apostle anticipates our reaction, by affirming that no affliction *seemeth* to be joyous, but it must be realized, that it does not initially seem to be an occasion for joy, even though they really are. There is a delayed acceptance and it must be accepted when viewed by faith, and realized that these are tokens of the love of God and Christ; and are evidences of our sonship. No discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

This verse ends the apostle's argument about sufferings and afflictions and how they should be borne. He states that the good derived from them is vastly better than their pain.

II Corinthians 4:17–18

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (KJV).

If we did not receive earthly correction as His sons we would suffer more than any of us can imagine in eternity. Because, to be disassociated from God in eternity is perpetual pain and suffering which is far greater than the temporary pain associated with correction here. We must always have in mind our goal of eternal life and the Messianic Kingdom, not temporary discomfort here even God's chastisement. All is temporary here, there permanent. We must endure here to receive the wonderful benefits of Heaven. This is what the apostle calls *the peaceable fruit of righteousness*.

One might refer to it as a harvest of righteousness. God as a farmer prunes his vine so that it may bear fruit (John 15:2). All of God's dealings here are likened to a farmer with his corn (Isaiah 28:23–29). This harvest produces two kinds of fruit. First, the removal of sin, by putting it to death. The second part of the harvest is increased righteousness and holiness.

The harvest produced is the *fruit* of righteousness, not righteousness itself. Neither our actions nor our suffering is the reason for our righteousness, but they promote it in us and increase its fruit and strength. Our righteousness is imputed at the point of justification (Romans 10:4; II Corinthians 5:21 etc.). So, the apostle says that God would increase in them the harvest of

righteousness *unto them which are exercised thereby*. That is, those to whom God loves as sons to correct. The promised peace is one of both inward tranquility and contentment.

DON'T GIVE UP

Hebrews 12:12–13

¹² Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed (KJV).

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees The exhortation is directed toward parts of the body that are involved in coordinated activity like athletics, namely, the hands, the knees, and the feet, through which the body exerts all its strength to prevail in an athletic competition. We must observe, first, the defect they possess; second, the remedy for this defect; and, third, what both of them mean spiritually.

Feeble hands is a reference to us becoming tired of what they we are doing and give up. Weak knees a picture of fear and hopelessness. “Hearts melt, knees give way” (Nahum 2:10). The knees are weak “my knees give way from fasting” (Psalm 109:24). Both the descriptions of the hands and the knees depict one who is ready to give up and abandon all hope of achieving success. The same ailment is afflicting different parts of the body, so the apostle prescribes the same remedy for them both. In our Christian race to the end we must use all our spiritual strength.

Now he says to “make straight tracks for the feet.” This is a path that leaves a track that may be followed. Obeying God is called “walking with Him,” and these paths are the “paths of the righteous.”

The apostle continues with his metaphor about running. Those who obey make level paths for their feet, but those who are defective here are called lame. A lame person makes only slow progress and is ready to stop altogether. So, lameness is an ailment different from external hindrances and is not just fainting and weariness. Lameness points to an inner sickness that needs to be healed. So, it is with our attitude toward correction.

FOLLOW PEACE

Hebrews 12:14–15

¹⁴ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled (KJV).

There is a radical difference in nature between the born again on the narrow way to Heaven and those following the broad road to Hell. The character and conduct of the genuine believers make obvious and incite the self-pleasing disposition and flesh-indulging ways of the latter.

The children of the Devil have no love for the children of God, and they delight in doing whatever they can to annoy and aggravate us. Nothing gives them more pleasure than to see success in their efforts to tempt us to compromise or stir us up unto angry retaliation. Therefore, it is a code of conduct for *all* believers, in any age and in any country, to strive earnestly to live in peace with all men. That does not mean we will. It means to try.

Follow peace with all men means that Christians require *to be told* to do this. Its implication is clear: by nature, men are fractious, wrathful, revengeful creatures. It is because of this contentious, envious, revengeful, spirit which is in us living as the old man, that we need to be reminded to try and *Follow peace with all men*. Further, it is the duty of Christians to be at peace among ourselves, to be on their guard against all alienation of affection towards each other. Paul's words here seem to be a reference to the world around them. They are to 'follow peace with *all men*.'

We must carefully abstain from injuring anyone, and must do everything but sin in order to prevent a quarrel. Do not merely be easygoing when one irritates you, but go out of your way to be gracious unto those who oppose. Do not be so ready to "stand up for your rights," but *yield* everything except truth and the requirements of holiness. We cannot successfully "pursue peace" if we are prideful, *pride* always stirs up strife. We can't "pursue peace" if we are filled with envy because it is sure to see faults where they don't exist, and cause trouble.

There must be constant spiritual oversight by each one over his life and his attitudes. There is a danger if we fail to keep on the lookout as to where we are spiritually.

Falling short means "a moral separation." It is more than a simple defect. It is the failure on the part of the children of God to apprehend or appropriate grace when something negative comes into their lives. Believers stumble in their spiritual lives because they fail to appropriate the grace that is available. The failure to appropriate grace is the first step downward for it means a failure to progress upward.

The second step downward is positive infidelity: *lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled*. When the apostle refers to a *root of bitterness*, he deals both with the *root* and with the product, which is *bitterness*. The failure to appropriate grace during a time of suffering or trial leads to bitterness resulting from the suffering. *Bitterness* will eventually result in the defilement of many others. In a plant this is how the *root* manifests itself. *Bitterness* in the heart leads to murmuring with the tongue; murmuring with the tongue means murmuring against other people. Others are defiled by the readers' murmuring, and the murmuring is caused by the *root of bitterness*. This phrase is found in Deuteronomy 29:18: *lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood*. It is used of Israelites in idolatry. They have become a root that produces poison. People with a *root of bitterness* cause divisions and split churches. They defile others by talking against the leaders of the church. The first step affects only the individual, but the second step begins to affect others as well. They fail to have peace with all men.

Next message: WARNING TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS

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