

"The Chastening of God"

Hebrews 12:5-24

Part 2

Introduction: Last week in our study of Hebrews we started into the section of Hebrews 12 in which the writer addresses the subject of "chastening".

Notice Hebrews 12:5

The word "chastening" in this verse has not just the idea of discipline because of sin but it also has the idea of education through the storms and the trials of life. In every storm and in every trial we grow if our focus is upon the Lord. James understood this Truth.

James 1:2-8

² *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

³ *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

⁴ *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

⁵ *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

⁶ *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

⁷ *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

⁸ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

Paul understood this Truth also.

Romans 5:3-5

³ *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

⁴ *And patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

⁵ *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Now let us get back to Hebrews.

Notice Hebrews 12:5 again.

The writer lists 2 warnings in this verse.

1. We are not to despise the chastening of the Lord.

The idea here is that we are not to look lightly upon the trials and the challenges of life. They are permitted by God and they have come into our lives for a reason. Many times we desire to escape the trials and the storms and we then look for the easy way out. This is what the writer is warning about.

The Hebrew believers were facing persecution for their faith and God had permitted it for a reason. The only means of escape for them would have been to compromise and to fade back into Judaism and that is the way some of them were leaning. Therefore this warning was meant to stop them and help them to see that what they were facing was for a purpose.

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

2. We are not to faint when rebuked by God.

The idea here is that we are not to become discouraged when God's chastening comes into our lives.

Let me show you the words of J. Vernon McGee on this warning.

"There are those who respond in this way (I would call it the crybaby reaction): They begin to cry and say, "Why did this happen to me? It is not worth living a Christian life. I have served the Lord, and now He's letting this happen to me." In other words, they just faint away. Many saints take that attitude."

Job had the proper perspective toward God's chastening.

Job 5:17-18

¹⁷ *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

¹⁸ For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

David also understood the purpose of the chastening of God.

Psalm 23:4

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

The rod was used for chastening and David tells us that God's chastening was a comfort to him. David understood that it kept him on the path of righteousness.

When God brings chastening into our lives there is then the danger of you and I beginning to question God's goodness and His love. The peace of God which once filled our hearts begins to give way to fear and doubt. Satan will then begin to shoot his arrows of doubt and discouragement into our lives and if we are not careful we will cry out as the Psalmist did in Psalm 10.

Psalm 10:1

Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

We forget the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 46.

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³ Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

You see when God comes in and He begins to tear up our comfort zone or he overturns our cherished plans or He shreds our fondest hopes and dreams or He permits intense pain to pierce our body or to pierce our soul or He allows our family circle to broken, it is then we can begin to question His wisdom and it is then when we can question His goodness. That is exactly why the 2 warnings are in 12:5.

Notice Hebrews 12:5 again.

Now we are human and the writer understood that all his readers need to fortify their hearts. There must be a way to stop the arrows of doubt shot by the enemy which would cause us to question God's goodness and His purpose. There is and it is found in the next verse.

Notice Hebrews 12:6

Let us notice some verses that are connected to this verse. Every time God chastens His children it is always an act of His love. This verse is so important that it is repeated in one form or another in 4 different books in God's Word.

Job 5:17-18

¹⁷ Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

¹⁸ For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Psalm 94:12

¹² Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

Proverbs 3:12

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.

Revelation 3:19

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Why is this Truth repeated 5 times in God's Word?

1. God desires for His children to know that all chastisement flows from His love. This is a blessed Truth!
2. This is a Truth that is difficult to grasp in the midst of the pain and there is the danger we will forget it or overlook it when life is difficult. Therefore God has repeated it some 5 times in His Word.

Let us get back to the thought of fortifying our hearts. How can this be done?

Notice Hebrews 12:6 again.

The first word is a connective and the writer is telling his readers that the way to avoid despising God's chastening and to avoid fainting we must understand that all chastening is done out of love. I want to borrow the words of Pink to help us to better understand this thought.

"The way to victory over suffering is to keep sorrow from filling the soul: "Let not your hearts be troubled" (John 14:1). No matter what it is that we must face it is our duty to "keep thy heart with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23): allow no doubting of God's wisdom, faithfulness, or goodness to take root within our souls. But how do we do this? The answer is in Jude's words:"

Jude 1:21

²¹ Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

This is the key in overcoming all murmurings against the hand of God in our lives. But this makes me ask a question, "What does it mean to keep ourselves in the love of God?" Let us notice what Paul prayed in Ephesians 3 for the believers.

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Paul's prayer for the saints at Ephesus was that they would be ROOTED and GROUNDED in God's love and that they would understand the breadth, the length, the depth and the height of God's love.

To be rooted is to be "anchored" into something. It has the idea of being unmovable. The word "grounded" has the idea of a strong foundation. Trees that are rooted in deeply are able to endure the storms. Houses that are built upon strong foundations are able to endure the storms. Believers who are rooted and grounded in the love of God are about to endure the chastening of God because they will understand that whatever it is that they face it is an extension of the love of God.

How do we get rooted and grounded in God's love so that we can "keep ourselves in the love of God"? I believe Peter gives us the answer.

2 Peter 1:2-9

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [moral excellence]; and to virtue knowledge [insight, understanding];

⁶ And to knowledge temperance [self-control]; and to temperance patience [steadfastness]; and to patience godliness;

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Here in verse 9 there is a frightening Truth. When a believer is **not** rooted and grounded in the love of God because they have neglected to submerge themselves in God's Word and learn of His ways and His love and the trials and the pressures of God's chastening's come they can actually forget that they were made new creatures in Christ and they can actually go back to the old ways. That would be going back to handling the storms and the trials as an unbeliever would.

Conclusion:

The bottom line is we must spend time in and under the teaching of God's Word so that we can learn of the love of God and learn of the ways of God. Then we **MUST** walk by faith in the light of what the Word of God says concerning God's love. This is how we **KEEP OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD.**