

"The Chastening of God"

Hebrews 12:5-24

Part 4

Introduction: Last week in our study of Hebrews 12 we looked at how God's chastening in our lives is evidence that we are truly born again.

Notice Hebrews 12:7-8

The idea within these 2 verses is really twofold.

1. When a believer steps into sin they can be sure that God is going to bring the chastening to get them back to where they need to be.

Numbers 32:23

²³ *But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

If someone claims to be a believer and they can live in sin with no chastening from God then there is no TRUE salvation in their life.

2. The other Truth which we can glean from this verse is that when we are Truly saved the storms and the trials as well as the correction from God will be used by Him to make us more holy.

Everyone in this world goes through the storms and the trials but it is only the believer who is purified in the furnace which God has permitted to come into our lives. As believers we should be able to see our spiritual growth as we pass through the trials and the storms of this life.

In our study tonight the writer will instruct his readers on how they were to face the chastening of the Lord.

I. Our Attitude toward Chastisement

Notice Hebrews 12:9a

Here in the beginning of this verse the writer uses an analogy from our years of growing up. He points to our earthly fathers and reminds us of how we faced correction from them when we needed it. The word "corrected" here in this verse means "instructor or teacher".

The idea is when we were young and growing up our father instructed us and did all he could to keep us within the boundaries which he had established. When we stepped outside of the boundaries there were consequences. As we experienced the correction from our earthly father we submitted to that which we were taught. Maybe the submission did not come right away and if that was the case then the consequences were even more severe but eventually we learned that he had wisdom from experience and if we submitted to his teachings then life was much more enjoyable.

I can look back on my own life and some of the lessons which my father taught me and I can remember that some of what he taught seemed so "old fashioned" and I resisted some of his teachings for years. But eventually I came to the place where I understood that he was correct. If I had submitted to his ways earlier I could have avoided much frustration and discouragement in my life.

Notice Hebrews 12:9b

Now the writer asks a question as he reasons with his readers and in this question we find how we are to face the chastening of God. The writer lists the proper reaction to God's chastening and the blessing connected with the proper reaction.

a. The proper reaction.

There are multitudes of ways in which we can react to God's chastening. We can react out of anger, bitterness, blame, doubt, or denial. There is only one proper response however.

Submission - The reasoning is that when our earthly fathers taught us we gave them respect and reverence and we submitted to their instruction. Therefore, should we not submit to our Heavenly Father's instruction and teachings? Our earthly fathers' chastened/corrected/instructed us and it was not a perfect chastening. Sometimes earthly fathers chasten too lightly, sometimes too harshly, sometimes with the wrong motives, sometimes at the wrong times, and sometimes in the wrong way.

But none of this can be said about God! His chastening is perfect! It is always out of His love and never out of His anger. It is never too harsh and it is never too light. It is never at the wrong time or with the wrong motive. It is for these reasons that we should submit to the chastening of God in our lives. Let us notice some other verses which teach this same Truth.

Notice what God said to Israel through Malachi.

Malachi 1:6

⁶ *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*

Let me show you something from the book of James which I believe shows us why chastening comes and how we are to submit to it.

Let us first of all notice what was happening in the lives of the believers whom James was writing to.

James 4:1-4

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

² *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

³ *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

⁴ *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

There was strife, lust, pride and a love for the world within the hearts of these believers. They had forgotten that they were crucified with Christ and because of the cross they no longer had to submit to the flesh for the old man was made powerless by the cross. Therefore, God allowed them to face a time of instruction/correction in their lives.

James 5:1-8

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

² *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.*

³ *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

⁴ *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.*

⁵ *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

⁶ *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

⁷ *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

⁸ *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

Here in verses 1-6 we see what it was which the Lord permitted to come into their lives. They were being mistreated by the rich. God also made it clear that the rich would be held accountable for what they were doing. It was not the responsibility of the righteous to seek vengeance for God would do that. Then in verses 7-8 we see how they were to handle the chastening. They were to be patient and live for the return of the Lord. They had been living for the world and God desired for them to live for eternity so He allowed them to come under this chastening so as to purify them by burning away the dross from their lives. Let me remind you of what James recorded earlier in this same letter.

James 1:2-4

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.*

We have talked about this before but I need to once again point out that the word "LET" here in verse 4 is the key to handling the chastening of God. This by the way is the very same idea which the writer of Hebrews sets forth with the word "SUBJECTION" in Hebrews 12:9. Let us notice what Peter wrote to those under the persecution of Nero.

1 Peter 5:6-10

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

⁹ *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

¹⁰ *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Peter's readers were also called to submit to the trials which had come upon them which means they were to allow God to use this time of persecution to bring them on towards spiritual maturity.

b. The blessing.

Life - The writer promises life to those who submit to God's chastening.

Notice Hebrews 12:9b again.

The question which I have as I read this is, "What does the writer mean when he tells his readers they will LIVE if they submit?"

The LIFE spoken of here is not our future life on this earth. He is not saying that if we resist God's working in our lives that we will die physically. The LIFE spoken of here is the ABUNDANT LIFE in Christ.

Proverbs 6:23

²³ *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:*

There is within Hebrews 12:9 and the blessing of LIFE a deep spiritual Truth which we need to grasp. Let me show you 2 verses which we studied a while back in Hebrews.

Hebrews 2:14-15

¹⁴ *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

¹⁵ *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

Before we were saved we lived in bondage because of the fear of death. Now the idea here is not the fear of actually dying physically. The idea is that before we were saved we lived a life to please the flesh trying our best to live life to the fullest. The absence of LIFE is death and so in our lives we did our best to fill our lives to the max in an attempt to experience the fullest life we possibly could. We did not know it but we were in bondage to the fear that we may miss out on something and so we did everything within our means to really live it up. We do not have to look very far today to see this very thing happening all around us. People dive deep into debt in order to get the stuff of this world because they do not want to miss out on the "full life". They are in bondage to the fear of some great experience escaping their lives. The absence of all of this to them would be death in their eyes. We were the same way before we were saved.

Now here is the frightening Truth, if we are not careful we can fall back into that very way of thinking. When we do fall back into this way of thinking and God's chastening comes we begin to fight against it because we believe this trial or storm is keeping us from experiencing life to the fullest. So we become bitter or angry and we may begin to question God or we may begin to take our frustrations out on those around us. We then have allowed our own hearts to deceive us.

Hebrews 12:9b

...shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

The abundant LIFE comes from surrendering to the will of God! It is God's desire for each of His children to live the abundant life.

John 10:9-10

⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Conclusion:

It is God's will that you and I experience the abundant life and if storms and trials of life hindered that God would never permit them. But he does permit them and it is through the

storms and the trials that we can draw nearer to God in fellowship which enables us to experience the abundant life. I want to leave you with the Words of Jesus in John 15.

John 15:1-5, 11

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

³ *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

¹¹ *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*