

"The Chastening of God"

Hebrews 12:5-24

Part 5

Introduction: This is our 5th study in which we are looking at the Chastening of God and tonight we have come to a verse which we could spend several nights on but we shall limit our time to one night. Last week we looked at Hebrews 12:9.

Notice Hebrews 12:9

In this verse we looked at how the writer uses an example of our earthly fathers. When they corrected/instructed us we gave them reverence or respect. We submitted to their instruction. The writer takes this thought and encourages us to submit to the chastening/instruction of our Heavenly Father and he tells us that submission leads to the life. The life spoken of here is the abundant life in Jesus Christ.

Now as we continue tonight the writer is going to continue the very same thought and in so doing he is going to wade a little deeper into the subject of chastening.

I. Our Attitude Toward Chastening

Part 2

Notice Hebrews 12:10a

Our earthly fathers chastened us for a few days after their own pleasure. The words "for a few days" have the idea that the chastening of our earthly fathers was only for this life. Their main concern was that we would make good choices in this life. The instruction of our earthly father's was for our short life on this earth. It was only for a season.

The words "after their own pleasure" means "as it seemed good to them". This has the idea that our earthly father's chastened us sometimes out of anger or maybe out of pride.

There have been many children who have been disciplined out of pride because they did something which embarrassed their father. For that reason they were over corrected with the rod.

Earthly fathers often either over chasten or are too light on chastening.

Eli was far too light on chastening.

1 Samuel 3:13

¹³ *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

Paul warns us about chastening that is too harsh.

Ephesians 6:4

⁴ *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Now let us get back to what the writer of Hebrews is saying: Earthly fathers only chasten for a short period of time or until the child reaches the adult years. This chastening is for this life only. Earthly fathers often make many mistakes in chastening. It is often out of passion or feeling and so it can be to light or too harsh.

Now let us notice the contrast.

Notice Hebrews 12:10b

The words "for our profit" have behind them a very interesting thought. In the previous verse the writer encouraged his readers to be submissive while going through the chastening of God. Now here in this verse he tells us it is for OUR PROFIT. This has the idea that when we have an attitude of submission as we face the chastening of God we can be assured there will be a PROFIT or a GAIN. The point is there are WAGES for the heart which is submissive to the instruction of God.

Notice Hebrews 12:10c

Here is the ultimate goal of God's chastening: that we might be partakers of His holiness. The word "holiness" here means "to sanctify". The idea is that as God chastens His children it is all for the purpose of "setting us apart" or "sanctifying us" and we must remember that it is for our PROFIT. No matter what the trial, no matter how long the trial and no matter how painful the trial it is all permitted in God's Divine wisdom for the purpose of refining us and making us more like our Savior.

Now I want to take some time and look at some ways in which the chastening of God sanctifies us.

1. Chastening detaches us from the world.

We live in a world that is dry and barren.

Psalm 63:1

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

No matter what we would seek in this world it always would leave us empty. Let us remember the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-11

⁹ *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*

¹⁰ *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

¹¹ *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

Now we would think that after we have tasted of the LIVING WATER which our Lord gives that we would forever turn our backs upon this old world. But the Truth is our old nature is still alive and our flesh still lusts after what this world has to offer. We are called to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and the lusts of the flesh and alive unto God.

Romans 6:11-14a

¹¹ *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

¹³ *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

¹⁴ *For sin shall not have dominion over you:*

While this is what we are called to do it is a major struggle in our lives. Therefore God will often step in and He will assist us through the chastening's. He does this in many different

ways. Sometimes He allows us to be mistreated at the hands of the people of the world. Sometimes He allows us to have a very bitter experience with the world. Both of these can be seen with the nation of Israel when they were in Egypt. While life was good and prosperous in Egypt Israel was content to stay there. But after the affliction Israel desired to leave Egypt.

Exodus 1:13-14

¹³ *And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:*

¹⁴ *And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.*

This is a picture of what it sometimes takes to get us to loosen our grip on the world and to get us to tighten our grip upon eternity.

2. Chastening drives us to God.

The sin nature in us desires to live a life of independence. The old man loves to believe he can stand on his own and be self-sufficient. The chastening of God is often used to strip us of self-dependence. In Psalm 107 we can see this point very clearly.

Psalm 107: 11-28

¹¹ *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:*

¹² *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.*

¹³ *Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*

¹⁴ *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.*

¹⁵ *Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

¹⁶ *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

¹⁷ *Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*

¹⁸ *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.*

¹⁹ *Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

²⁰ *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

²¹ *Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

²² *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*

²³ *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;*

²⁴ *These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.*

²⁵ *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.*

²⁶ *They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.*

²⁷ *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.*

²⁸ *Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.*

3. Chastening brings the promises of God into focus.

We would all agree that when we are faced with the trials and the storms of this life God's promises mean so much more to us. Let me show you a few verses.

Isaiah 43:2

² *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

Psalm 61:1-2

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

² *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

The words of Isaiah and the words of the Psalmist mean far more to the believer who is in a storm or a trial than they do to a believer who is not. Notice the words of Spurgeon.

"There are some verses written, as it were, in a secret ink, which must be held before the fire of adversity before they become visible."

There are verses in the Psalms and in the book of Job which we can read right over but when we are in a time of darkness and there seems to be no light due to the storm clouds over us these verses become a ray of hope. They stand out beyond all other verses because we are exercised by the chastening of God.

4. Chastening equips us to minister to others.

God will often allow us to experience the storms of life so that we will later be able to come along side someone who is going through the very same situation.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

³ *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

⁴ *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

5. Chasten is used by God to bring us to spiritual maturity.

Let me show you the words of Paul in Romans 5.

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.*

The TRIBULATION/TRIALS which we face in life develop 3 graces in the believer's life when we face the chastening with the proper attitude.

Chastening develops:

- a. **Patience** - Patience will only be developed when we are under pressure. The word here refers to "endurance" and endurance/patience is never called into play until we are facing the chastening of our God. The patience here in Romans 5:3 speaks of being delivered from murmurings and taking matters into our own hands. It has the idea of waiting upon the Lord to work out His will in the situation which we are facing.
- b. **Experience** - Patience then develops EXPERIENCE. When we exercise patience/endurance it is then we are able to EXPERIENCE the sufficiency of Divine grace. It is that that we are able to EXPERIENCE the presence of the Lord in the midst of the trials which we are going through. Was it not in the fiery furnace where Daniel's 3 friends EXPERIENCED the Truth which tells us God will never leave us nor forsake us? It is in the chastening that we can claim the words of **Psalm 46:1**
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- c. **Hope** - Experience then develops HOPE. I am reminded here of Romans 8:28 "ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD". When we face the trials and the storms with the proper attitude our PATIENCE/ENDURANCE is built up. When our PATIENCE develops and we learn to submit to the chastening of our Lord then EXPERIENCE strengthens us. Then the result of the EXPERIENCE is HOPE. Hope is the grace which we can hold tightly to as we face the chastening of God KNOWING that God will use the storm we are in for our profit and even if we die in the storm we profit even more.

Conclusion:

When we allow God's chastening to work we develop character like that of Job.

Job 13:5

¹⁵ *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*