

The Chastening of the Lord

Hebrews 12

Introduction

1. Hebrews is an epistle of exhortation – **Hebrews 13:22**
 2. Brethren needed to be encouraged to bear up under the persecution they were facing – **Hebrews 10:32, 35-39** – you endured this early on, don't cast your confidence away, but endure to the end.
 - a. Thus, also an epistle of admonition – they were slouching toward apostasy!
 3. Evidently, part of their problem was their forgetfulness about how God deals with His children in relation to various adversities – **Hebrews 12:5-6** (note: **"exhortation"**)
 4. Adversity is inevitable even though we are children of God. He never promised us an easy road – **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)**
 5. We must be equipped with the knowledge of God's will for us as it pertains to adversity, whether it be persecution, or a matter like the "present distress" (COVID-19).
- I. The Need to Endure **(vv. 1-4)**
- A. Adversity Demands Endurance **(vv. 1-4)**
 - a. After calling for endurance **(10:36)** he exhibited such enduring faith by the examples of **chapter 11** – the **"great cloud of witnesses."**
 - i. Engulfed by their examples and cheered on by their own proof of victory. Not alone.
 - ii. Run with endurance **(v. 1b)**
 - b. **(v. 2)** – Jesus is our ultimate focus, and prime example. (Author and finisher – originator, leader, completer – provides the pristine example of faith that is successful to follow.)
 - i. **Victory** – He sat down at God's right hand after suffering!
 - c. **(vv. 3-4)** – be encouraged by what Jesus had to go through and know you haven't even touched the hem of the garment.
 - i. Cannot give up at the sight of adversity but push through AND ENDURE!
 - B. Endurance Demands Elimination **(v. 1, 4)**
 - a. This race is ultimately **"striving against sin" (v. 4).**
 - i. **Hebrews 4:9-10** – end goal is rest from the work we are called to now – DOING GOD'S WILL, WHICH INVOLVES GOING AWAY FROM SIN.
 - b. Endurance demands the elimination of matters which are unlawful, and unnecessary:
 - i. **Endure** – from *"hypo"* (UNDER) and *"meno"* (TO STAY, REMAIN).
 1. We cannot burden our shoulders with unnecessary things.
 - ii. **EVERY WEIGHT** – (in distinction from sin) – are we trying to run a race with unnecessary weight. (job, relationship, hobby, etc.)
 - iii. **"and the sin"** – DEFINITE ARTICLE SEEMS TO NARROW – sin period, but something specific in mind.

1. **“so easily ensnares us”** – *euperistatos* – *eu*, “well,” *peri*, “around,” *statos*, “standing,” i.e., easily encompassing (VINE)
 2. Specifically surrounding them in the entire epistle – UNBELIEF (lacking faith) – **3:12, 19; 10:38; 11**
 3. THEY NEED TO STOP WAVERING AND START TRUSTING IN GOD!
- C. **(v. 7)** – NEED TO ENDURE CHASTENING OF THE LORD.
- II. The Need to Understand the Chastening of the Lord **(vv. 5-11)**
- A. Chastening – *paideia*
- a. “tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction” (STRONG)
 - b. “(1) the act of providing guidance for responsible living. (2) the state of being brought up properly.” (BDAG)
 - c. “(1) the whole training and education of children. (2) whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing passions. (2a) instruction which aims at increasing virtue.” (THAYER)
 - d. Involves corporal discipline – **(v. 6 – “scourges”; v. 11 – “painful”)**
 - i. NOT OF NECESSITY A CORRECTION OF WRONG – (BDAG – 1; THAYER – 1, 2a)
 - ii. Consider Christ – **Hebrews 5:8** – learned obedience by suffering.
 - iii. Began when they were being faithful – **10:32** – they had **“forgotten the exhortation” (v. 5)**
 - iv. **(v. 6) – “scourges every son WHOM HE RECEIVES”**
- B. The Source – A Father’s Love
- a. **(vv. 5-6)** – speaks to sons whom the Lord loves.
 - b. **(vv. 7-9)** – illegitimate without chastening.
 - i. **Proverbs 29:15** – No discipline = abandonment
 - c. Love – **(v. 10a)** – doing it for our profit.
 - d. Part of trusting in God is knowing He can use this suffering through His providence to strengthen us – **2 Corinthians 12:9**
- C. The Goal – Holiness, Righteousness **(vv. 10-11)**
- a. Such adversity is a training process – **(v. 11b)**
 - b. **(v. 10)** – partakers of His holiness.
 - i. **1 Peter 1:15-16** – called to holiness.
 - ii. **Holiness** – sanctity; separation.
 - iii. **(v. 4)** – striving against sin – separate from sin.
 - c. **(v. 11)** – Yielding fruit of righteousness.
 - i. **John 15:1-2** – pruning of vine to bear more fruit.
 - ii. Refining process of trials – **1 Peter 1:6-7**
 - d. ADVERSITY HAS A WAY OF WAKING US UP TO PRIORITY AND CAUSES US TO SEE THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE UNAFFECTED – THE ETERNAL AND SPIRITUAL.
 - i. **(vv. 26-27)** – THINGS SHAKEN VS UNSHAKEN.

III. The Need to Respond Correctly to the Lord's Chastening **(vv. 12-17)**

A. Not Sulking, but Improving **(vv. 12-14)**

- a. **(v. 12)** – they were allowing the adversity to have the adverse effect on them that God intended.
- b. **(v. 13)** – if they didn't change things (primarily their attitude, which would follow with changed action) THEIR SPIRITUAL MAN WOULD SUSTAIN FAR GREATER INJURIES THAN THEIR PHYSICAL.
- c. It can be easy for us respond to adversity with a "woe is me" mentality – WE MUST RESIST!
- d. **(v. 14)** – instead, pursue peace, and holiness.

B. Not Yielding to Satan's Purpose **(vv. 15-17)**

- a. This adversity was intended for them to improve – **(vv. 10-11, 14)** – improve relationships with God and fellow man (brethren, neighbor).
- b. If we fail to respond correctly it will not strengthen us, but destroy us:
 - i. **(v. 15)** – fall short of God's grace by being embittered through the adversity and turning to the world.
 - ii. **(vv. 16-17)** – example of Esau:
 1. Sold birthright for temporary carnal relief.
 2. **Hebrews 3:13** – deceitfulness of sin.
 3. Fornicator and profane – spiritual infidelity through base thinking and living, and not valuing the spiritual as you should.
- c. NOTE: While God intends to use adversity for our good, the devil means it for our destruction – **2 Corinthians 12:7** – don't let the adversary have his way.

IV. The Need for Boldness – Mount Zion **(vv. 18-24)**

A. Not Fear

- a. These brethren were being moved by fear in their adversity.
 - i. A matter already addressed by the writer – **Hebrews 2:15** – release from bondage of fear of death.
- b. Ironically, their fear was causing them to turn back to the covenant characterized by fear **(vv. 18-21)**:
 - i. **(v. 21)** – EVEN MOSES WAS TERRIFIED!
- c. But they were not given the spirit of bondage to fear – **Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7**
- d. **(v. 18)** – they haven't come to the mountain of fear.

B. But Boldness

- a. Under this New Covenant they approach the spiritual Mount Zion – **(v. 22)**
- b. Highlighting spiritual blessings untouched by adversity **(vv. 22-24)**:
 - i. Ultimately a culmination of all the "BETTER" components of Christ and the NC enumerated and argued in the epistle.
 - ii. You have reached the UNMATCHED SUBSTANCE OF GOD'S WILL!

- iii. **"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, HAVING BOLDNESS...LET US DRAW NEAR" (Hebrews 10:19, 22).**
 - c. **(vv. 26-27)** – boldness marked by the knowledge of things not shaken VS things that can be shaken, and ultimately will come to an end anyway. (anything on earth, including physical life.)
 - i. Christians sit in a place that cannot be shaken – **Ephesians 2:6**
- V. The Need for Reverence and Godly Fear **(vv. 25-29)**
- A. Such boldness, and the matters which supply us with it, does not warrant a relaxed approach to God.
 - a. Rather, the proper estimation of said matters will SHARPEN OUR FOCUS AND INTENSIFY OUR CAUTION.
 - b. We do not want to become guilty of refusing the blessings of God through careless religion!
 - B. Be Grateful and Godly
 - a. **(v. 25)** – do not refuse Him who speaks from heaven – the new covenant calls for careful adherence. **(cf. Hebrews 2:1-3a)** – give more earnest heed to what you hear!
 - b. **(v. 28a)** – We must have **"grace"** – gratitude – for what God has provided for us, and the confidence we have because of it.
 - c. **(vv. 28b-29)** – This gratitude is expressed in reverence and godliness.
 - i. WE DO NOT SHOW GOD GRATITUDE FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR US BY DEVIATING FROM HIS PATTERN OR DOING WHAT WE **"THINK"** HE WOULD BE PLEASED WITH!
 - ii. We honor Him by reverence and doing as He commands.
 - iii. **(v. 29)** – He is still a consuming fire.

Conclusion

1. When we experience any adversity on this earth, whether it is a direct result of our faith (persecution) or just by time and chance, we must remember the words which speak to us as sons – **(vv. 5-6).**
2. We must take encouragement from the fact that God is using these unfortunate circumstances to purify His children and set them further apart for the great reward!
3. We must endure, we must grow, we must not faint!