

Hebrews 12:3-11 “Father knows best”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 3-8 The way of Jesus

III. Vs. 9-11 Father knows best

I. Introduction

The writer answers a very important question that every person running on the part of the course of difficulties and disappointments asks themselves: “*Why am I having to run on this section?*” As I stated last week the challenge for us “***Faith Athletes***” is **more mental than it is physical** and without dealing with the motivation we are easily discouraged. So to these harassed and persecuted Christians who are battling discouragement the writer offers encouragement. ***The illustration changes in verses 3-11 from a spiritual marathon to that of a family. Though the Christian life involves running, working and enduring it does so within our relationship to God and other believers.*** The emphasis of this section is how we are trained to run the race and why we need to stay under God’s training no matter how difficult it becomes. First and foremost, we must understand that God’s training or discipline is never punitive towards His children it is instead always corrective in nature, designed for our benefit. All our punishment has already been placed upon our Lord at the Cross, therefore we know that what discipline we now are growing through is for our benefit not our punishment.

II. Vs. 3-8 The way of Jesus

Vs. 3-8 The first thing the writer says is in verses 3-4 “***It could be worse!***” He reminds his readers that they had not yet resisted to the point of shedding their blood. Instead of complaining they ought to be praising God for having been spared. In Romans 8:32 Paul said, “*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” When Jeremiah began to complain about his course the Lord said to him in Jeremiah 12:5 “*If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?*” The writer has told his readers that Jesus is the greatest example of the life of faith again exhorts his readers to consider him by way of comparing him in five ways:

1. Vs. 3 ***What they suffered and why they suffered it:*** “*Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*” This first comparison is that of what Jesus suffered and why; against what these persecuted readers were suffering and why. Jesus endured suffering from the very hands of the sinners He was being sacrificed to save. Paul wrote of this in 2 Corinthians 5:21 saying, “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” These persecuted Hebrews were being mistreated and persecuted by their own fellow Jews because they refused to participate in the temple sacrifices that only pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus. The point is they were only being asked to continue to trust in His sacrifice, where as if Jesus hadn’t endured there wouldn’t have been any sacrifice to trust in! Jesus has made the ONLY WAY possible for us in which we can be saved and all we need to do is CONTINUE TO TRUST HIS SACRIFICE! This was the exact point Paul wrote about in his letter to the Roman believers in Romans 8:35-39 when he said, “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor*

life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. Vs. 4 **The amount of suffering compared to that of Jesus:** “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.” **The second comparison has to do with both the type of suffering and amount of suffering when compared with Jesus.** The Greek word of “resisted” means to “stand against” and we see the writer saying that their “**stand**” was against the temptation of renouncing their professed faith in Jesus in order to avoid persecution and as of yet it had not yielded bloodshed. Jesus suffering wasn’t against the temptation of professed faith but “**striving against our sin**”! **The Greek words describes an agonizing fight to the death against OUR SIN in which in order to defeat our sin He had to die in the fight!**
3. Vs. 5-6 **The purpose of the suffering:** The writer now quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 to consider these persecutions as instructional allowed by God for the purpose of training, educating and encouraging them of the value of Jesus’ sacrifice and against returning to the temporary sacrifices of the temple. In a sense these persecutions verified the validity of Jesus true sacrifice as why else would satan fight so hard against it? The context is that of the way in which our earthly fathers would discipline us as a way of training us and educating us in a particular path.
4. Vs. 7 **What suffering reveals about whom we belong:** The Greek word rendered “**IF**” in this verse is unfortunate as it should be rendered “**IT IS FOR CHASTENING THAT YOU ARE ENDURING.**” The letter was written to the “**professing**” church made up of both saved and unsaved and both groups were being persecuted because both had left the temple sacrifices and identified with Jesus but only those who remained under the persecution would demonstrate that they were the child of God and those who returned to the sacrifices proved that they were as John said of them in 1 John 2:19 saying, “**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.**”
5. Vs. 8 **Suffering is instructive not punitive:** Israel had understood suffering only from the perspective as a sign of God’s displeasure and therefore punitive in nature instead of a sign of His love and relationship with them. The early church also was being tested in this way viewing their persecution as punitive instead of instructive. In an earthly relationship everyone knows that you don’t discipline the neighbor children and it is a sign to us that as we would submit to God’s discipline that we are indicating that we see Him as our Heavenly Father and are under that relationship. Before we were a part from the family of God now we are apart from the family of God.

III. Vs. 9-11 Father knows best

Vs. 9-11 The second thing the writer reminds them is that **difficulties prove our relationship to our Heavenly Father.** Every child knows that their **parents don’t discipline the neighbor children.** The point is if we are going through struggles then we need to thank the Lord because He is showing you that you are His child. And when this happens with or earthly parents and we show them respect how much more shall we do so to our Heavenly Father? Our earthly parents did so at at their discretion doing what they thought was right when perhaps it wasn’t. But our Heavenly Father is never wrong and always does what is right. He can only send us what we need at the right time. Someone has well defined God’s children as those who are **completely fearless, continually cheerful, and constantly in trouble.** The word “**furthermore**” indicates a new subject to consider but it is still a contrast but this time it deals with the contrast between our earthly fathers and our Heavenly Father.

1. Vs. 9 The first area to compare has to do with how we valued, respected and loved

our earthly fathers instructive discipline. We didn't doubt their love for us, we believed that such discipline was for our benefit even though it came from mere human limited wisdom. So why do we doubt God's intentions for us when His knowledge and love for us is "**universal**" and **without any possibility error**? Furthermore, our earthly father's disciplined only concerned things that are temporary where as our Heavenly Father's discipline is not only for earth but through out eternity.

2. Vs. 10 The second comparison has to do with two aspects of our discipline:

1. ***It's Duration***: Our earthly fathers discipline is both imperfect as well as limited in scope. It primarily is centered upon a brief time of our human development during our youth. Furthermore, it is based upon human wisdom and insight as it was "**what seemed best to them**". Its aim was to get us to only adulthood and offered nothing beyond that. Not so with our heavenly Father's discipline as its aim reaches past our youth, through our adulthood and on into eternity. It also was not based upon what "seemed best" but what "IS BEST" for us and not reasoned through limited wisdom and experience but unlimited.
2. ***It's Dedication***: Here the view is short sided and fallible nature of earthly discipline when compared to that of our Heavenly Father whose passion is only for our benefit and that we might be partakers of His holiness. Submitting to God's discipline is the truest and shortest course to maturity that will never be out of style.

Vs. 11 Finally God doesn't rejoice in our troubles but He in His wisdom knows what trouble ultimately does for us. He doesn't want us to fake a "**Hallelujah, it hurts!**" What ***He does want you to understand is this present discipline has an end and a purpose***. "*It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*" This reminds us that it is possible to go through trials and never have them produce their desired blessings in our lives. We can spend all our energy and time trying to get out of the trial instead of "**getting everything out of the trial!**" If you need to go through the trial of God's discipline, then don't complain your way through in gain your way through it! The final evaluation has to do with permanence of what God's discipline produces in us. There is no such thing in the midst of discipline as it being pleasurable be that human parents or our Heavenly Father. What the child of God is encouraged to do is not look at the tool but what it creates in us namely the "*peaceable fruit of righteousness*".