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DEUTERONOMY 9:1:11:32

The sermon of Moses continues. Moses continues to prepare the children of Israel for the task that lay ahead of them. In this lesson, Moses repeats the history of their fathers to them and Moses doesn't gloss over the sins of their fathers.

Oliver Cromwell, the man who was the advisor to King Henry VIII, told the artist painting his portrait that he refused to pay even a farthing for the painting unless it truly looked like him... including Cromwell said, "**pimples, warts and everything as you see me.**"

Most of us aren't that brave, are we? I sort of want a silk screen over the camera when my picture is taken.

But, in this part of this address by Moses to the children of Israel, Moses painted these folks as they really were – warts and all.

And it was important for these people...for their spiritual growth and maturity to accept reality and do something about it...

And it's that way for us as well, isn't it? We said last week that we should welcome it when God points out our failures so that we can know them and do something about them.

In **Chapter 9** of the book of **Deuteronomy**, Moses reminds the people who's in charge!

Deuteronomy 9:1-6...

Moses reminds the people that the land was a gift from the Lord...not a reward for their righteousness. God was simply honoring the covenant He had made with Abraham when He promised Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

And God is assuring these folks again that He will be the One who will drive out the enemy before them...**They** were to fight the battles but **He** would enable them and empower them.

Even though Israel wasn't a perfect people, God would use them to accomplish His purpose of judging these godless, idol worshiping heathens who occupied the land of Canaan. God had given the Canaanites 400 years to repent...now their wickedness had been "filled up."

The emphasis here is on the grace of God, not the goodness of God's people.

When we forget the grace of God, we become proud and we start thinking that we deserve all that God has done for us...that He's really lucky to have us...and when we do that, then God has to remind us of **His** goodness and **our** sinfulness...and that reminder may be very painful...

And that's really the theme of the rest of today's lesson.

Even though Moses is addressing a new generation, they **needed** to hear the things that Moses was telling them. They **needed** to realize **they** were sinners just like their parents.

Moses began to rehearse for them the golden calf incident. Remember that before Moses went up on Mt. Sinai to receive the Law, the people had gathered together and told Moses, "**All that the Lord commands, we will do!**"

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And Moses is reminding them that before He even came down from the mountain with the Law, they had **broken** the Law. They set up another god before themselves and they bowed down and worshiped this god.

Moses had to fast and pray to God that God would stay His hand of judgment upon these people, didn't he?

And God was merciful...He didn't totally wipe these folks out. He chastened them, but He did it for the same reason He chose them...because He loved them.

Moses is pleading with the people to remember what happened to their fathers so it would not happen to them. Moses doesn't want these folks to suffer.

Aren't we the same with our children? We want to shield them and keep them from suffering, don't we?

But, there are some things that we must allow our children to go through, and there are some things that God cannot teach us apart from suffering.

There are really three kinds of suffering found in God's Word...

One kind is the "**Job-type**" of suffering. The "**Job-type**" of suffering is used by God as a test of our faith. Many times we know of Christians who are suffering...and it's not a chastisement from God...it is a test. It is a trial of their faith that the Father might be glorified. It is a trial that proves the stability of their belief.

God uses His children as examples many times of how a person can remain faithful and sound and firm and steadfast even in the midst of great suffering...and this is to the glory of God!

God allowed this to happen in Job's life and He also allowed it to happen in Paul's life with his thorn in the flesh.

Remember, God told Paul that His power would be perfected in Paul's weakness!

So...there is a "Job and Paul-type" of suffering...

Secondly, there is a "Jesus-type" suffering. This is a suffering that God allows the world to do to a Christian.

Jesus said, "If the world hated Me, you know that it will also hate you..."

Jesus also said, "When you are persecuted for My sake, rejoice and be exceedingly glad..."

So, Christians suffer many times like Jesus suffered simply because Jesus was obedient to the Heavenly Father. He was identified with the righteousness of God and the world reacted to that righteousness with persecution.

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All the disciples experienced this. They were persecuted and martyred for the sake of the Gospel. They suffered because of their righteousness.

I believe this type of suffering is happening to missionaries all over the world today...many are being persecuted because they are identified with the righteousness of God!

So, there is the “**Job-kind**” of suffering and there is the “**Jesus-kind**” of suffering, but there is also the “**Jonah-kind**” of suffering.

Jonah suffered, not as a test of his faith as Job did and as Paul did...

And not because he was identified with the righteousness of God as Jesus was...

Jonah suffered because he was rebellious and disobedient to God. Jonah was God's child but he was not an obedient child.

And today, I want us to think about this kind of suffering...the suffering of chastisement. God tells us in the book of **Deuteronomy** that God chastens His children as a father chastens his son.

There are at least three purposes that are accomplished when God chastens His children. And I believe if we were to go over to **Hebrews 12**, it would be very plain to us.

Hebrews 12:5-8...

1) God disciplines us in order to prove our sonship.

Verse 8 tells us if there is no chastisement then we are illegitimate children.

Back in the New Testament days, if a man had an illegitimate child...

- he never gave that child any love,
- he never gave that child any nurture,
- he never gave that child any care,
- he felt no responsibility towards that child.

He just simply ignored and neglected that child.

And I believe the passage we just read tells us if a person is persistently rebellious against God and suffers no discipline...then that person more than likely is not a child of God.

2) God disciplines us in order to purge us from our sin.

Verses 10-11...

Jonah is a great example of this. Remember how Jonah ran away from God and God had to allow Jonah to be caught in a storm and then thrown overboard and then be swallowed by the whale? If God had not disciplined Jonah in this way

- Jonah would never have repented.
- He would never have been obedient.
- He would never have preached to Nineveh.
- Nineveh would have never repented.

And God chastened Jonah in order to purge him of his prejudice and rebellion.

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And I want to say this...if there is some sin in your life that you continue to hang onto...some sin that you refuse to give up...then you are forcing God to chastise you in order to purge you of that sin.

Not only does God's discipline prove our sonship.
And not only does God's discipline purge our sin...

3) God's discipline promotes our sanctification.

Look again at **verse 10**...

And this goes on to say in **verse 14** *"without holiness no man shall see the Lord."*

Listen, when we came to Jesus Christ and received Him as Lord and Savior, God said,
"Alright, here's My plan for you...My plan for you is not to take you to heaven right away...My plan for you is to make you holy."

Did you know that heaven isn't the main thing? I mean, if heaven were the main thing God would just take us on to heaven the minute we're saved, wouldn't He? NO! He wants His children to be holy! And He will sanctify us **with** or **without** our cooperation. But, I want to tell you, it will be far more pleasant **with** our cooperation.

**The most miserable person is not the lost person...
The most miserable person is the Christian who is outside the will of God!!**

God wanted His children back in **Deuteronomy** to be holy. He had called them out and He had set them apart for His own possession...for holiness. The word "holy" means "to be set apart."

And these folks were about to enter a godless, heathen land and they were to be obedient to God so that folks would see them and be drawn to the God of Israel. They were to be a light to the nations.

And Moses was attempting to tell these folks that if they didn't do what God had commanded then chastisement would come upon them.

We've looked at the **purpose** of God's discipline...let's see **how** He disciplines...

Verses 5-6...

If you'll notice, there are three different words to describe the discipline of the Father. The first word used here is "reprove" NAS, "rebuke" KJV and NIV.

This is the easiest form of God's discipline. This word can mean "gentle conviction." How many times when you kneel to pray do you feel God begin to chasten you with a gentle word of rebuke or reproof or conviction?

I believe this is what God always does first. He may give us a word of rebuke from the Bible...or from the pulpit...or from a friend...or from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

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But, if a word of rebuke or reproof doesn't work, God doesn't give up, He moves on...

Notice, the next word used here is "discipline" NAS and NIV; "chastening" KJV. This word means "to correct" and it's a little stronger than the word "rebuke."

You know the difference in these words with your own children, don't you? And believe me, they did too!

Then, notice the word "scourge".

Now folks, there's nothing gentle or tender about scourging. But, when the gentle word of rebuke or the little bit stronger correction will not bring us into line with God's holiness, then God is forced to pick up the scourge.

I don't know how God's discipline has come about in your life.

Has He been able to get your attention by a mere word of rebuke?

Have you been convicted of disobedience by a Scripture or a sermon or the Spirit of God?

Or, has God had to use more severe means of correction? Has His chastening come in the form of illness or some other painful circumstance?

God wants you to be a partaker of His holiness and I pray that God will impress upon you the seriousness of this. In **verse 5**, he says, "*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,*" and that word despise means "don't treat it lightly."

You better not treat lightly the chastening of the Lord!

When a child of God persists in his backsliding, in his rebellion, in his disobedience, and God reproves him, God rebukes him, and he doesn't change...and God chastens him and he isn't corrected by it...and God scourges him and he does not repent...the Bible teaches in many cases, God, in order to spare His holy name, will take that child unto Himself and deal with him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

I heard it illustrated this way.

He said, "Say I go and visit someone and I take my child with me. While we're sitting in the living room visiting, this child begins to climb on the coffee table and knock over a lamp, get crayons and color on the wall and I tell that child, 'Now, don't do that.' But he still persists in doing that.

And after awhile I say, 'If you do that again, I'm going to spank you.' And he continues to be unruly and disobedient and so I take off my belt and I spank him. And after awhile he still is unruly, he still is rebellious and finally I cannot control him and it's embarrassing to me and to my host...I cannot control him and finally I say, 'Get up. I'm going to take you home. I can't do anything with you...I'm just going to take you home.'"

And I believe that's what God has to say to some Christians. I believe He has to say, "I've tried every way I know to make you behave yourself. I have loved you. I have nurtured you. I have given you every good thing. I have rebuked you. I have chastened you. I can't make you behave yourself...I'm just going to have to take you home in order to save My holy name."

Well, what is God trying to say to me through discipline?

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I believe chastening from the Lord is both a **word of comfort** and a **warning against carelessness...**

Verse 6...

When we're chastened by the hand of God we need to recognize it as a proof of His love...

The scalpel that cuts into us is held by the hand of our Heavenly Father who loves us. And no chastening for the present seems to be joyous and we misunderstand it many times.

Just as a child misunderstands his father's correction and thinks that the father is correcting him because the father doesn't love him or because he just enjoys seeing him mistreated and it's only years later that the child understands that had it not been for the correction, the discipline, imperfect as it may have been, of the father, he would not have grown up to understand and to know how to behave himself in society.

Afterwards, we understand God is doing this for our good. And I want to say this morning that I praise the Lord for the chastening He has dealt out in my own life.

If God had not chastened me I wouldn't be here this morning. I thank God that He loves me...and He knows what's best for me. The message of chastisement is a word of comfort! He is our Father. Notice it always says "father".

The idea of a father-son relationship moves all the way through this passage – not some unknowable, unreachable, uncaring, unfeeling fate...it's a Father who loves His son!

Not only is it a word of comfort, it is also a warning against carelessness...

Verse 12-13...

The message of chastisement is a warning against carelessness and against careless living...Don't force God to chasten and to scourge you...take the gentle word of rebuke and conviction.

Well, let's see how this applies to the children of Israel...

Moses is doing everything he can to warn these people about disobedience. The bottom line of all this is that the nation had to make a choice whether to obey God and enjoy His blessings or disobey God and experience His chastening.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28...

They could enjoy the land, endure chastening in the land as we're seeing in the book of **Judges** on Sunday mornings, or be evicted from the land as we know happened when the Assyrians and Babylonians conquered them.

What a waste! The results of Israel's disobedience are still being felt today.

They never conquered all the land.

They never destroyed all the people.

They never were a light to all the nations.

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**They never obeyed all the commandments, laws, statutes and ordinances.
They went after the gods of the nations they never conquered!**

And, God ultimately used the Assyrians and the Babylonians as His rod...His scourge of discipline. Instead of the blessings, they received the cursings that we saw in **Deuteronomy 11**.

God hasn't written the Old Covenant Law on stones and warned us about curses; rather, He has written His New Covenant on our hearts and blessed us in Jesus Christ. ***"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus..."***

However, the fact that Christians are under grace and not under Law doesn't mean that we have a license to sin...

God's principles never change, and one of those principles is that God **blesse**s us when we obey and **chaste**ns us when we disobey.

The message that I want us to leave with this morning is this...

LET'S NOT FORCE GOD TO CHASTEN AND TO SCOURGE US! LET'S DETERMINE TO LISTEN FOR HIS GENTLE WORD OF REBUKE AND CONVICTION, DEAL WITH OUR DISOBEDIENCE AND WALK IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!!

May God enable us to do just that!