

The Father's Word and Discipline

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to the New Testament book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12, and we're going to read the first 14 verses.

! Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

And you have forgotten, and you have forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as sons. My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

[1 : 37] Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live?

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while, as they thought best, But God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Therefore, strengthen your feet and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Make every effort to live in peace with all men, and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Behold.

[2 : 34] Behold. Take a look at that. What kind of love is this, anyway, that the Father has lavished on us? That we, you and I, who used to be children of the devil, should be called children of God.

And that is what we are. God's reminding us in that verse, 1 John 3, 1, of who we are. That if we belong to Jesus Christ by faith and repentance, we are the children of God.

And it's good for us often to remind ourselves of that. Because this is at the very heart of Christianity. As J.I. Packer said, we quoted him last year.

If you would know how much a person knows about Christianity, ask them how much they make of God being their father. It's at the very heart.

The Christian life is living as a child of the Heavenly Father. If that's you, say with me, I am a child of the Heavenly Father. I am a child of the Heavenly Father.

[3 : 41] And that identity is to influence everything about us, all of life. Last week we saw it's to revolutionize the way that we pray.

That prayer is primarily talking to God, who is our Father. Even as Jesus taught us to pray, our Father, who is in heaven.

And so we're invited to tell Father everything, to pour out our hearts to Him at all times. And what confidence it gives us that when we come to pray, we find it is our caring Father that we speak with. Who so much more than we loves to give good gifts to those who ask Him. To His children who ask Him. And then secondly, we saw that according to Jesus, having such a Heavenly Father ought to eliminate worry from our lives.

We're to cast our cares upon Him who cannot not care for us. How much more valuable you are than the birds.

[4 : 48] His eye is on the sparrow, but how much more is it upon you? And how much greater is His care and concern for you? Yes, He feeds the birds and clothes the grass of the field.

We can trust our Father to protect and to provide for us. So what kind of love is this that the Father has lavished upon us? Well, if we have His heart, as Pastor Jason just reminded us, we have His ears.

We have His listening ears. We have His fatherly watching eyes. And we have His hands to provide and protect us. Well, today we see that we also have the Father's words and the Father's discipline. Please open to Hebrews 12 if you don't have your Bible open there, the passage that was read for us. It was written to these Hebrew Christians who needed to persevere in the way of Christ. They were being persecuted for becoming Christians, and they had had about enough of it. They were growing weary and were tempted to avoid it.

[5 : 58] And they could avoid much of the persecution just by turning their back on Jesus and returning to a Jesus-less Judaism, a Judaism without the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

And so they're told that if they would persevere in the way, they must fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith, who himself had his eyes fixed on the joy that was before him, the joy of bringing many sons to glory.

And that kept him persevering. So you, in all of your weariness, fix your eyes on Jesus and learn from him to not grow weary and lose heart and quit.

But there's something else that these Hebrew Christians must do and that you and I must do if we would persevere to the end in holiness, even in the midst of great trial and tribulation. And that's that we must realize our privileges as children of God.

And he mentions, too, in this passage, that they have their Father's words and that they have their Father's discipline. Now let's take those in order. Your Father's words.

[7 : 11] So kids, what would you think if your father never spoke to you? Weston? Cademan? Hallie? Hayden? Molly?

What if Dad never spoke to you? Theron? You'd say something's wrong, wouldn't you?

And you would be right that that something's wrong. Because healthy relationships, all of healthy relationships, are mutually interactive.

And if they're just one-sided, something's wrong. Even so, in this Heavenly Father-child relationship, it is a two-way street.

Last week, we saw that prayer is you talking to God, your Father. But you not only speak to your Heavenly Father in prayer, He speaks to you in Scripture.

[8 : 15] It is a two-way communication that we have in this relationship. And that will change the way that you read the Bible. Just as your identity as God's child flavors everything that you say in prayer, so your identity as God's child flavors everything that He says to you in Scripture.

For what He says to you here, He says to you as your loving Heavenly Father. It's your Father speaking. And so your identity as His child is to affect the way you listen, the way you receive it. And so here in Hebrews 12, verse 5, it says, How many of our troubles in the Christian life come from forgetting what our Father has been telling us?

Kids, maybe some of your problems at home come from forgetting what Father has said. It's surely true in this way that many of our problems in the Christian life come from forgetting what Father has been saying to us in Scripture.

And so He reminds us. And the specific word of encouragement here that He quotes is from the book of Proverbs, Proverbs 3, 11, and 12. And here He quotes it in verses 5 and 6 of our text.

[9 : 44] My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline. Let me say that again. My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline. And do not lose heart when He rebukes you.

Because the Lord disciplines those He loves and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Now we're in the book of Proverbs then right away.

He takes us back to the book of Proverbs. And in the book of Proverbs, we get to listen in on a father talking to his sons. Listen, my son, to your father's instruction.

My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. My son, give me your heart. And on and on. Some two dozen times in the book of Proverbs, we're reminded these are the words of a father speaking to his son.

But we're mistaken if we think these are just the words of King Solomon speaking to Rehoboam and his other sons. It's also the heavenly father speaking to his sons and daughters.

[10:51] Notice again how the writer to the Hebrew Christians. These aren't Solomon's children. These are Christians living a thousand years later.

And notice what he says. How he he says what he says to these Hebrew Christians as he introduces this proverb in verse five. And you have forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.

Oh, do you mean Proverbs 3, 11 and 12 is talking to me? You mean that God, my father, is speaking to me in that proverb?

Yes, he is. And not just in that proverb, but indeed in the whole of the book. What the father says in the book of Proverbs, your heavenly father is saying to you who are his sons.

And that's not limited to the book of Proverbs. Rather, all of scripture is to be received as my heavenly father's word to me, his son.

[11:59] You, his daughter. Just as he tells you fathers in Ephesians 6, 4 to not exasperate your children, but to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Even so, our heavenly father brings his children up with plenty of instructions that that takes the words, doesn't it? It requires speech. And God, the father does that.

All of scripture is God breathed. And it's profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness. He's bringing up children. And he speaks words to do that.

That's the scriptures. Even the red letter portions of your Bible. Those words of Jesus. Those, too, are to be regarded as words from your father. Jesus told his disciples in the upper room, If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.

And my father will love him. And we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. So he's been talking about my teaching. Then he says this.

[13:06] These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the father who sent me. Even Jesus' teachings are to be regarded as our father speaking to us as his children.

So the Bible is God speaking to us as our heavenly father. I wonder if you've been receiving it as such. I wonder if you've been reading it as such. Have you been receiving it as it's preached as such?

As father is speaking. My heavenly father. That puts a different slant on it. Yes, it's the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. But the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth is my father.

Never forget that as you read his word. All he says to me flows from this amazing fatherly love that wants the best for me. And so his word.

What do we find here? Well, it's full of fatherly commands, isn't it? And all of them are righteous, holy, and good. And not a one of them are burdensome. At least not to the one who is born of God.

[14:16] 1 John chapter 5 and verse 3. All of his children, they eat up the words, the commands of their father because they're not burdensome. They have a new heart that receives them and is hungry to hear them.

The warnings of scriptures even. They come from our heavenly father. And he wants to spare us of unnecessary suffering. And unnecessary pain that comes when we step out of the way.

That narrow way that he's laid out before us in his word. It's a father heart, you see, that sends these warnings. He would do us good and spare us from all kinds of troubles.

Father wants us happy and he knows there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. That's the way we're meant to live as God's children.

Trusting and obeying. And it's our responsibility as well as children of God to represent him well in the world. And so we would honor him by obeying him.

[15:25] He complains to Israel, if I'm a father, where's the honor? Do me. You're not obeying my commands. No, the honor of children that they give.

One of the ways they honor their father is to listen and to obey his commands. So it is in the family of God. The commands, the warnings. Oh, and then there's great and precious promises, aren't there, in the Bible?

Whereby our father in heaven ties his hands. He binds himself. He obligates himself.

He binds himself to us by way of a promise. He must now do what he said because he promised. And as a child might remind father.

Father, you promised. Once God promises, he's bound to do it. Why would he ever do that? Why would he ever stoop to bind himself to do something for his children?

[16 : 21] He just loves us that much that he wants to remove all doubt from our hearts and minds. Will he do this for us? He's bound himself by promise.

Precious promises. They come as a father to his children. That we might rest upon them. And then don't miss the encouraging nature of the father's words to his children.

You have forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as children. The word of encouragement that addresses you as sons. Paul says in Romans 15 that it's through the encouragement of the scriptures that we might have hope.

The encouragements of the scripture. Haven't you found the scriptures to be full of encouragements? They're the encouragements of a father. Children need tons of encouragement. And that's what we find in scripture. This book is father encouraging us in the right way. It's not all rebuke and correction. He comes affirming us as his child.

[17 : 27] He comes telling us of his love for us. Telling us what pleases him as well as what displeases him. How he's pleased with our obedience and our trust and our love.

And he speaks words that lift up our hearts when they're drooping. In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul tells the Thessalonian church, For you know how we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children.

What are you talking about, Paul? How did you deal with that church? I mean, how does a father deal with his own children? Well, he goes on. Encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

That's the way a father deals with each of his children. Or ought to. Encouraging, comforting, urging. And that's the way our heavenly father deals with us in his word.

With tons of encouragement and comfort. So just a couple challenges this week on this point. And first is every time you open your Bible to read this week. Pause and remember this is father speaking to me.

[18 : 43] And thank him. Thank him that he's not silent. He's got words for you. Words you need. Words to build you up.

And then as you read, hear it as from your father. Hear it coming from his loving heart. Behold, what manner of love is this?

To say these kinds of things to us. You're forgiven, child. That's how to read the Bible.

As Sinclair Ferguson says, we sit at our father's feet and listen. What a precious way to read the Bible. And then respond to it. As to your father.

And talk to him about what he's talked to you. Do you do that? Or do you just read what he says and just shut the book and go on your way?

[19 : 43] I, that's, something's wrong there. There's to be this two-way communication. Has he spoken to you? Then pause and respond to him.

Father, you've said this. Oh, it's so good to hear that promise today. Father, you've given me this commandment. Would you help me today? You know I'm weak. You respond.

It's your father speaking. Remember that your identity as children of God is to change the way you read the Bible. And then for you. And just, just the reminder, the two chief means of grace of prayer and the scriptures.

They got this identity of father-son relationship all over it. It's interesting. That's walking with God.

That's the Christian life. That's communion with him, enjoying your father's presence.

But then, human fathers, examine your words to your children. Are they like those of your heavenly fathers, to his children? Do you speak the truth in love to them?

[20 : 51] You're giving them the true wisdom from God in scripture. And are you loading your communication with your children with tons of encouragement?

Not always carping at their imperfections, but praising them. Not a father who can never be pleased, but telling them what pleases you and what they're doing that is right.

Find that which you can affirm in each of your children. And see to it that your words of affirmation outnumber your words of correction.

Even as father does to you. Well, to have our father's heart of love, then, is to have his word of encouragement. And secondly, to have his heart is to have his discipline.

Indeed, we find that these two go together. Word of encouragement, fatherly discipline. For the word of encouragement that he quotes is here in Proverbs and the rest of Hebrews, the passage that was read in Hebrews 12.

[22 : 01] It's all about the father's discipline. So that's the word of encouragement. God is disciplining you. Don't you feel encouraged already? Some of you look like you're feeling better.

Just knowing he's disciplining me and it's all painful. You say, where's the encouragement in that? How do you come away encouraged?

Sadly, we misread our circumstances and our father's involvement in it in a way that discourages us when the very same situations are meant to encourage us.

How we misread our heavenly father, his heart, his intention. We would take that which is spoken for our encouragement and go away discouraged. So here's his word of encouragement.

The father's word of encouragement. My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline. And don't lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines those he loves.

[23 : 02] And he punishes. The word is whips. He whips every, everyone he accepts as a son. So, if that doesn't at once make you jump up and down for joy and encouragement, I trust a closer look at it will.

And a following of his exposition of how he explains that proverb to us should encourage us. Now, the father's discipline, just by way of introduction, the father's discipline comes in many different forms.

It could be a painful rebuke from his word as he's speaking to you. That's part of discipline. It could be a more painful punishment. The word, as I said, is whipping, scourging.

It reflects something more serious than just a word. It could be hardships. It could be tribulations. It could be trials, pressures of life, sickness, loss, thorns in the flesh from Satan to be left to ourselves.

But here in Hebrews, it was persecution. That was the discipline of the father. It was being persecuted for following Jesus Christ. But whatever the form it takes, all discipline is painful and not pleasant, verse 11 says.

[24 : 17] So, if it is not painful, it is not discipline. By definition, discipline is painful. It has to hurt in order to produce the intended result.

Now, something else we need to know as we look at this passage is that the father's discipline is not always punishment for something we have done wrong. But it is always part of his child training. His overall schooling and discipline of growing up his children into maturity and godly character. I remember as a boy being sent to the garden hot, humid mornings and have to weed and water and cultivate and then pick the produce and bag it and then pedal it on the streets in my little red wagon.

That was painful, but it was not punishment for something I had done wrong. Dad had other pain management for that. But what he was doing, what it was, as painful as it was, it was a part of father's child training.

[25 : 32] Part of his discipline to teach me valuable lessons for life that I could learn in no other way. Like the value of hard work and its rewards.

Like the importance of doing something even when you don't feel like doing it. Self-control. Like delayed gratification.

I don't have to be gratified and be having fun 24-7. No. The priority of work before play. Unselfish contributing to the family cause.

And about 20 other important lessons. Many of the hard and painful trials of life are just that kind of fatherly discipline. Not necessarily. This is a broad category.

And not everything in it is just correction for ill behavior. Some of it is just building character. Discipline.

[26 : 32] Anybody feeling encouraged yet? Well, there is some encouragement in that. Let's look more closely at the reasons to be encouraged. I have three. The encouragement lies not so much in the painful discipline itself, but in what it proves and in what it produces.

Now, we will look first at what it proves. Fatherly discipline proves his love for his own children.

Verse 6 says we're not to lose heart. In other words, we are to take heart.

We're to be encouraged. Under discipline because the Lord disciplines those he loves. Can't we get it wrong? We think that the discipline of trials is proof that he really doesn't care that much for us.

He really doesn't really love us that much. When the truth is just the opposite. How stupid of me as a 10 year old boy to say, dad, you don't love me because you make me work in the garden.

And you don't let me fritter away fritter away my life like the other kids. How foolish. No, he was proving his love for me that he wanted me to amount to something.

[27 : 45] That's love. How foolish to say you don't love me, dad, because you spank me when I rebel against you. Kids, you ever feel like that?

Like your dad's discipline proves that he hates you? You got it exactly wrong. Exactly wrong. The Bible says you couldn't be more wrong.

Proverbs 13, 24. He who spares the rod hates his son. You want to talk about hatred? Listen to God's definition. When a child needs correction and dad does nothing, that's hatred.

That's hatred. But it goes on to say, but he who loves his son is careful to discipline him. That's real love. It's hatred to leave a child undisciplined, uncorrected, untrained, never make him do anything he doesn't want to do.

To shield him from all that is painful. That's hatred according to God's word. And even so, our heavenly father's discipline proves his love for us.

[28 : 52] His loving care for us. He loves us too much to not correct us. He loves us too much to just let us go on our self-destructive way. To not lead us back into the best life.

So, child of God, receive painful trials and hardships as tokens of his fatherly love for you, his child. And closely related to this is that fatherly discipline is proof that you are a true child of God. Not a phony. Not an illegitimate child.

This is meant to be a boost to your assurance. Do you struggle? Am I a child of God or am I not? Well, one thing is for sure. If you're a true child of God, you will be experiencing discipline in your life.

Because the father loves all of his children and he disciplines everyone that he accepts as a son. Not everyone that professes, I'm a child of God, does he accept as a son.

[29 : 59] But those that he does accept as a son, to the last one of them, he disciplines them. We want to be a son without suffering.

Without anything painful from our father's discipline. Do you know that even his eternal son, while he was on the earth, went through painful child training from his loving heavenly father?

Earlier in this book, in Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 8, we read, Although he, Jesus, though he was a son, he learned obedience by the things that he suffered.

Not like us, that he walked out of the way and sinned and needed the rod to bring him back. He never sinned. But he still needed to learn obedience under hard things, suffering things.

Even Jesus knew this discipline, this child training, while he lived among us, which caused one old Puritan to say, God had only one son without sin, but no sons without suffering.

[31 : 11] Not even Jesus. Not even Jesus. And this is to be expected. It comes with the territory. Are you son of a father? What son is not disciplined by his father?

That's the question. So consistently true is this in the father's family that the absence of it means that you're not a true son of God, but an illegitimate son and only professing to be a son.

Because the heavenly father disciplines everyone he accepts as a son. That means there's no undisciplined children in the family of God. No spoiled brats running around not being disciplined. Not in God's family. Not at all. So believer, are you going through hardships? Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons.

Now, is anybody feeling better? Feeling more encouraged yet? He's owning you as one of his legitimate sons. And we're going to see in the weeks that follow the heaping of blessings that are yours as a child of God.

[32 : 17] We've seen it already. What a precious reality that our discipline wakes us up to. Oh, Father, he's got my best in view here. He loves me.

So we're to be encouraged because of what the father's discipline proves. His love and our true sonship.

And then lastly, we're to be encouraged because of what fatherly discipline produces. And it produces a wonderful harvest. The encouragement is not in the discipline itself.

It's painful. But it's in what it proves and what it produces. Now we're looking at what it produces.

And as he introduces this topic, he contrasts the discipline that we receive from our earthly fathers and the discipline we receive from our heavenly father.

This was not an undisciplined age, I suppose. It was taken for granted that the human fathers that they had were disciplining their children. And he says that in verse nine.

[33 : 20] Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live?

We saw that last week several times, didn't we? The how much more of the heavenly father. We're bumping into it again. You've had human fathers who disciplined you. How much more should we submit to the heavenly father's discipline?

Notice how encouraging it is. Our fathers, verse 10, disciplined us for a little while as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good. He points up the limitation of our earthly father's discipline.

It was as he thought best. So at best, our father's discipline was as he thought best. And what he thought best was sometimes too much discipline.

And other times it was not enough pain. And sometimes it was just the angry response of a father out of control. Other times it was well meant, but still less than helpful.

[34 : 35] And with all these limitations, it was still beneficial. And you still respected your father for it. As a human father, what I thought was best in the way of discipline and what was best were not always the same.

Johnny, that wasn't with you. That was with your sisters. But with you, it was always the same. But what I thought best and what was best, not always the same.

With our heavenly father, they're the same. What he thinks best is best. What he does is the very best for us.

God does. So our earthly parents, they disciplined us as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good. Our good.

Because he perfectly knows my heart, my situation, the exact amount of pain I need to produce the most good in me.

[35 : 44] And so he disciplines us for our good. Father, as he thought best. God, for our good. That is our profit, our benefit, our coming out ahead at the end of it.

Not for our loss, but for our profit. Not for our destruction, but for our good. Never taking something without giving something better. That's my father in heaven's discipline.

I can rest in the perfect knowledge and love of my heavenly father to know the exact discipline. With the exact amount of pain. Without exception.

This was not an exception, John. This was not an exception. It's always for your good. That's what my father's telling me. I can rest in that.

I can take that by faith. How much more better is the discipline of our heavenly father? How much more than should I willingly submit to his discipline and live?

[36 : 47] Anybody feeling encouraged yet? Always for your profit. Not your loss. And what is this intended good? What is this intended profit?

Well, it's that he goes on in verse 10. That we may share in his holiness. That's the profit. That we might come out more holy than what we did going into it.

Sharing in his holiness. Now, that's what he's aiming at in these disciplines. And the sooner we learn that, the better. He's not interested in what is the least painful.

That's not your father's discipline. He's interested in what will make you the most holy. What will make you share in his holiness? What will make you bear more of the family resemblance?

You, child of God. What will get you to be more like Jesus? The elder brother in the family. That's what he's after. More of Christ's obedience.

[37 : 47] More of Christ's trust. More of Christ's patience. More of his love. More of his gentleness. More of his humility. More of his self-control. More of his faithfulness.

That's the good that he's working all things together for. That we might bear the likeness of our son. Of his son, our savior. Some of you have adopted.

Which would you rather adopt? A one-year-old boy? Or a 17-year-old boy? Oh, some of you are raising your eyebrows.

Why? Well, you say, at 17, they've got a lot of wrong learning that would have to be undone. And how old were you when he adopted you out of the children as a child of the devil and brought you over into his family?

Were you one? Were you 17? Were some of you a lot older than that? There's a lot to undo of the old family habits.

[38 : 53] And discipline is part of that. There's not only new things to put on. There's old habits to put off. The habits of the old man.

Of the old life. And habits of the new ones. And that's why we need discipline. To share in his holiness. If we don't value holiness, we'll never value the father's discipline.

And maybe that's just the best way for us to determine how serious we are about holiness. Do we appreciate?

Do we welcome? Do we even thank God for his discipline? Our heavenly father's discipline in our lives. Because we so want to be more holy.

It could be that the reason we push away the father. Like some children when they're about to be disciplined. Push daddy away. The reason we do that as his children.

[39 : 57] Is because we don't appreciate holiness like we ought. And that's why I had Pastor Jason read verse 14. That we might appreciate holiness.

Because without holiness, no man will see the Lord. No man will see Christ. In that perfect, beatific vision of love and acceptance.

That is not holy. And that's why we are to strive for it. And if that is that important. Then should I not welcome one of the chief ways that God is building into my life holiness.

This family, this family, fatherly discipline. Oh, it's good for us to be afflicted. That we might learn his decrees. That we might learn his decrees. And that holiness is imperfect now.

But it will be perfect one day. When we see him face to face. And then we'll be full grown children. We won't need any more discipline.

[40 : 56] That's part of what makes heaven heaven. To be totally full grown, mature, grown into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Never needing discipline again. And God will finish what he started.

He'll accomplish the very purpose of his discipline. All of his children will perfectly share the moral likeness of our elder brother, Jesus Christ. Without spot or wrinkle. He'll get what he's after in our discipline.

Anybody encouraged yet? He's going to finish that with you. And so it's not the discipline itself that's encouraging. But what it produces. What it proves.

The father's love and our legitimate sonship. And what it produces. A harvest of sharing in his holiness. He further explains what that holiness is in verse 11. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. But children of God, do not live just for the moment.

[41 : 58] That's the way the world's living. Immediate gratification. Here, now, forget the future. Later on. That's the perspective of God's children.

We've got our eye on the later on. We've got our eye on the harvest. A harvest of righteousness and peace. That's only for those who have been exercised by it.

Only those brought up in the father's family who submitted to the father's discipline along the way. A painful discipline, yes. Oh, but it's producing a harvest of righteousness and peace.

Righteousness and peace. Those are the fruits of God's eternal kingdom. Righteousness. Yes, it's imputed to us on the record of heaven. In the moment, we're justified.

But then there's that in-worked righteousness. We just talked about that holiness that's a process. And we're being made righteous. And we'll one day be as righteous as Jesus.

[43 : 02] But then peace. And peace and righteousness are often connected in the scriptures. Isaiah 32, 17. The fruit of righteousness will be peace. The effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

One commentator said, perhaps, and the word suggests that this peaceful rest is that of the athlete after his competition is over. And now he's just run the 26 miles.

And indeed, this chapter, verse 1, talks about the games and the runner. And so it's very much in view, perhaps, here even, that the peace is that of the rest after the race is done.

One famous runner was interviewed. He ran many miles a day. And the interviewer said, well, you must really love running as much as you do.

And he said, no, I really love the way it feels each time I quit. And maybe that's what he's talking about, that peace. What will it be like to have no more discipline, no more struggle with sin?

[44 : 13] Maybe he's looking ahead to the final harvest of resting, resting. No more sin. No more need for fatherly, painful discipline.

But he mentions it in the form of the farmer. A harvest of righteousness and peace. What's keeping farmers up all day and night, plowing and planting while there was a window of opportunity? It was the hope of harvest. And so they put up with all kinds of pain in sowing in the hope of the joy of harvest. And that's the children of God.

We're in the sowing. But, oh, what a harvest is coming. That's the encouragement. You're feeling the encouragement? Don't give in to discouragement.

Lift up your drooping hands. Strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Run on. Take another step. Realize the heavenly father's hand of discipline and child training is normal for all his children. [45 : 17] It's not evidence of a lack of care, but it proves his love and fatherly care. And the harvest he has in store will have you pinching yourself for all eternity.

Is this real? Could it be this good? Hold on till harvest. And that's the message that these folks needed to hear.

They were growing tired. They were thinking of quitting. And it's their father's discipline that they needed to remember. That they go another step.

Another lap. How thankful we should be for the father's discipline. If you make it to heaven, you will not only have Jesus to thank for dying for your sins. You'll have your heavenly father to thank for his fatherly discipline that got you there.

Every time you ran off the track, he went after you. And he disciplined you. And he brought you back. Wow, what a father.

[46 : 23] How we'll thank him. We wouldn't persevere in holiness to the end without him. We'd drift off into our own way and only to go down into the way of destruction.

He loves us too much not to come after us. He's bringing us to glory. After all, we are the children of the king of kings. What's he doing? He's preparing the children of the king to live and reign and rule with him forever and ever.

Wouldn't you expect some bringing up discipline for the king's sons and daughters? When you remember what he's preparing us for. To rule and reign with him forever.

Oh, may we be encouraged then. And submit happily to our heavenly father's discipline. Heed the rod and him who wields it.

None other than your loving heavenly father. Receive his word. That's the word of your father. And if you're lost this morning, we pity you.

[47 : 32] Yes, there's discipline in the father's family. We're not going to hide that from you. But we are going to tell you we're thankful for it. We need it. And a day is coming in heaven when you will wish that you had had it.

And it's a shame. Because the father's ready to receive you. You receive his son and he'll receive you. He sent his son. He put him to the grief of the cross to die for sinners.

And you don't want him? But if you receive him, the father will welcome you. And you will have the right to become the children of God.

Come to him today. Father in heaven, we know that in that day when Christ shall return and shall separate all mankind that have ever lived, and those on the right and those on the left, what a blessed thing it will be to be found in that family of God, purchased by Christ's blood on the right hand of our Lord Jesus.

We thank you that even now, here in this life, if we can know and sing of the blessedness, the happiness, the joy of being in your family, and even being under your discipline and having your word, thank you for these gifts.

[48 : 53] Send us on our way encouraged and built up in our most holy faith and bring someone else to travel with us as children of the living God. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.