

Title: Joy After Chastening
Text: Heb 12: 11-17
Date: December 26, 2019
Place: SGBC, NJ

John Newton wrote this song:

I asked the Lord that I might grow
in faith and love and every grace
Might more of his salvation know
and more earnestly seek his face
Twas he who taught me thus to pray
and he I trust has answered prayer
But it has been in such a way
as almost drove me to despair
I hoped that in some favored hour
at once he'd answer my request
And by his love's constraining power
subdue my sins and give me rest
Instead of this he made feel
the hidden evils of my heart
And let the angry powers of hell
assault my soul in every part
Yea, more with his own hand he seemed intent
to aggravate my woe
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
blasted my gourds and laid me low
Lord, why is this I trembled to cry
Wilt thou pursue thou worm to death
Tis in this way the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith
These inward trials I employ
from self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
that thou mayest seek thy all in me!

Subject: Joy After Chastening

Hebrews 12: 12: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

The word “wherefore” refers to what came before this verse. The Hebrew brethren were being chastened, disciplined, corrected by our heavenly Father. God mainly chastens through his gospel through the word. But God also uses trials. He uses our brethren, offenses, sickness, persecution and many more things. Sovereign God can use anything in his creation. He is the Lord of hosts. Brethren, when you suffer in your life, always consider the chastening hand of our heavenly Father. Learn what God is teaching through our suffering.

So the writer is giving reasons not to be discouraged when we are chastened. Seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, seeing that the Author and Finisher of our faith endured the cross and is now set down at God's right hand for the joy set before him, seeing that God the Father only chastens his children whom he loves and that for our profit and seeing that after the grief and sorrow of chastening, God *always* produces fruit in the children he chastens—that is *the joy set before us* in our trial.

Every sinner suffers trouble in this world. What is the difference between the child of God and the reprobate who suffer? The unregenerate only sees himself as not getting what he wants—he only thinks himself unlucky—he never considers God. But God always makes his child profit from his chastening.

Hebrews 12: 10...he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11: Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

God our Father *always* makes his child profit spiritually from God's chastening hand: this fruit is certain because it is of our heavenly Husbandman who never fails to yield fruit in his child. If I suffer trouble, *the joy set before me*, is that afterward God shall bring me to Christ's feet, to partake of Christ my Holiness, my Peace, my Righteousness.

Having chastened me, God who sanctified me—by his electing grace, by his redeeming grace, by his regenerating grace—God who formed Christ my Holiness within me—God who made Christ unto me Sanctification shall make me follow Christ, walking in holiness.

God the Father by his chastening hand shall bring me to behold and bow to Christ my Peace once again. He shall make me behold Christ alone made peace for me with God by his precious blood. God in Christ reconciled me and all his elect to himself. He shall keep me following Christ my Peace and thus make me a peacemaker in my dealings with men

After chastening, God shall make me behold Christ is my only Righteousness. He shall make me behold that it not by my works of righteousness I have done but by Christ's righteousness alone that I have fulfilled the whole law of God and am accepted of God forever

Divisions: So seeing all these encouraging truths, the writer gives three exhortations:

1) Keep running the race looking to Christ—**Hebrews 12: 12: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13: And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed**

2) Do not distract others in the race instead look diligently to Christ—**Hebrews 12: 14: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;**

3) Run to the throne of grace and obey Christ's voice—**Hebrews 12: 18: For ye are not come to [Mt Sinai] but to heavenly Mt Zion...25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven**

Proposition: These three exhortations are the peaceable fruit of righteousness God produces in his child through chastening.

KEEP RUNNING THE RACE

Hebrews 12: 12: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13: And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed

One, the fruit God produces through chastening is produced by God effectual commanding us to lift up our hands and our feeble knees.

If my hands are hanging down then I am not running with patience the race set before me. I am ready to quit. This is often the reason God chastens his child in the first place. Troubles and weights make us personally grow weary, tired and dull of hearing. We sometimes turn from looking to Christ. We begin to be turned off the race course. Without God's preserving grace, we would stop running the race of faith entirely.

Therefore, God sends the trial to chasten his child to make us keep running the race with patience looking to Christ. But the chastening is grievous at first. Our hands hang down and our knees are even more feeble due to the trial. Job had strengthened his brethren. But when the trial came to him he was troubled. One of the so-called friends said to Job,

Job 4: 3: Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. 4: Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. 5: But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

By this, by making us behold our weakness, it is one way God makes us behold that our strength to lift up our hands and knees is Christ alone. Paul said,

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore, when God has made us behold our weakness, Christ commands his child effectually in the heart, "*Lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees!*" He does this through the preaching of the gospel. Then with the command comes the strength. For instance, the man with withered hand could not stretch forth his hand until Christ commanded, "Stretch for thy hand" then he stretched it forth. Lazarus was dead and could not come out of the grave until Christ commanded, "Lazarus, come forth!" then he that was dead came forth.

Then by Christ overcoming our weakness by Christ's Strength, God brings us to give all the glory once again to God. We cry out,

Habakkuk 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

At last, when God does this for his chastened his child, he uses his corrected saint to speak the truth from painful experience to our brethren when they suffer trials. God says to us concerning our brethren who are in trials,

Isaiah 35: 3: Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4: Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you.

When that word is blessed by Christ, the same thing that he did for us in our trial, God does for our brethren in their trial.

Isaiah 35: 5: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6: Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7: And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

During the trial we lose sight of Christ because we are blinded. We can hear because we have become spiritually deaf. But when God gives us sight again, once more we behold Christ the Way, Christ our Holiness.

Isaiah 35: 8: And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*. 9: No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*: 10: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,...

This way is only for those Christ has made holy. Only those redeemed by Christ are called into Christ the Way. Those Christ ransomed by his precious blood are set free from our bondage and drawn into Christ the Way by faith. And notice to which mount we run to. It is the same heavenly mount our text reminds us to run to.

Isaiah 35: 10: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Our text says that no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, but afterward, God makes us flee to Christ with songs and joy and gladness and the sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Two, God commands us to look to Christ and he mortifies our flesh. God commands his child, "*Make straight paths for your feet*" How do you run a straight path? When I was in middle school my grandfather taught me how to till a straight line in my garden. He taught me to look at a single tree in the distance. Do not look to the right or left or behind you. Only look to that one tree. When I finished the row it was straight as an arrow. We run this race looking to Christ alone. That is how we make straight paths for our feet.

Proverbs 4: 25: Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26: Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 27: Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.

Before the correction, we were looking to our brethren beholding their sins. We were looking to ourselves away from Christ. Usually, we justify our own sin by judging our brother's sins. We take on many weights and sins which turn us out of the way. It is impossible for a believer to mortify his flesh and put off this old man with his sins. But by making me look to Christ, God mortifies my flesh. The Spirit of God makes me lay aside all hindrances: the weights, the sins, the self-righteousness and self-exaltation over my brother. These were besetting me, turning me out of Christ the Way. But God's chastening hand turns me to behold Christ and by this God mortifies my flesh and grants repentance to put off these things.

Hebrews 12: 1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;

Three, by making me behold Christ, God makes me love and care for my brethren. God makes me see that my sins are causing my weak brethren to stumble. So to keep the lame—weak brother—from being turned out of Christ the Way, Christ says to the one he chastens,

Isaiah 57: 14:...Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people

God makes me lay aside every weight and the besetting sin and run looking to Christ. By turning me to Christ, by granting me repentance and strength to cast off the works of my old sinful flesh, God makes me a witness for my weak brother like that cloud of witnesses from the past. Our Redeemer makes his corrected child someone that my weak brethren can follow as I follow Christ—"lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Brethren, it causes great shame if during this race we put a stumbling block in the way of our weaker brethren by our sins. God makes us put away the weight and sins because they not only beset us but they also beset our weak brethren.

And to you who are looking to the offenses and sins of your brethren rather than Christ, if you do so then you will be turned out of the way. Turn from looking at the sins of your brother and look to Christ alone. By this, God makes both believers come to our great Physician who heals us—"let it be healed!"

DO NOT DISTRACT OTHERS IN THE RACE

Hebrews 12: 14: Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16: Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Again, the Spirit of God speaks effectually into the heart of his, commanding us to look diligently to Christ. This entire passage tells us to run the race of faith looking to Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith. Christ is our perfection of faithfulness. He has already run this race and is our only righteousness and holiness before God. It is only by Christ that we are given faith in the beginning. He is the Author of our faith. Likewise, it is only by Christ that we persevere unto the end in faith. He is the Finisher of our faith.

When God teaches us to follow peace with all men, it is by bringing us to the feet of *Christ is our Peace*. As we look diligently to Christ we behold that is our Peace with God. He alone brought us into friendship with God from our state as an enemy by our wicked works. Likewise, it is Christ's grace to us that gifts us with the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit makes us follow Christ's example. By all this, Christ makes us peacemakers with all men.

Matthew 5:9: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

When God teaches us to follow holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, he makes Christ sanctification unto us. We rest in Christ our Holiness. Christ is that holiness formed in our new man, without which no man shall enter glory and see God. God chastens us to make us partaker of *his holiness*—of Christ our Sanctification. By God's grace making me look diligently to Christ my Holiness, his blood purges my heart so I see clearly. Christ gives me the grace to walk in holiness and godliness with all men from a pure heart.

Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Remember, he is writing to brethren persecuted by vain religion. He is telling them to follow Christ that they might follow peace even with their persecutors. We are to make war with sin, not with men; we are to make war with sin but not with our fellow worms. If we use the sin of our brethren to justify our sin in warring against them then devil has won the day!

But if I am not looking diligently to Christ from whom all grace comes then I certainly will *fail of the grace of God*. Do not misunderstand, the grace of God never fails. He chose his people by free grace so that nothing will cause him to cast us off. Christ justified his people before the law so that justice demands he lose not one. The Spirit of God regenerated us and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The grace of God never fails! It is I who fails of the grace of God. I must come to the fountain of all grace or I will fail of the grace of God and my sinful flesh will reign. Listen to this contrast of the grace of God given from heaven and the sensual fleshly fruit of one who has failed of the grace of God.

James 3: 13: Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16: For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18: And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

When, by the grace of God, we look to Christ for all salvation, we hear and behold Christ in the gospel, we are constantly at his feet in the word, and we are at his feet in prayer asking more grace then Christ strengthens our inner man and mortifies our sinful flesh. But if we look to our flesh—to the sins of our brethren, to our offenders and how they have offended me, if we dwell on the offenses and make our fleshly wants our focus—then our sinful flesh reigns, making us fail of the grace and graciousness God gives his child. Rather than peace, we make war—doing so we distract our brethren from looking diligently to Christ. Rather than holiness, we follow strife and envy and division—doing so we distract our brethren from looking to Christ. If we are his, Christ will correct us through painful chastening. But if not, we will prove it by being totally overcome by our sinful flesh.

Esau is the illustration—"*lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16: Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*" This wording is like that found in Deuteronomy 29, which tells us the sin is turning from the LORD our God to idols.

Deuteronomy 29:18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

Our sinful flesh is *the root of bitterness*. If we look away from Christ to our brother's sins and to our fleshly wants we feed the bitter root of our flesh until it springs up and troubles us. Esau looked to his brother and became covetous of something his brother had—a bowl of meat. Esau looked to himself—his belly, his lusts, his feelings, his wants, his desires—rather than Christ! Therefore for one moment of gratification—he traded Christ for one morsel of meat.

Some professing believer says, "*I want that career!*" But God says it will cost you Christ, cost you your brethren, cost you your family. It costs too much! Will you trade Christ for that one morsel? "*I want that house, car and stuff!*" But it will take you from the gospel, from Christ, from brethren. It costs too much. Will you trade Christ for that morsel? "*I want those drugs and alcohol!*" But it will cost you Christ, cost you your brethren, cost you your family. It costs too much. Will you trade Christ for that carnal morsel?

Brethren, weeds grow slow. Slowly, they cover a wall then another then windows then the door then the whole house. If we do not look diligently to Christ, slowly this root of bitterness will spring up until at last we are defiled and we trade Christ for

one morsel of meat. The devil is subtle. Our flesh is deceitful above all things. We must continually look diligently to Christ or we will be beguiled before we even know it.

RUN TO MT ZION AND OBEY THE VOICE

Hebrews 12: 18-22: For ye are not come to [Mt Sinai] but to heavenly Mt Zion...25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh [from heaven]

God even commands his chastened child teaching us where to run to and whose voice to obey.

Christ has redeemed his people from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. Believer, we are not under the law—we have not come to Mt Sinai. We have come to Mt Zion. We have come to Christ Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, who blood declares our completion and our righteousness in him.

Hebrews 10: 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And having an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 4: 15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. 16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

As God draw us near in prayer to his throne of grace, God commands his child effectually in our heart, saying, “*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.*”

May God now speak this command in the hearts of his children who are suffering under the chastening hand of our heavenly Father. This is the peaceable fruit God always produces. This is the joy after chastening!

Amen!