

If God Didn't Chastize Christians in Sin – Hebrews 12:5-11

I. Introduction:

- A. Brother Fulton referred to this sort of thing this morning in his lesson.
1. The woman whose son was killed in a car wreck caused by a drunk driver, may ask the question:
 - a. *"If there is a God in heaven, why didn't He keep my son from that deadly accident?"*
 - b. *"Where is the all-powerful, loving God you Christians talk about?"*
 2. Despite its unbelief, many people consider this it be a logical question
 3. But I might answer that lady's question with an equally good question: *"Why didn't **SOCIETY** stop that drunk after his fourth DUI ticket?"*
 4. Whose fault is it that a drunk or otherwise inhibited person was behind the wheel of that car?
 5. Maybe it was the liquor store owner or the manager of the marijuana outlet across the state line.
 - a. If the parents of the teenager who killed several people at his high school can be found guilty of a crime,
 - b. then why can't the bartender be held culpable for selling liquor to a known drunk?
 6. In fact, why isn't the government responsible when it licensed these people to sell their poisons?
- B. Of course, there is **no SPECIFIC answer** to many people's *"why"* questions.
1. Why didn't God step in and spare that young man who thought he had the right of way at the stop sign?
 2. Why did that escapee get caught again, after promising the Lord that he'd behave in the future?
 3. I don't know the mind of God so I can't give a **precise** answer to questions like these.
 4. Why did that rapist target that particular young lady, rather than someone else? Is that the Lord's fault?
 5. And the man who lost his wife to breast cancer, may ask why God didn't cure her after they both started going to church following her diagnosis.
 6. Sometimes the Lord does ordain that such a woman be cured, but not in every case.
 7. *"Why one woman and not the other?"* is not a question for which the Lord has given us an answer.
- C. But there **are GENERAL** answers to questions like these.
1. Yes, there **is** a God in heaven, who is also the sovereign God over all things on earth.
 2. And that God cursed this world with death, disease and natural destruction, when our first father chose to rebel against Him.
 3. Because of Adam's sin against the Lord, death has come to reign over creation – **Romans 5:17-18**.
 4. **Thankfully**, God has provided a means of salvation from that sin, giving us His outline for eternal life.
 5. **Thankfully**, there is the gospel remedy for sin.
 6. But that involves repentance and an acknowledgment that we are sinners and that God is always righteous.
- D. Generally, these types of questions are asked because the people asking don't know the Lord or His Word.
1. And in this regard let me say to you **who DO know** Christ, such questions, asked by grieving people, are not to be dismissed with a sneer or a snarl.
 2. Yes, they may be asked in anger and with a snarl, but we need to respond as Christians.
 3. These queries can become open doors for a presentation of the gospel.
- E. Now, let's change our question and put something similar into the heart of a poorly taught Christian.
1. *"Why do **bad things** happen to good '**CHRISTIAN**' people?"*
 2. And, *"why does God **punish Christian people**, when they sin or disappoint the Lord?"*
- F. There is a modern evangelistic style which suggests that when people *"ask Jesus into their hearts,"* then all of their problems will disappear.
1. Some evangelists suggest that if sinners permit Christ to come into their lives, they will have **perpetual joy**; they will have **excess money**; they will be **protected** from **disease**; that the **seas of life** will all be **smooth**.
 2. Those Bible teachers prove themselves to be false prophets by ignoring scriptures like **Job, Peter** and **James**.

3. **I Peter 1:6** says, *“now if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, through it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory and the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*
4. **Paul**, that great servant of God, had difficult enemies, adding to the pains of a thorn in his flesh.
5. *“But he was a Christian. I don’t think he should have been made to suffer since he was a servant of God.”*

G. Maybe **rather** than **thinking**, we should be **reading** – reading the revelation of God.

1. For example, there is that scripture with which we began a few minutes ago – **Hebrews 12**.
2. Despite what some Christians **think God should do**, there are times when God’s chastising hand falls on His own children.
3. *“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth”* – **verse 7**.
4. *“If ye be without chastisement (when you sin) then are ye bastards and not sons”* – **verse 8**.
5. **Verse 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.”*

H. I don’t know if any true child of God would ask my next question, but I’m going to pose it for its instructive value.

1. Now that I am a child of God, and Christ has taken all my sins upon Himself, dying for them on the cross, then why should I be chastised by the Lord for my transgressions today?
2. My latest sins are already under the blood. Haven’t they been cast behind the Father’s back?
3. Aren’t they buried in the deepest sea, and God has promised not to dredge them up again?

I. The question is: What if God didn’t chastise the Christian for his sins?

1. What if they were instantly forgiven and forgotten?
2. This is part of another false gospel which is commonly taught and believed today.
3. Some preachers teach that you can be saved and live like the Devil without fear of rebuke or punishment.
4. With that question in my mind, several answers began to pop up.

II. If the Lord let the Christian’s sins slide, it would **VIOLATE** the **DIVINE CHARACTER**.

A. God is holy, and sin is an affront against that holiness. God is righteous, and sin is wicked.

1. His command even to the children of God is: *“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”*
2. Jehovah, by his very nature, cannot turn His back on deliberate sin.
3. He cannot ignore **any** sin – even those committed by **Abraham, David, Paul** – or **you** and **me**.
4. It was for sin that He sent His only begotten Son to die, proving to us how much He hates sin.
 - a. So Christ paid my sin-debt with his own blood, & that blood covered all my past sins and my future sins.
 - b. I have been adopted into the family God, and forever I will be one of His many children.
 - c. I have the seal of the Holy Spirit over my heart, and I will never be disowned or disinherited.

B. But – *“whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”*

1. Every time I lose my temper, or I covet an other man’s talent, or I wish that I didn’t have some particular God-given trial, those sins have been eternally covered by the Lord’s grace and Christ’s blood.
2. But in some ways I am still accountable for them.
3. The Lord says, *“If you are responsible for their commission, you are responsible for their punishment.”*
4. If I have killed a man, I am liable for my crime, and the punishment for my crime belongs to me alone.
5. No one can be punished for me, and no one can arbitrarily decide that the dead man isn’t dead.
6. These are God’s rules, not mine or man’s.

C. Besides being **righteous**, God is **gracious** and **merciful** by nature.

1. He sends the rain upon both the just and unjust, assuming they share adjacent properties.
2. And the rising pollen count affects both the righteous and the wicked equally.
3. God is often accused of not being fair, but obviously that is simply not true.

4. If your neighbor is stopped by the police for excessive speeding, we may say that he should be fined.
5. But if God ordained that you should never be stopped by the police for any reason, He would not be acting according to His revealed character. He would not be just.
6. You are just as responsible to obey speed limits as your lost neighbor, and if your Saviour arranged that you'd never speed through a radar trap, that would not be godly in God.

D. What **IS god-like** is the Lord's **fatherhood** of His children.

1. *"We have fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence;*
 - a. *shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*
 - b. *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;*
 - c. *but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."*
2. And this, too, is a part of the divine nature: the Lord wants us to be holy as He is holy.
3. And He will take steps to lead us into that godly behavior.
4. So God's chastisement of His children is not vindictive; it is not out of anger; it is not meanness on His part.
5. It is for our spiritual improvement.
6. We must not be angry with the Lord for His righteous chastisement.

III. Obviously, if the Lord ignored the Christian's sins, it would **REMOVE** our **ACCOUNTABILITY**.

- A. Let's say that some Christian man is cheating on his wife, committing adultery, or staring at pornography.
1. You might gasp at the thought, and say that my example is too extreme – Christians don't do these things.
 - a. The fact is, these are sins that some professing Christians commit. I have known of some cases.
 2. But let's say that since these people are Christians, God doesn't care, and neither the sin nor the sinner are exposed.
 3. I guarantee that those unjudged sins will not remain static. They will grow like mushrooms.
 4. Whatever sins that Christian committed last month, they will be more gross next month when he knows that God will not chasten him.
 5. The child who lies will not only continue to lie in the future, if he is not caught, but his lies will become worse.
 6. The shoplifter, if he is not exposed, will become more & more daring, perhaps venturing into armed robbery.
 7. *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" – Ecclesiastes 8:11.*
 8. If I was embezzling church funds, and I was never caught because God has saved my soul, I might eventually ruin our church, not to mention stifle the ministry of the Spirit in the mean time.
- B. Despite the fact that the eternal effect of the Christian's sin is under the blood of the Saviour...
1. That does not mean that the Christian sinner is not accountable for those sin.
 2. In fact, he is more accountable – more responsible – because he has already seen the grace of the Lord.
 3. In warning two of the tribes of Israel of the sin of neglect, Moses said, *"be sure your sin will find you out."*
 4. Christians will bear the earthly, temporal, governmental responsibility for their sins.

IV. If the Lord didn't correct the Christian's sins, it would **CHANGE** the nature of **EVANGELISM**.

- A. At the root of the gospel is the fact that we are a bunch of wretched sinners before the Lord.
1. As sinners we deserve eternal judgment; we deserve Hell and the Lake of Fire.
 2. Therefore we need a Saviour, not only for forgiveness... not just that we can *"go to heaven when we die..."*
 3. We need a **Saviour** and a **Mediator**, while living here below, because we continue to be sinners, despite our eternal redemption.
 4. And, at the same time, we have been commissioned to be His evangelists.
 5. We are to carry the good news of salvation to the sinners who are around us.
 6. But what would it do to our testimony and message, if we behaved no differently from the lost?
 7. If we opened our mouths at all, our message could no longer be the age-old gospel message.
 8. The gospel has nothing to do with forgiving sinners and leaving them in their old pig sty of sinfulness.

- B. But on the other hand, if God instantly made angels out of us; or if the Lord chose not to call our sins “*sins.*”
1. And this became a part of our evangelism, then we would no longer have a soul-changing and life-changing message of good news.
 2. If our neighbors could hear us beating our spouse, or cursing and swearing inside our homes...
 - a. If they could smell the pot wafting over the fence, or they could hear the liquor bottles clanking together..
 - b. If they saw us shop-lifting or committing other sins...
 - c. And we claimed that we had already been forgiven by God, and He no longer cared to punish us...
 - d. We might entice those neighbors to join us in our depravity.
 - e. But they wouldn't want to join the Lord in His righteousness.
 3. People seeing the lives of Christians and realizing that they get away with murder, might come running to Christ, not for forgiveness, but for relief from the consequences of *their* sins.
 4. They would come to the Lord to ease their consciences, but not for Biblical salvation.
 5. It would rip away half of the gospel demand: “*repent for the judgment of God is at hand.*”
 6. Unforgiven and divinely ignored sin in the so-called “*saint of God,*” might fill our church, but it wouldn't add a single citizen to the kingdom of Heaven.

V. And if the Lord let the Christian's sins slide, it would REMOVE the joy of RESTORATION and REVIVAL.

- A. The other day I was listening to a very good sermon on “*revival.*”
1. In the course of the message the preacher referred to the famous revival text: *II Chronicles 7:14 – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*
 2. He also mentioned that a speaker earlier in that meeting had already referred to that verse.
 3. I have heard it mentioned and preached hundreds of times, and perhaps I have used it a hundred times.
 4. But very rarely is anything said about its original context.
- B. Do you know to whom it was that the Lord was speaking in *II Chronicles 7?*
1. It was in the middle of the night when God spoke to **Solomon** after the dedication of the temple.
 2. Earlier for **42 verses** in **chapter 6**, Solomon opened up his heart before the Lord in hearing of all Israel.
 3. After that he had the priests offer 22,000 oxen and 20,000 sheep.
 4. There was so much blood and so many bodies that some of the courtyards of the temple had to be sanctified and drafted into sacrificial use.
 5. By the end of the day, the king, the priests and all the people were exhausted, but extremely joyful.
 6. Eventually Solomon went to bed and fell asleep.
- C. Please turn to *II Chronicles 7:12 – “And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.”*
1. The king was probably thinking at this point – wonderful. This is exactly what my father and I had in mind.
 - a. But then the Lord went on before getting to our famous text.
 - b. *If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;*
 - c. *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, & pray, & seek my face, & turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*
 - d. The context of the revival of *II Chronicles 7:14* is the sinfulness of God's people.
 2. *“Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*
 3. *And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.*

4. *But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;*
 - a. *Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.*
 - b. *And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?*
 - c. *And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.”*

D. What should we learn from this scripture?

1. Among other things, we should learn that God will not look away when His people sin against Him.
2. It doesn't matter whether or not the penalty for their sin is under the blood of 42,000 animal sacrifices – even under the blood of the infinitely perfect Lamb of God, those sinners have brought shame to name of the Lord.
3. And the righteous God will not let their exposed sins go unpunished – without chastisement.
4. **But** – *“if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

E. If God overlooked our sins... if there was no consequence for sin... there would be no opportunity for the blessing of restoration and revival.

1. If after our salvation, our lives could be spent in any way that we saw fit, without any judgment, to be a Christian would be a bland and tasteless life.
2. More probably, it would be a constant downward spiral.
3. But the Lord **does** judge Christian sin, and when that sinner repents and humbly returns to the Lord, with new peace from the Lord in his heart, the joy and exhilaration may lift him to heights he's never reached before.
4. *“Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law” – Psalm 94:12.*
5. **Jeremiah 10:24** should be our prayer: *“O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, let thou bring me to nothing.”*
 - a. God doesn't want to bring us to nothing, except in the nothingness of our own strength and in our own righteousness.
 - b. The Lord wants us to prosper in His grace and in His work, therefore he says, *“As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.” – Revelation 3:12.*
6. So, *“My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction” – Proverbs 3:12.*

F. God hates those sins you committed yesterday, and those sins you may commit tomorrow.

1. *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” – I Corinthians 11:30.*
2. *“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”*
3. Next Sunday we will celebrate the Lord's supper, and the last two verses I quoted come from the context of such a celebration.
4. As we come to consider once again the sacrifice Christ Jesus made to deliver us from our sins, we need to examine ourselves and then confess our sins to God, forsaking them for His honor and glory.
5. This needs to be done prior to the Lord's supper.

G. God does not ignore our Christian sins, and neither should we.