

## The Happy End of God's Correction

Job 5:17-26, Trinity Sunday XVIII

October 3, 2010

Beloved of the Lord.....As a rule, life never turn out the way we expect or want. When we are young in our minds we often have a plan for our life, or at least a general course. We don't expect, nor do we plan for any real bad thing to happen. We are much like a child with a toy steering wheel driving a pretend car, only we as adults actually imagine or think we are in control of our life. Needless to say, and thanks be to God, we are not in control, nor should we want to be – but God is. And it is for our own ETERNAL good, so we do truly reach our heavenly home above, that God as a loving Father at times corrects our course or path in life. Right now you could say we are all in the middle of our journey where there are trials and tribulations, sufferings and our hearts are fearful and afraid. But knowing that His grace rules all things we need not despair nor fear, but look to the Lord in a childlike faith for God knows what He is doing. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding." Thanks be to God days of laughter always follow days of sorrow and there is ALWAYS a happy end to God's correction. Our blessed Jesus said, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

I. All earthly suffering is the consequence of sin. But in today's lesson we will start with the middle of our story, as we live in this world of sin. And this world suffers from sin. The starving children in Africa, people suffering from disease, war and bloodshed.....all of this suffering is the direct result of sin. Mankind suffers because mankind sins. God has a right to punish sinners. Psalm 34 says "The face of the Lord is against evil". Psalm 32 says "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." People bring God's anger upon themselves by their sin. In the Old Testament, God punished Pharaoh's wickedness with Ten Plagues. In the last plague God slew Pharaoh's firstborn son and later Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea. In the wilderness God punished the rebellious with poisonous snakes, thousands died. The priest Aaron had two rebellious sons, and God struck them dead with a bolt of lightning or fire. There is the lesson of the forty two children who mocked the prophet Elisha. They said, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." And the prophet Elisha turned around, and "looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." 2 Kg 2 That was God's punishment for the children's sin.

God still punishes people for their sins today. God punishes homosexuals and drug users with AIDS. God punishes others with Tsunamis, earthquakes, fires, floods, tornados, and a host of other disasters. War is often God's

punishment. And God still at times uses even wild animals to punish sinners. People still die from shark attacks, crocodiles, cougars, lions, sting rays, snakes, and various other beasts. God is a jealous God whose anger burns against sinners. In Exodus 20:5 God says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." When God visits sins, He punishes sins. Those who in live in sinful pleasure without repentance, will die in their sins and be damned. "Our God is a consuming fire." Since God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, He urges all to repent lest a worse punishment than death befall them after death.

But now, what about the Christian? Does the Christian suffer for their sin? Usually the first point we make here is that yes, there are consequences to the sins of even Christians. Sometimes we suffer for our sins. If we speed, we will get a ticket. If we hit our neighbor, they will hit us back. If we lie, we will be lied to. If we gossip, others will gossip about us. Those who sin will reap the consequences. I Peter 4:15 warns, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." And Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If we give in to and do the sins of our flesh, our flesh will reap the consequences.

However, though all suffering is related to sin in general, the Christian should not look upon our many sufferings as God's punishment and anger against us. For Christ Jesus our Lord long ago took the eternal punishment for our sin upon Himself. When our heavenly Father then looks upon us from heaven, through the merits of Christ He sees only His beloved children upon whom His continual divine favor rests. When we suffer then, we must not fall into that trap of assuming God has suddenly turned on us, and no longer loves us. That is not the case. God's love for us through Christ is undying, everlasting, and eternal. Our God says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." And Jesus Himself said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." There is no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." God's love for us is secure in Christ. Our blessed Jesus said, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

II. There is always a happy ending, for those who trust in Christ. Why then does God allow His children of faith to suffer? The answer is fatherly correction. Our heavenly Father corrects us out of love. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth." If He did not love you, He would

not correct or chasten you. But He does love you, and your chastening is a sign, a perfect sign of fatherly love. For when we are chastened, when we suffer, our path is corrected, and we bring forth more fruit. "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. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet." Heb 12 When corrected we remember Jesus is our peace and He is all we need.

"For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth and his hands make whole." Our suffering, whether it be bodily sickness, financial hardship, or loss of loved ones.....always has the same purpose, to correct and strengthen us in our Father's love. If He is to be our strength, don't we first have to be weak? And so God wounds, only so that He can heal. We suffer lose, only so He can fill us with His grace. Consider that Job lost all of his wealth, all his children, and then God allowed him a disease. In the middle of Job's story (ch. 6) he cried out, "Oh that my grief were throughly weighed,.....the arrows of the Almighty are within me!" But after God accomplished His will in Job, happiness returned to Job's life. Job became wealthy again and had ten more children. "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Whereas when he was afflicted his own friends failed to comfort him, at the end of his affliction God blessed him with better friends and family who overwhelmed him with their love. And so the Bible says, "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." His story had a happy ending. He "came to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn, comes into his season."

Dearly beloved, you and I are yet in the middle of our story, the middle of our life. God is still testing us, correcting us, purging us to bring forth better fruit, and a stronger love for the Lord. He makes us weak so that we see He is strong. You then who are indeed a very child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, should not view your hardships in life as if God has withdrawn His love from you. He hasn't. He never will. He is absolutely unable to do it, for the blood of His Son has already been shed and God through Him has thoroughly declared you clean. Indeed, God's love for you is higher than the heavens above the earth. As far as the east is from the west, that is how far He has removed your sins from you. Your suffering is not a sign of God's wrath or disfavor, rather it is a sure sign of His undying love and care for you. His grace is still, and ever shall be, upon you.

So let us not be discouraged when we have every reason to be happy! When afflicted rejoice in your heart saying, "This is indeed a sure sign of God's eternal and undying love for me! For He has promised me in His Word through my blessed Savior the eternal mansions of heaven! I will not therefore fear, for Jesus himself said, 'Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's god pleasure to

give me that kingdom!" Not only does God give us a happy ending at the end, but even in the middle of our lives, there are many happy days, days of joy and gladness! Sometimes His afflictions last only a few months, a year or two or three. But sooner or later He grants relief, and we know that God never gives us more than we can bear. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Over and over and over again He delivers us from each and every affliction. Days of laughter follow days of tears. There is always a happy end, to God's correction. Don't forget Job.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Do not forget dear Christian this peace, when you are suffering affliction for Jesus has already saved you by His blood so that God will forever be at peace with you. When you keep God's peace with you at the forefront of your mind, you will learn to rejoice and be happy even when you are for a short moment afflicted. For "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope." Rom. 5:4 Godly hope removes all fear. "In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword." When we understand the power of God's grace, when we see the strength of Christ our Savior, there is a certain fearlessness which fills the believing heart. "Perfect love casts out fear". What is there to be afraid of when we have the Lord? The believer will not be afraid "of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth." If Christ be for us, who can be against us? Through Christ we are more than conquerors! "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 8

Beloved of the Lord, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all." Ps. 34 God gives happy endings to those who trust in Christ. By grace ye are saved, through faith. Therefore may our faith be in Him. Though we presently are in the middle of our story, our end will be a happy one. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." His love is behind your afflictions, dear child of God. Our "happily ever after" waits above. Amen.