

2ND WEEK 21 DAYS OF FAST: RENEWING OUR STRENGTH

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Heb. 12:12-15

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Faced with everything we have experienced and continue to witness, our need to be renewed is essential.** As we saw last week, when we wholeheartedly repent and seek Him in prayer and fasting, God promises to renew us but in this renewal there is a part that corresponds to us and that is what we are going to talk about today. We have had an excellent time during our Sanctification Week and continue on the 21 day fast; Everyone can still join we have the devotionals and if you haven't started it is not too late for you to join us.
- B. During our first week we have meditated on what **Hebrews 12** teaches us about discipline: God loves us and uses difficulties to produce the fruit of righteousness and holiness in our lives and exhorts us not to despise God's discipline, that is, not to think that it is too harsh to the point that we get discouraged.

II. THE PURPOSE FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD

- A. **“Therefore”** The word that this verse begins with means that the verses of **Heb.12: 3-11** are part of the foundation for the exhortations of which the verses that we are looking at today speak, that is:
 - 1. **v.6 “for the Lord disciplines the one he loves”** The pain and problems we face are not a sign that God failed us, but the opposite of God's love.
 - 2. **v.7 “It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons.”** Difficulty, hard as it may seem, **is not a sign that God treats us as enemies, but as children.** According to God's plan, suffering is designed for our good, to participate in God's holiness.
 - 3. **v.10 “he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.”** The purpose of teaching about God's discipline in our suffering is that we don't give up on the race, that we don't get discouraged or drift toward what seems “easier.”

III. ARE WE BEING PUNISHED WHEN WE ARE IN TRIBULATION?

- A. The Bible clearly states that Christ bore the penalty for our sins.

Is. 53:5 "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace"

- B. Therefore, it is a mistake to think that the pain that happens to us is a second punishment from God for our sins because Jesus has already paid it completely. **Rather, God's goal for us is deeper faith and deeper holiness.** God's purpose is not to hurt us (although it is painful), but to purify and refine us.
- C. So **how should we feel when we are persecuted or betrayed or afflicted by illness or when we have a loss that is very difficult to overcome?** We should feel that God loves us and that He knows the best therapy to purify and refine us and deepen us and strengthen our faith and holiness. This is what Jesus lived:

Heb. 5:8 "although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered"

- D. God's purpose in His Son's suffering was not only that He could bear our punishment, **but that He Himself will learn deeper dimensions of faithfulness and obedience that could not be learned otherwise.** If it was so for the Son of God, how much more so will it be for us!

IV. WHAT DOES THE FATHER EXPECT US TO DO?

- A. So, since God's fatherly love designs even difficulties for our good therefore...

1. **Therefore v. 12 "STRENGTHEN THE HANDS"**. The writer urges us to renew our strength to walk without stumbling and this happens when we follow the exhortation that he is giving us, that is, **plan your life well so that what is failing or deviating does not get worse.** The Christian life is a race that we must run so we must get rid of the weight that hinders us, that is, there are sins that we must abandon.

Is. 35:3-4 "With this news, strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come... and save you.'"

Prov. 4:25-27 "Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. 26 Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. 27 Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil."

2. **"the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees"** We can all get tired of continuing to do the right thing and keep praying, but we must never forget that God's promises are sure.

Gal 6:9 "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Lk. 18:1 "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart"

3. **Therefore v.13 "MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS"** It means removing impediments to our progress in our relationship with God and with others. This may involve avoiding contact with people and materials that promote deviation from the faith or will of God. This text includes setting aside sin (v. 1) and avoiding compromising associations with those who stray from God, who can put up harmful barriers, such as false teaching.
 4. **"so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed"** Then, the "lame" that is, the weak in your life will be able to recover and "be healed" to regain your passion and faith.
 5. **Therefore v.14 "PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL PEOPLE"** In other words, stay together, do not allow bitterness to disconnect you from the family of God; therefore we need what he says v.15 **"looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled"**
 6. **Therefore "DO NOT BE LIKE ESAU"** he sold his blessing as a first-born son for a bowl of cereal and afterwards even though he cried he could not really repent. God tells us: **do not let the delights of this world make you lose the way, the passion and the sanctification that God has for you. Strengthen yourself by these truths and join God in the search for the holiness that He designed, drink of His grace, do not despise your place as children of God by saying:** "These sufferings are too hard or long if God is like that then I return to the world." **Esau looked down the narrow path that leads to life and saw adversity and instead of believing that God was working for his good, as a loving and disciplining Father, he sold his birthright for a single food and gave up the race because he became hardened.** When we repent, God always forgives us no matter how far we have been but there is a hardening against God in which people cannot repent, so this exhortation is intended to bring sobriety to our lives.
 7. **Therefore v.14 "SEEK HOLINESS"** that is, **seek what God is looking for in you through His discipline!** Holiness is what God seeks in us through our suffering and that is why we know that when we seek purity we are not doing it on our own. **God is working in us and we must unite ourselves to his perfect purpose.** We must say to him: Dear Father, may these tests produce in me what you want.
- B. WE CAN DO THIS: We can do all of this by faith with the certainty that God is for us and that He is working for those of us who trust in Him.** We are commanded to act as people convinced that we have already been adopted by faith, and that our omnipotent Father loves us, and that the most painful adversities are part of his loving discipline and not of his anger against us. **We are going to be strong, courageous, diligent, faithful and we are going to overcome because our God is for us!!**

V. CONCLUSION

- A. **As we all know, faith can wear out when difficult circumstances are constant or prolonged but we must always recognize that God is ruling over the lives of His people.** The persecution and sickness and adversity that we are experiencing are part of God's sovereign design to bear the fruit of justice and holiness in our lives. **God is already working for us to accomplish the same commandments that He commands us.**
- B. Our Heavenly Father wants us to understand a crucial reason why life is hard. Sometimes we wonder why adversity? Why the disease? Why doesn't God just fix it? **Knowing what God is doing in our suffering is the key to persevering in the race of holy Christian life.**
- C. **So to renew ourselves we must renew our faith by believing everything that God says regarding what His discipline really is, rejecting unbelief and taking care not to deviate looking for the holiness that God wants to produce in the company of God's people without allowing bitterness to separate us. of the family of God.**
- D. **God is going to produce fruit in all who are His in these times. Seeking peace and seeking holiness is the straight path that guides us towards life, to see the Lord.**
- E. **The most important thing is to keep doing the right thing, regardless of the immediate results.** God will surely bless such faithfulness at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and even during this life.

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **How does God ask you to renew your strength?**
2. **What does it mean to trace a straight path for your feet?**
3. **Why is it so important to stay connected to the church family and what can stop us from staying connected?**
4. **Do you think God is punishing you with everything that has been happening lately?**