

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 12 Jun 2022

Sermon Title : The Heart Of The Father

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : Proverbs 3:11-12

INTRODUCTION

In my younger days, after disciplining me with the cane, my father would say, "It hurts me more than it hurts you." I found it a hypocritical thing to say, until a few years ago when I said the same thing to my son. Why do I say something that I disagreed with so much? Let us now look at God, our Father's heart when He disciplines us.

We dislike discipline because we see discipline as a:

- Consequence of breaking a rule/wrongdoing, Punishment or Retribution.
- Discipline (1st Merriam Webster Dictionary definition) – to punish or penalize for the sake of enforcing obedience and perfecting moral character.

The idea that discipline = punishment is further reinforced by people administering discipline while they are angry and unfortunately this is so for some parents. Emotions cloud judgment so if we administer punishment in anger, we might over punish by caning with too much force or chiding with unkind words. We might inflict pain or hurt that does not commensurate with the wrongdoing. Hence, we tend to equate discipline with painful or hurtful punishments.

God's discipline is for reproof (Proverbs 3:11-12)

*"¹¹My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof,
¹²for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." (ESV)*

Another word for reproof is reprimand or rebuke. These are not pleasant either but there is a difference from punishment:

- (i) Punishment – consequence of an offence. Retribution for wrongdoing; there is no need for any follow up to heal any internal or external wounds inflicted.
- (ii) Reproof – God's reproof is for repentance. Not condemnation but reformation. Not retribution for wrongdoing but refinement of the wrongdoer. God can never over punish because His disciplinary action is not an end in itself. God's punishment seeks to enact change within a person:
 - Not punish, but instruct; to train
 - Not penalize, but correct; to change

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- Not condemnation, but repentance
- Not retribution, but reformation

- God is our Father, we are His children. God loves His children and it is love that compels Him to discipline His children.
- Worldly parents desire their children to be as perfect as they can be and so does God. He has high hopes for His children, that is, us. God wants us to be perfect. (Matthew 5:48) Practice makes perfect and so to help our children develop a talent, we will help them learn the right way and encourage them to practise. To learn the right way of doing something and practising it is called discipline:
Discipline (2nd Dictionary definition) – to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control. Disciple comes from the word discipline.
- To have discipline is to have a regime that moves us towards excellence. God will also do His best to help us reach our full potential. The purpose of God's discipline is to move us towards Christian perfection or mould us into Christ-likeness. This process in Christian theology is called sanctification.

Punishment will happen at the final judgment when Jesus comes back. The Lord's discipline while we are on this earth is training, correcting our old habits or the wrong form that we have been practising our whole life. We are not enduring punishments but the practice. (Hebrews 12:7) The Father wants us to move towards Christian perfection, to be more and more like Jesus; it proves we are His children and He loves us. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

Application for parents:

1. Discipline is not punishment per se. If discipline is needed, do not do it while you are emotionally charged as you might over punish. Cool down before administering the sentence. Do not exasperate your children but instead bring them up in the training and instructions of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) Always do follow up. Discipline is not condemnation but reformation.

2. Discipline is about discipling and training. Parents need to learn the right things and practise in the right way too. Do your daily private devotion. Also attend corporate worship and practise what you learn. Follow our daily Bible reading plan TBtW by downloading the app. Join a small group which is an accountability group because iron sharpens iron. (Proverbs 27:17) Be with a group of brothers and sisters to spur one another on to good works. (Hebrew 10:24)

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Application for those who are not parents:

- 1, Remember the heart of the Father. The Father does not want to hurt or harm you, but to prosper you.
2. Sometimes, disciplines may come in unfair situations. In my canning by the school discipline master, I felt I was the only scapegoat – I might feel it was unfair, but it was not unjust. God was disciplining me to bear the Fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Becoming more like Jesus

Jesus, the only really innocent scapegoat who has all the fruit of the Spirit and is sinless was sent to the Cross. He is Jesus, God the Son. This means God Himself went to the Cross, took the penalty of our sin and was punished in our place.

- Jesus is the reason why our discipline on earth is not punishment because He has taken the punishment for us.
- Jesus is the reason God's discipline on earth is our training and our correcting so that we will reach our full potential and become more and more like Him.

CONCLUSION

Let us accept God's discipline with thankfulness in our heart because God's grace will be with us so we will be able to bear the discipline. Be humble and know that it is for our good and so allow God's discipline to move us towards Christian perfection and mould us into Christ-likeness because the Father's heart is never to hurt or harm us, but to prosper us.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Proverbs 3:11-12 slowly.

- a. What new insights do you have on God's discipline from this sermon?
- b. Why are humans unable/unwilling to accept God's discipline with thankfulness?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. The heart of the Father – The Father does not want to hurt or harm you, but to prosper you. Do you believe this is true even when going through God’s discipline in your life?
- 3b. God’s reproof for us is “not punish but instruct; to train, not penalize but correct; to change, not condemnation but repentance, not retribution but reformation”.
 - (i) In disciplining others whether as a parent or otherwise, how close have you been in showing the Father’s heart toward the person you discipline?
 - (ii) How can you better reflect the Father’s heart when administering discipline?
4. Discipline (2nd Dictionary definition) – to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control. To have discipline is to have a regime that moves us towards excellence.
 - a. What are some actions you need to take to have a regime that moves towards excellence in your Christian discipleship journey?
 - b. What are some challenges you will need to overcome?
 - c. How can your group members help or encourage you to make the changes in 4a. above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

5. Share your personal testimony on how you have accepted God's discipline in humility and thankfulness and it had brought about a good in your life.

OR

Give thanks to God for loving us as His children, and so are compelled to discipline and correct us to be more and more like Jesus. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

6. With a prayer partner, seek the Holy Spirit's revelation if you have not been sensitive to God's discipline in your life. Ask God to reveal to you where you can be corrected to be more like Jesus and to have the humility to accept His discipline even when it may seem unfair. Pray also for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to support one another in your sanctification journey.

As a group, pray that every member in your group will be committed to do a daily private devotion or follow our church's daily Bible reading plan TBtW by downloading the app, attend corporate worship and practise what you learn by being accountable. Pray also for worshippers who are not in a small group to join one so they too can be accountable to one another to spur one another on to good works and so be transformed to be more and more like Christ.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. You Hold It All – New Life Worship
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1evyBRj0n1Y>
2. How Deep The Father's Love For Us – Stuart Townend
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0CDqG5STPM>
3. Goodness of God – Bethel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4>

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