



Lesson 11

RG and CHASTISEMENT

KEY PASSAGE(S)

“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. 12:9)

THE BIG PICTURE – THE Story

Similar to many areas considered, this area often lacks gospel alignment. How one views this area receives significant shaping from how one views the gospel. If there is proper alignment with the preceding energy, this object will take that energy and transfer it to what follows.

God’s wrath against sin is notable. It is incapable of being answered by human effort. With sin’s immediate presence, God acted in judgment against it. Lucifer and his minions were cast from God’s presence. Adam and Eve were ashamed, an innocent animal was sacrificed, and they were driven from the Garden. All of the pictures and promises speak to a full and final judgment where God’s wrath would be met and His justice satisfied. God acted against sin at Mt. Calvary.

BASIC IDEAS:

1. Because of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the believing will never face any future judgment before God the Father for their sins.
2. Because the believer is IN CHRIST and clothed with His righteousness, the Father never sees them other than righteous.
3. Because Jesus took all our sin, those who believe will never face the wrath of God sin again.

INITIAL TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

1. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all my sin (1 John 1:7; Cf. Lesson 4).
2. The cross took care of all the punishment my sin deserved (Col. 2:13).
3. The Father always sees me in the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).
4. The Holy Spirit causes me to see my sin for what it is and produces in me the fruit of confession and repentance (1 John 1:9; Cf. Lesson 7 and Lesson 9).

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

For His people, Calvary is the barrier standing between them and God. God does not transgress that boundary. From that point forward, His people never need fear His wrath against them. Calvary has forever altered the believer's relationship to the Father and to sin. There is, however, an intrinsic demerit to sin placed by God to keep His people from sin's destructive behavior. I believe understanding this truth is a watershed truth for the believer. If one understands this particular truth, they will be able to experience what it means to be free in Christ and to be walking in the grace of God.

We will consider eight statements in treating this idea. Some will be in the form of a question.

Before going any further, let us ask four initial questions.

Q1 - Does God punish His people for their sins? If God deals with me after my sin, what does this say of His Son's cross work?

Q2 - How extensive is the death Christ died in the atoning of my sin? What sin was addressed?

Q3 - When Christ died for my sin did He take care of every sin or are there sins I am still to be held accountable for before Him?

Q4 - How does the Father currently see His children?

TODAY'S LESSON

I. If God punishes us for our sins, what does this say of His Son's cross work?

The effectual nature of His work begun at Calvary continues to this day. God's work of forgiveness *in time* continues unimpeded. Emphasis is placed on *in time* because from His vantage point we are as forgiven now as we will ever be. This is the genius of John 13 as well as 1 John 2:1, 2. Christ, unconditionally and unsolicited, continues His work of forgiveness. Without such a work on His part in our behalf, we could never enjoy what He has secured. Jesus Christ is our advocate.

II. When Christ died for my sin, He took care of every sin (Col. 2:13).

- "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**" (Col. 2:13).

When Christ died for our sin, did He take care of every sin or are there sins for which we are still accountable to God? The person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ removed the divine

judgment against sin. Thus, Christians will never face the wrath or judgment of God against them. God is not going to judge them for their sin in this life nor in the life to come.

When we speak of the death of Christ and the scope of its coverage, we say He forgave us of all our past, present and future sin. This is not a disputed issue in evangelical doctrine. There is no sin His death has not dealt with in full. There are a number of places where it says simply that He “died for our sins” or for us as sinners (Rom. 4:25; 5:60-8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:17-18).

- “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3).
- “**who gave Himself for our sins** so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal. 1:4).
- “and **He Himself is the propitiation for our sins**; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).
- “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**” (1 John 4:10).

Several passages address this issue (Acts 13:38, 39; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 1:7, 9; Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 14).

- ³⁸“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that **through Him forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39).
- “in whom we have redemption, **the forgiveness of sins**” (Col. 1:14).

The death Christ died was and is sufficient to eliminate all of our sin debt. Such great theological words as justification, propitiation, and redemption all speak of this glorious truth (Cf. Lesson 4). God has declared us righteous and has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ. God’s wrath against us has been placated. The debt of sin we owed has been paid in full and cancelled. All of this is the substance of Romans 3:21-26.

The reason why many do not enjoy the power of Christ’s sacrifice is they do not understand what God did for them by means of Christ’s death. The benefits placed on those who believe are marvelous.

The effectiveness of the sacrifice is diminished when we believe God is still dealing with our sin issue. **If we have to answer for any sin, in any way, then we must answer for all sin.**

III. How does the Father currently see His children (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 4:17)?

- “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).
- “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Cor. 5:21).
- “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; **because as He is, so also are we in this world**” (1 John 4:17).

When God sees us, how does He see us? Does He see us in His Son? Does God even see our sin? This question is intriguing. Our identity is established in positional truth. God sees us as an individual with personality. However, our standing before Him is always based on the merit of Christ. This appears to be the message of Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 2:20, and Colossians 3:1-4.

When 1 John 4 speaks of “perfect love,” he says we have within us His perfect love and as a result of this perfect love, fear of torment is removed. Why is this so? “Because as He is, so are we in this world.”

God sees us just as He sees His Son. Why do we struggle with such a concept? Oh, what joy to embrace such truth; God the Father says of His children, “These are my beloved sons in whom I am well pleased.” How can such a thing be true? Because they are standing on the merit of His only begotten Son. We live in a world of constant fear. Fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of being unwanted, unloved, and unaccepted. We fear the pain of missing the mark, of not measuring up, and of being different. We fear the failure of failed expectations and desires. Such fear has no place in our relationship with God. Such fear is fueled by a theology that believes our standing before the Father is based on our ability to persevere. Such thinking is man-centered and denies the power of the cross to both justify and sanctify. The only merit we have before the Father has been secured for us by His Son. This is the doctrine of grace. This is the Christ life.

IV. God never “punishes” the believer for his sin.

Often it is said God punishes us when we do wrong, even as we would punish our own children if they did wrong. Yet, think about it. If our child did wrong and was punished for it, why would we punish him again for that which he was already punished? The only reason would be if we somehow felt the initial punishment was not enough nor sufficient.

V. There is providential judgment of God against all sin, this does not, however, affect our relationship with God.

Calvary removed for us the divine penalty against sin. This does not mean that Calvary removed for us the providential penalty against sin. Providential simply means the natural

outworking of events without direct or immediate suspending of natural laws. If we were a drunk, or promiscuous, or a cheat, or a compulsive liar, or slothful prior to salvation and received Christ and are now delivered from the bondage of these things, this does not mean we will avoid the intrinsic consequences of those things – bad health, lost friends, legal troubles, etc. However, the judgment against those things will be providential and not divine. God will not “punish” us for our past transgressions.

Does God see our sin? God sees all sin and all sin grieves Him whether in the life of the believer or unbeliever. Nevertheless, such sin as it is found in the believer is never considered by the Father (Rom. 4:6-8). He never imputes to them its penalty or power. God the Father never reckons or “brings up” the sin of His children. He did it once and its “cost” Him His Son. He will never do it again.

Sin’s inherent demerit is death (Rom. 6:23). God has established providential laws concerning the judgment against sin.

- “For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Sin in the life of a believer is a failure to believe that God alone is enough. It is still there and nothing we do can make it less than what it is. Sin in the life of the believer fails to appropriate what is already ours in Christ. Sin is our failure to grab, not God’s failure to give. God has already provided all things in grace. Sin fails to appropriate all things because of greed. One’s obedience no more merits blessing as one’s disobedience merits judgment. Our standing in Christ merits the blessing and sin’s inherent demerit brings the judgment. Neither one is capable of affecting God’s “opinion” of us. Unfortunately, such truth appears startling; yet how tragic to continue living in a spiritual state of bondage.

VI. If God is not judging any of our sins, then can we sin without restraint?

Paul anticipates such a charge in **Romans 6:1, 2, and 15**. Romans 6:1-23 gives the triumph of grace over the power of sin. Verse 1-14 shows the freedom from sin’s tyranny (it is no longer my master) and verses 15-23 give the freedom from sin’s slavery (it is no longer my motivation). Some feel grace is a license to sin. Verse one asks, “Should we sin that grace might abound?” Here the question in verse 15 is, “Can we sin since grace abounds?” Paul’s response to each is emphatic. **Freedom from sin is not a freedom to sin.**

Paul answers this charge rather strongly in Romans 6:1-8. If anyone believes God is most glorified when they sin and thus the expansion of His glory liberates them to sin, then the damnation of such is just. Anyone who thinks grace is a license to sin is theologically amuck.

When one begins to comprehend the magnitude of God’s grace toward him, it can only result in love. In addition, love always overflows into obedience (John 14:15, 21).

VII. What about the chastening of the Lord?

Hebrews 12 has always been looked to as a pivotal passage to “prove” God will chasten His people for their sins. Yet, in light of all that is found in the doctrines of justification, imputation, etc. and the exchanged life, how can this be? By looking at the larger context of chapter 11 and 12:1-4 it will be seen that the discipline being referred to is the hardship one will naturally incur by living a godly life in this world (John 16:33; 2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22). All of the hardships we encounter are providential in nature.

Consider this truth in light of Hebrews 9:23-10:4. There are several points to consider.

- **First**, the death Christ paid the penalty for sin in full once and for all (vv. 25-27). No one would dispute this. Jesus paid the penalty against all sin both past, present and future. If Jesus paid the penalty for all sin, then for what sin are we being punished? If we say for the sin we commit today or that which will be committed, then we see the once and for all nature of the sacrifice as being insufficient.
- **Second**, when Christ does appear again, it will not be to deal with our sin (v.28).
- **Third**, the sacrifice Christ offers makes the recipients of it perfect (10:1).
- **Fourth**, those who are the recipients of His finished work have been cleansed once for all and no longer feel guilty before God for their sin (v.2).

How are we to look at Hebrews 12:1ff?

A suggested overview in light of the context:

10:23	Let us hold fast
10:32ff	Remember you endured a great conflict of suffering being made a public spectacle
11:36	Others experienced mocking, scourging, chains, and imprisonment
12:1	Therefore (in light of what has preceded) run the race. Do not give up in the face of persecution. In the midst of our affliction for righteousness' sake, let us “put off” the old man . . .
12:2	Fix your eyes on Jesus. Jesus is the perfect example of one who suffered at the hands of sinners, who did nothing wrong.
12:3	“So that you will not grow weary and lose heart (These echoes back to 10:23ff).
12:4	In your stance for righteousness and against sin, you have not yet been harmed.
12:5ff	Here begins the exhortation. Why the exhortation? I believe the intent of 12:5ff, is to let the people of God know that what they are currently enduring is coming from the hands of a loving Father.
12:12	Therefore, be encouraged

The Hebrews passage would read dramatically different if instead of the word chastening we used the word instruction, admonition, or nurture. Yet, if we note the context, the idea of penal

judgment seems foreign, especially in light of the previous statement of v.3. **The hardship, chastening, and instruction of vv. 5ff is the persecution endured for living a life of faith as noted in chapter 11.** This is consistent with the other New Testament passages.

CONCLUSION

If Christians can commit some type of sin that results in the judgment of God against it, then activity becomes subjective (for we never know when we cross the line), forgiveness is not full and finally, and His death was not sufficient. In the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Father has laid upon His Son His entire wrath against the sins of His people. Because of this act, no child of God will ever face the vertical consequences for their sin.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

For all the passages that deal with divine chastening, consider the larger context for each text. In addition, place the idea within the biblical framework of the one *Story* where Jesus is in the center. Many of our misconceptions about divine chastisement will fall away as we discover a proper interpretation within context.

1 John 5:14-17; Mark 3:20; Acts 5; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24; 1 Peter 4:17; Revelation 2 and 3

NEXT LESSON – RG and Our Victory

