



Sermon: February 4, 2018

Verses Covered This Week

*Hebrews 12:5 - 11*

*Jonah 4:8 - 11*

*2 Corinthians 12:7 - 10*

*1 Corinthians 11:29 - 32*

So we're going to start out with a real positive sentence today. Here it is. Before you met Jesus you were a sinner. After you met Jesus, you are still going to sin. There's our positive beginning today. Now we're in Proverbs, right, but we're going to go to Hebrews 12 because Hebrews, the very next couple verses in Proverbs, Hebrews 12 quotes and then actually writes a sermon about those verses. So we're going to look at Hebrews 12. We're going to cover a little ground today. Now before we get in here, there is a difference between the word punishment and the word in the Bible, discipline. They're not the same thing. Punishment is what happens when you die, if you've missed Christ, and that punishment never ends. It's in Revelation 20. You want to read what that is, you turn to that chapter, you read it, the great white throne of judgement. That's punishment. It is a decree that we join the devil and his angels in a particular area. We're there and we do not get out. The punishment is eternal. Discipline is temporary. It is in the life of a believer. And it is a temporary thing. Punishment is based on His wrath. Discipline is not.

Now I want you to listen to what he writes in Hebrews 12 beginning in verse 5. Here's the quote from the very next verse we would have been in Proverbs.

<sup>5</sup>have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him; <sup>6</sup>for the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."

Now here comes the sermon. Listen to this. Number one:

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure; God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, of which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

So here's the first thing he said. If you know Jesus, God is going to, at some point, bring discipline into your life; not punishment, but discipline. He does it because you're His son. He does not

discipline people who that don't know Christ. They don't get disciplined in this life. They never get it. God does nothing with them. He doesn't discipline them. They, at the end of life, face punishment. We, though, because we don't face punishment, we are temporarily disciplined at times. Now before you leave me, we're going to walk through this whole thing. I'm going to explain everything as clearly as I can. We're going to come out at a good end. So just hang with me. He says God disciplines us because we're His children. In other words, it's out of love. Now when I grew up, we were told all the time in Vacation Bible School and in any kind of Sunday school class that God was sitting up there watching and kind of waiting for us to mess up so He could jump on us with both feet. I mean that was kind of the viewpoint. So we all lived in a little bit of terror which is an opposite of the fear of the Lord in 1 John 5. So I grew up with that. That is not the concept here. It's not the concept they're looking down going, "Man, I hope you mess up so I can jump on you." No, He disciplines us because He loves us. We're His adopted children. And the idea is that He disciplines us for our benefit as we discipline our own children. So we don't discipline our own children because we want to. Not every day do we want to. Some days it's a joy, but most days we don't want to do it. We do it because we love them and because we're in a relationship. We're trying to keep them going the right way and that is precisely his point. That's God's heartbeat. It's the first thing he says about discipline.

Now look at the next thing beginning in verse 9.

<sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly Fathers who disciplined us and we respected them; shall we not be much more subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Now here's the second thing. You can, if God brings discipline in your life, ignore it. There's a guy in the Old Testament, when we go to Israel, the first place we stop at is Joppa. Which is a sea coast town. God told Jonah, one of His prophets, one of His guys. He said, "I want you to go to Nineveh, capital of Assyria. These people were like the Isis of that day. They were vile. There's some argument they created the idea of crucifixion. So the Assyrians were horrible. He says, "Look I want you to go to Nineveh and preach to them." And Jonah says, "I don't want to go." So he gets on the ship, we all know the story. God brings some heavy discipline in his life. He throws him in this massive fish, big bass in the ocean. Throws him in this bass for about three days, pulls him out, and Jonah's all, "I love you, God." So he then goes to Nineveh and preaches. But they repent and God relents the disaster, the Bible says. And Jonah is livid. He is so mad. He is beside himself. And so at the end of the book, this is how the book ends. He's sitting on the outskirts of the city of Nineveh after all this, and he's watching the city hoping that God will still kill them all, because he hates them. He despises them and he's hoping God will kill them all. And so he's sitting out there and he's built a little kind of booth that he can sort of sit in to get a little bit of respite from the sun. But still the sun's hitting him hard mid-day. And so God brings this plant up that sort of shields him. And he's feeling a little better. He's still hoping God will kill everybody because he's got such a good heart. So he's hoping God will kill everybody, plant comes up, then the next day when he gets up in the morning, God withers the plant and now Jonah is really hacked. Now here are the last words he says. Now listen to this.

<sup>8</sup>...and he asked that he might die, "It is better for me to die than to live." <sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes I do well to be angry. Angry enough to die." <sup>10</sup>The Lord said, "You pity the plant for which you did not

labor nor did you make it grow which came into being in a night and perish in a night.  
<sup>11</sup>Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

He says, "Jonah you're worried about a plant. I'm worried about people." Jonah, and here's the horror, that's how the book ends. It stops right there. It's over. A lot of scholars that say, "Well there's obviously a chapter missing." There's no chapter missing. That's how Jonah's life ends. He's angry at God. He's frustrated with God. Even with God's discipline he will not yield to it. He will not love people that God has disciplined him to love. And so he ends not submitting to the discipline of his God.

Now you contrast that with 2 Corinthians chapter 12. The Apostle Paul goes to heaven, he sees heaven, he comes back, and that revelation has made him arrogant and conceited. And you've got to admit, if you've gone to heaven, if God takes you there and you see what heaven's like, and he brings you back and somebody's arguing with you about something, what are you going to say? "Hey buddy. I've been to heaven. You've been to Hearne. So let's just be clear here who's right with Jesus and who's not." So here's what God did to him. He said:

<sup>7</sup>So to keep me from becoming conceited, because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me – to keep me from becoming conceited! <sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this that it should leave me. <sup>9</sup>But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." <sup>10</sup>Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses."

Paul hated what happened to him. We don't know what the physical ailment was. But it was obviously intense. He prayed three times, God said, "I can't do it. You're too conceited." And once he got that, he said, "You know what, Lord? I'll take this. I'll live in it because I want Your power perfected." He accepted the discipline God brought in his life. Jonah does not. He does. So the writer of Hebrews tells us we have a responsibility to make sure that we allow that discipline to run its course. Then look at the next thing he says. He says:

<sup>10</sup>They disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

Now when you go to seminary you can always tell a first year seminary student. He's got four words that he knows: agape, it's the only Greek word he knows, he thinks it's God's love, doesn't mean that, but he thinks that. So he's going to throw out Agape so you know he knows Greek. Then he's going to give you three fancy theological words so you know he's been to seminary. He's going to give you justification. He's going to give you sanctification. He's going to give you glorification. Now those are the three words to describe everything about us; every state we're going to be in. Glorification is the fact that when I die, I receive God's glory in its fullness. Never lose it, it's never fading, it's always great. I receive that glory. That is the second end of justification. Justification's real simple. It is that when the Holy Spirit comes to me and he says, "Chris you're bad and My Son is not. But My Son's death on the cross was a ransom payment for you. And if you'll accept that, I will do two things for you. I will remove your, I will declare, it won't be true experientially, but I will declare about you that your sin is removed and that you are

as righteous as I am. That will be my declaration to you if you put your faith in what my Holy Spirit is telling you about My Son and about yourself.” So if I put my faith, if God makes a declaration and the only reason you and I go to heaven, you have to be as holy as God to get into heaven. And the only reason we get there is because God’s declared us that holy at the point of justification. So the end of justification is glorification, but the other is in the middle: sanctification. Here’s what he wants to do. Now listen. He wants to take what He’s declared about us and put it in our life experientially. That’s sanctification. And so when he says he has done this so that we make sure His holiness, God wants to place His holiness in you. And there are times when the only way He can do that is to bring discipline into your life. His purpose of justification is to put His holiness in our life; and then to qualify us so when we die, we stand with Him.

Now so discipline’s purpose isn’t for God to be mean to you. Discipline’s purpose is for you to come to a place where what He’s declared about you becomes reality in your life. Grace, real grace, and mercy always issue into holiness. And if the holiness is being short-changed by you, then God will bring discipline in your life. Now look at the next thing he says. He says:

<sup>11</sup>All discipline for the moment seems painful rather than pleasant; but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

It’s not fun. Nothing fun about discipline, but it is going to come. Now obviously the question is, “When does it come? What causes discipline in my life?” So let me walk you through as quickly as I can, OK. You are going to sin; even after you become a Christian. But there are two things in the Bible that make this statement. In Ephesians 4 it says, don’t grieve the Holy Spirit of God. In 1 Thessalonians 5, it says, don’t quench the Holy Spirit of God. You walk through your life, if you grieve and you quench the Holy Spirit to a point where that’s entrenched in your life, so you’re not listening to Him, at that point then discipline will come. Now this is going to be a little hard. But I want you to hear me all the way out. I’m going to make this come out good when we get to the end of the message. But I want you to slide over with me to 1 Corinthians 11 because somebody’s going to ask, “Well what is an example of discipline.” Let me show you in 1 Corinthians 11 what some examples are. Now when Paul writes this to the Corinthians, right. He’s talking about the Lord’s Supper. They had the Lord’s Supper with a meal. Now at the meal in Corinth, they had some rich people, they had some poor people. They had some people that didn’t have enough money to bring any food with them and they came and the only meal part they had was the Lord’s supper. There were right people there that came with all sorts of extra food and they were getting drunk because they brought so much alcohol. They were getting drunk at the Lord’s Supper and they were not sharing their food with these at the table. They were looking at them going, “You know, if they work harder, they’d have some food.” I mean they were Republicans. So listen carefully. I don’t want any e-mails, OK. Let me just tell you this. You send me an e-mail, God’s going to discipline you. There we go. Now we’re cooking. Now listen to what he says. In verse 29 he says:

<sup>29</sup>Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup>This is why many of you are weakened, ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup>But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

He says to them, "Look some of you are sick because of the way you treated the poor people at the Lord's Supper. And some of you have died." Because what happened is they had at some point, I can guarantee you if you've come in and you've got money and you're at the Lord's Supper where you talk about the equality of all of us in Jesus. There is nobody that has more sin than anybody else. Everybody needs the same declaration from God. We're equal when you come to the Lord's Supper table. We may not be equal in this town, but we're equal at that moment. And when you're sitting there in that moment where God has declared everybody equal and you're sitting across and it's entrenched in you, the Holy Spirit's tried to say to you, "You need to reach out to this guy. He may not have the same car you have, he may not have the same camel you have, but he is your brother in Christ." And you become entrenched where you believe you're better than he is. Listen, when you quench the Spirit and you grieve the Spirit long enough that it's entrenched in you and He can't reach you anymore, listen, when He can't reach you anymore, that's the point at which God brings discipline. Not before; but then. And there are examples there of discipline. First fundraiser in the book of Acts where Ananias and Sapphira died for about how much money they gave to the children's building. That was a joke. I thought it was funny. Apparently you didn't. There is, I'm just kidding, there is discipline when we are so entrenched that His conviction, his grief, do not affect us anymore. That is the point at which discipline comes into your life.

Now I know Baptists. OK. I know that when I finish this sermon, some of you are going to go home, you're going to have had a bad day today, you're going to get sick on Tuesday and think it's a discipline of God. I had a preacher friend text me last Sunday, or last Monday. He said, "Here's what happened yesterday." He said, "I've got my son, I'm spanking him in my office while they're singing in the worship, and I have to finish the spanking so I can get there in time to preach." Now we all have those moments, right. You came to church today, some of you had a little tiff at home. You're really mad. You walk in, you've got to put on the Baptist face. "Hi. How are you? This is my wife. I would die for her, not today, but any other day. I would die for her." You put the face on because you've had this massive fight. Then you drive to eat lunch at Chuy's. Somebody pulls in front of you and you lose it. "I cannot believe that guy did that!" And then you hear your wife go, "You know you need to calm down." Now I've never actually experience that. I've just heard stories about that. Just pouring my heart out today. So you do that and then Tuesday comes and you get the flu. And you remember the preacher's sermon. "Let's see, some of them were sick, I'm sick, I yelled at my wife, I reamed that... It's God's discipline. I'm being punished." Now that is a Baptist logical position. It's stupid, but it is a Baptist logical position. That's how you will think. That is not how God works. You're going to do some things over and over and over. Because you have some things in your life that you're weak in. And you have a proclivity toward, and there's some of those things you're going to do over and over. If you, if you get to the place where you mess up and God's Spirit speaks to you and you go, "You're right, God. I shouldn't have done that." And you step back, He is not going to discipline you. You say, "Well what if I do it next week?" He's still not going to discipline you. And what will happen, if you don't quench the Spirit, and you don't grieve the Spirit, in time those instances will get further and further apart and God is not going to discipline you for every single instance you do. If He did, we'd all be sick this week. There'd be nobody here. It doesn't work that way. I remember we were, my son was in high school, and we were living in the country on the west side of town, and the lights had gone out in the neighborhood. It's about 10 o'clock

one night and we see the headlights from the pickup come flying in. And I looked at my wife and I said, "This can't be good." So he comes walking in and here are the first words out of his mouth. "I'll never do it again." OK. About that time the lights come on and he's holding in his hand a piece of his tooth. One half of this tooth is gone. So I asked the natural question, "What bonehead thing have you done, boy!" He goes, "Well we stealing a sign." That's not the dumb part. He said, "My buddy had the big bolt wrench and I was looking under it like this and he dropped it and hit my mouth. So here's my tooth." And then my wife looks at me and goes, "I told you not to tell him all those stories that you did in high school." I said, "You hush. The discipline of God will come on you." So we had a little moment of glory there. Called the dentist, he said, "Yeah put it in a glass of milk." So he goes in the next, and he does this like three days before he's got some major senior picture of something coming up. So the guy, dentist, glues it back on and there he is. Now he really was genuinely sorry, I think, when your tooth's killing you, you're really sorry. But he was genuinely sorry. Did we discipline him? No. Because he really was sorry. He really was repentant. There was no point in discipline. He was where he should be emotionally, physically, and spiritually with what he had done.

When you're there, God does not discipline you for every little failure you have. You are going to mess up. You say, "Well how do I know when it's discipline?" I'm going to give you a letter, a verb, and a conditional particle. I'm going to give you these three things. And if these three things are rolling through this front part of your head, then I want you to understand you're not under discipline. There's a metaphor in the Bible that says the rain falls on the just and the unjust. OK. What it means is there are things that happen, good and bad, to good and bad people. Now it rains on, if it rains here, it's going to rain on the Christians in the community and the lost people in the community. If there's a drought in Texas; the lost people in the community are going to be dried out, the Christians are going to be dried out. If it's flu season, there are going to be Christians that get the flu and lost people that get the flue. So if you get the flu Tuesday and you were yelling at your wife Sunday morning, that's probably not connected; might be, but it's probably not. So understand, do not go out of here and go, "Well it's painful, it's hard, I'm going to get, oh my goodness." Don't do the Baptist thing. OK. I want you to remember this. Number one: I want you to remember the letter "I". Two: I want you to remember the verb "wonder". And three, the conditional particle, if. If you had a fight with your wife this morning, and you ream somebody out on the Chuy's, and Tuesday you go to the doctor and he says, "Buddy you've got the flu." And your thought is "I wonder if I'm being disciplined." Listen if those words, "I wonder if," are in your head, you are not being disciplined. If you're being disciplined, you will know. You say, "Well how will you know?" The same way Paul knew. The minute he got that thorn in the flesh, he prayed three times, and he knew without question, this is God's discipline in my life. It's for my best. I'm going to take it. So understand; you're going to be disciplined, but only when you really are entrenched in cutting off the Holy Spirit in your life. When you yield to the Holy Spirit, you may do next week what you did this week, you may yell at your wife three Sundays in a row, you won't four, because the pain will be intense. But you will make the same mistake. You're going to make mistakes in your marriage. You're going to make mistakes in parenting. You're going to make mistakes at business. You're going to sometimes do things you didn't mean to that was a mistake you had no idea was bad. You're going to do those things. You repent. You say, "God, You're right, I'm wrong." Boom! It's over. There is no discipline. He is not sitting up there hoping you mess up so He can just punch you. He loves you. I didn't want to discipline my kids. What my hope was that they wouldn't do what they were doing. I didn't want to discipline.

It gets old. I wanted them to simply do what I said. That was it. He's not up there hoping He can discipline you; He simply wants you to have His best which is His holiness. And if it requires discipline to pull you back to where you don't grieve the Holy Spirit and you don't quench the Holy Spirit, then He will allow that discipline in your life. Again because you're His son. He doesn't do it to lost people. He does it only to His children because He loves them and they're the only ones that are capable of what's been declared about them being put in their life.

So His agenda for you is His holiness. Will the discipline be hard? Yeah, sometimes it will be. I remember the best advice we got in rearing our children. They had just been born and a family had told us, "Look when you discipline your children, it needs to be an event, not abuse, but an event. They need to know that this moment of discipline outweighs the joy of the rebellion." Now God's going to do that with you. You ignore Him, you quench the Spirit, you grieve the Spirit, you get entrenched there, you will be dealt with. But if you don't, if you stay the course, and you walk in the power of the Spirit, you are not going to be disciplined. So if you go out of here today and you get the flu Tuesday, and you think to yourself, "I wonder if." Then you are not under the discipline of God. I think discipline is rare because I think most of us don't grieve and quench for long. Discipline is a last resort God uses to pull us back. It will come. In the end it's good for you because His holiness is always the best for you. Men's goodness really isn't very appealing. But His righteousness is staggeringly rich and it is that wealth that He wants to put in your life. And there will be times when that will require discipline, but not all the time. It's rare. If it comes, you yield to it. But again, it's because He loves you.

Father remind us to listen to Your Spirit. Remind us to yield to what He says to us and that inner-witness with our conscience so that we don't grieve Him and we don't quench Him. Father we don't want Him hurt by our disobedience and we want Him to control who and what we are. And Father if we are in a discipline mode today, let us surrender to that, yield to that, so that we can return to the control of Your Spirit and You can do in our lives what You want to do. Father we ask you to make that difference in who we are for You. In Jesus Christ name.