

Sunday December 2nd 2012
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Sixty Eight

1). Heb 12:4 ¶ *You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against [the] sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

a). The writer of Hebrews we will remember had drawn our attention to the fact that we have not yet resisted to bloodshed striving against the sin of unbelief – neither our own unbelief or the unbelief of others that comes against us as persecution.

b). Christ had resisted to bloodshed striving against the unbelief of the nation of Israel at His first advent and it would be equally true that many of the OT saints from Hebrews Chapter 11 had also resisted to bloodshed striving against this same sin in others within their historical context.

c). On the one hand then the Lord is given to us as the example of how to patiently endure through suffering, being obedient to the point of death – 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

d). And on the other hand we see the faith of the OT saints as they patiently endured through suffering in faithful obedience, being absolutely certain of a better resurrection, therefore being commended by God – Heb 11:39 *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

e). Then as we put all this together we can be greatly encouraged as we realize that what is presented to us through these 2 examples is the race of the

faith that is set before us and that because of the outcome from these 2 examples we can also complete this race in absolute assurance of the prize which awaits us - 2Ti 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

f). Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

2). Now we had also seen in past weeks that the race of the faith is described by Paul in - Php 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

a). And if we continue in these verses from Philippians Chapter 3, the Holy Spirit makes it quite clear that Paul's perceptions expressed in these verses are to be ours also - Php 3:15 ¶ *Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 ¶ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

b). We see in these verses then that as many as are mature, those who are of full age, who have grown with respect to the salvation of the soul, should think the same way as Paul thinks and should follow Paul's example also taking note of, also considering, those who walk just as Paul does realizing that he and they provide for us a pattern, literally a type, of how to successfully run the race of the faith.

c). And again, inevitably, everything in these verses is linked to that future Day when He 'will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body' – and here in v21 we have reference to the redemption of our body, an event which is inextricably connected to our adoption as a firstborn son - Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

d). And as we know the word translated 'adoption' literally means 'son placement', therefore the reference to those who 'are mature', of full age in Philippians 3:15 can only be synonymous with those whom God is dealing with as sons – those who will be son placed and will receive the covering of glory – those who will have successfully completed the race of the faith.

e). Now whether the pattern we are to follow as we continue in the race is with respect to suffering persecution as a result of the hostility of sinners against us or whether our trials come from another direction, the end result, if we follow the pattern, is always the same - Mt 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

f). 2Co 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal [age lasting] weight of glory,*

g). The great reward in heaven, the weight of glory, are then reserved for sons who have patiently endured, who have run the race according to the rules – sons who will be adopted as firstborn sons in that coming Day – Eph 1:5 *having predestined us to adoption as [firstborn sons] by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

3). Heb 12:3 *For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

a). Now according to our verse here it is perfectly possible for us to become 'weary and discouraged' in our souls as we continue to run our race.

b). To absorb the pain that comes through persecution and separation and to remain steadfast in the faith as we resist the world, the flesh and the devil, as well as remaining patient as we endure the trials of life, takes an emotional toll that can make us feel overwhelmed and exhausted.

c). This is real and we all experience it, but we are at a place now in our understanding of the purpose of God where there must be a paradigm shift in

our thinking with respect to this, so that the same mind will be in us as is in Christ Jesus, the same mind as we saw needs to be in those who are mature.

4). And the key to this mind shift we find in our opening verses this morning – Heb 12:5 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

a). We are then to see the persecution and the trials and testing that come our way as the child training, 'the chastening' of the Lord.

b). We are not to despise this child training and we are not to be discouraged when we are rebuked by Him – now the word translated 'rebuked' here is a Greek word that means, 'convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove' – and is the same word we find translated 'reproof' in – 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for **reproof**, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

c). So, not unsurprisingly we see that the Lord 'rebukes' us through the scriptures – that which we saw last week which is brought forth from above by the Holy Spirit.

d). And because the rebuking comes through the Word we can see how it is easy to despise the child training – if we don't like what the Holy Spirit reveals to us about ourselves through the Word we have the opportunity to just reject it. Such an attitude will probably lead us to find reasons to stay out of the Word – anything rather than face that which the Spirit of God has shown us.

e). And here is the thing, the more time we spend in the Word the more we will be convicted of the extent of our own depravity and the depth of the darkness of our sin nature. This of itself could be discouraging unless we come to realize that - Ro 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my*

mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

f). This is why we must believe - 2Co 3:18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

g). 2Co 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

5). To be rebuked, to be convicted, by the Lord is not a negative but a positive - *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."*

a). It is because God loves us that He trains us – and let's please remember that our training is preparing us for rulership in the Millennial Kingdom as a co-heir with the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the second person of the Trinity – the Lord Jesus Christ.

b). And also, according to our verse, if God is to receive us as a son in order that we will be adopted as a firstborn, then He will scourge us.

c). Now the idea of being scourged by the Lord is an interesting one. At the outset it would be good to keep in mind that we are not dealing with a literal scourging such as our Lord received, but rather it is a figurative scourging.

d). In the OT we can see a word that is translated 'scourging' used for the first time in Leviticus Chapter 19 in connection with sexual immorality and this particular Hebrew word comes from a root word that means 'to inspect, to search, to seek out' – the idea then being of examination in order to find the truth that is at hand.

e). Now this Hebrew word is not the word we find here in the Book of Hebrews, but there is the use of the Greek word for scourging in Acts that appears to be very similar in its meaning - Ac 22:20 *'And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'* 21 *"Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'" 22 ¶ And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" 23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.*

f). The idea here then seems to be that Paul should be scourged in order that the truth could be discovered as to why the Jews 'shouted so against him'.

To find out the reason then for the hope that was within him.

g). And so, given the idea presented through child training and through rebuking we would undoubtedly understand scourging in Hebrews 12 as a part of the testing that must come through the Word of God to prove the genuineness of our faith.

h). Just as Christ's literal scourging tore the literal flesh from His back so would our figurative scourging tear away our 'flesh' to reveal the hope that is within us - 1Pe 1:6 ¶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

6). And so, to return to where we were a short time ago - the chastening, the rebuking and the scourging of the Lord can cause us to be discouraged and weary – but here is where we need to make the paradigm shift in our thinking- If we are experiencing the child training of the Lord, pictured through the words chastening, rebuking and scourging then this is proof positive that God is dealing with us right now as sons - Heb 12:7 *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

a). And if He is dealing with us as sons now, providing we don't turn back to perdition, then our adoption as a firstborn son is absolutely certain, then.

b). This then is proof positive that the goal of our faith will be achieved – it is here then that we can find the certainty that Paul had at the end of his life.

c). 2Co 4:8 ¶ *We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

d). Here then is cause for rejoicing – can we perhaps understand even more what the Holy Spirit writes through James in - Jas 1:2 ¶ *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

7). Having laid out for us this amazingly encouraging truth the writer of Hebrews then continues with the theme of child training by drawing comparisons with the training we received from our earthly fathers [parents] introduced through the word 'Furthermore' and the training we receive from the Lord.

a). *9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

b). Our 'human fathers who corrected us' ['corrected' from the same word as we get 'chastening'] we gave respect to – we respected them as they attempted to correct us either out of love or fear or both as we remained under their authority.

c). The thought in v9 then is that if we did this with regards to our 'human fathers' who were/are human and therefore fallible then shouldn't we all the more place ourselves in subjection to 'the father of spirits and live' – so as to have life in the age to come - *1Pe 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,* And we would note the contrast between fathers of the flesh and the Father of spirits.

d). Then in v10 we see that our 'human fathers' child trained us 'for a few days' – there is a short period of time when a child is subject to its parents' training and once this period of time is over, when the child becomes an adult, then there is no more influence whether the training has been completed or not or has been 'successful' or not.

e). And we also see that the training we received from our 'human fathers' was done 'as seemed best to them' – this phrase is the translation of one Greek word which means 'to be of opinion – to think, suppose' – the idea here then is that their training was subjective – what they thought was best in their opinion, not necessarily what was best for us – in other words they made mistakes, they got it wrong and on occasion even did more harm than good.

f). Now none of this is true of our heavenly Father. His child training, if we allow it, does not last for just 'a few days', but for the entire length of our Christian life – it is a training that does not stop until the point where we are complete and adopted as a first born son – and if we are 'much more readily in subjection to the Father of spirits' then His training will be completed and must be successful – it is impossible to be subject to His child training and fail.

g). Neither does He make any mistakes – His training is not subjective but ‘for our profit’ – therefore whatever the details of our training look like for each of us individually, it is exactly what we need and exactly what we need to go through in order to bring us to adoption – this of course is a matter of faith.

h). And that which is for our profit is that ‘we may be partakers of His holiness’ – this is the transformation into the image of Christ.

8). Chapter 12 then continues with both earthly and heavenly training in view Heb 12:11 *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 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.*

a). According to v11 then ‘no chastening’, neither that from ‘human fathers’ or our heavenly Father ‘seems to be joyful for the present’ – for the period of time we have to be subjected to it, for that period of time when it is necessary and good for us.

b). Rather than being ‘joyful’ it is ‘painful’ – the word painful being a translation of a word that means ‘sadness, heaviness, sorrow’.

c). ‘Nevertheless’ even though the child training causes us sorrow and heaviness while we are subjected to it; ‘afterward’ after it has been completed it ‘yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it’.

d). This part of our verse then takes us to the Judgment Seat – the word ‘yields’ means to give back, a just recompense of reward then; and what we receive in return for being subject to the child training is ‘the peaceable fruit of righteousness’ – and this would take us back to - Php 3:9 ¶ *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;*

e). And take us back further to the father of faith - Ro 4:20 *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 ¶ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us.*

f). And forward to - Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

g). And the words 'peaceable fruit' are inescapably Millennial – 'peaceable' comes from a word that means, 'rest, to set at one again' and the word fruit in this context must inevitably take us to - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

h). What a glorious promise we see in all of this – the peaceable fruit of righteousness is ours, with absolute certainty, if we have been trained by the child training of the Lord.

i). And how extraordinary is the word translated 'trained' – let's just look at what's recorded in Strongs - *gumnazo, goom-nad'-zo* = to practise naked (in the games), i.e. train (figuratively):--exercise.

j). This word 'trained' then takes us back full circle to the very first verse of Hebrews Chapter 12, drawing from the imagery of the Greek athlete preparing for the games, confirming for us that the race of the faith and the child training of the Lord are one and the same.

k). If the imagery of the athlete trained by chastening is one of nakedness so that he may run to win then this pictures for us the child of God, who as a son, is doing exactly that recorded at the beginning of our chapter – Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

l). If we are laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us we are becoming naked in the sense of being free of all encumbrance that would prevent us from winning the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

m). Perhaps we can hear this final verse today in a different way – Pr 22:6 ¶ *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*

9). We will continue with our study of Hebrews Chapter 12 next time, if the Lord is willing.