**Greater Than All - wk 21 – No One Likes This**

**Getting spanked at school 2nd grade - for throwing snowballs at the girls at the bus stop. Waiting to be spanked… Gone are the days…**

**Hebrews = Jesus, God in the flesh, creator of all - greater than all OT temples & priestly requirements - don’t go back! Stand strong – true faith perseveres!**

**Don’t give up but grow up! Part of growing up is correction.**

**Some parts are theological - right thinking about Jesus.**

**Some parts are inspirational – encouragement and moving.**

**Some parts are practical – what we find the next few weeks.**

**Heb 12:1-3 - throw off the hindrances and sins that slow you down and run the race of faith! Now something else to throw off - your attitude.**

**Hebrews 12:4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. (They have been facing persecution - but are still alive.)**

**Four reasons for hardship our life:**

**Temptations, persecution, lost jobs, broken relationships, illness**

**1. Hardship is a part of living in a fallen (sinful) world**

**Heb 12:4 “in your struggle against sin” - there is an assumption that those in Christ will still struggle against sin. Fighting the flesh.**

**Jo 16:33 “in this world you will have trouble.” - It’s part of the journey.**

**The results of our sin and the sinful choices of others on us.**

**2. Hardship is a result of the enemy seeking to harm us**

**1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**

**But not every trial is an attack of the enemy.**

**3. Hardship is God’s way of maturing and preparing us**

**Trials serve a purpose of God to refine us. Like gold in fire.**

**James 1:2** **Count it all joy, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**

**Perfect and complete = mature us.**

**2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.**

**To prepare us for a unique work and ministry to others.**

**Truth is – God is always and forever in control - we must never forget that everything that happens is with His knowledge and allowance.**

**He is not the author of evil, nor can he sin - but allows others to choose evil to ultimately display his wisdom, grace, & love.**

**But there is one more often forgotten or ignored reason for hardship…**

**Hebrews 12:5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement…**

**A lot of reasons for frustration over trials are found in those three words… “you’ve completely forgotten”)**

**A reason for their discouragement was, they could not understand how God could allow difficult times.**

**Often in times of trials and struggle – we forget the basics and begin to wonder of God is still in control and still loves them.**

**Hebrews 12:5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? (remember) It says, (quoting Pro 3:11-12) “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, (corrects you) 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”**

**One more reason for hardships in life…**

**4. Hardship is God’s way of disciplining us**

**The writer reminds us - God not only comforts but also disciplines us. A sovereign God allowing struggles and pain to correct us.**

**Ever see someone do the same thing and enjoy the benefits of their sin without trouble. Seems unfair (eventually be judged).**

**\*\* Discipline is a sign of God receiving us – not rejecting us.**

**Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline - then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.**

**\*\*\* God’s Discipline (hardship) is an act of love**

**A parent who does not discipline is a parent who does not love**

**A parent who does not discipline his child is preparing them for heartache and self-destruction.**

**Proverbs 19:18 - Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death. (self-destruction) It is loving to discipline.**

**A sign of love for his Children. Truth is I would be concerned if he did not discipline us. \* V6 “Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”**

**Only the most prideful Christian would say they are never in need of correction from God.**

**How does God discipline us?**

* **Disciplines by allowing the consequences of the choices we make**
* **Disciplines by disrupting the choices we make**
* **Disciplines by the falling apart of the choices (plans) we make**

**Does God allow sickness and death – ask Job**

**This chastising is an act of love & correction to get us back on course.**

**(Spurgeon) If we groan for nothing, he will give us something that will make us groan.” If we complain to God about life – he will often give us something to groan about – to correct us.**

**Some people claim persecution – when it’s really discipline for stupidity and arrogance. Claiming persecution when they are teaching false doctrine and living double lives.**

**Hebrews 12:9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; (maybe it was not done right all the time – but as they thought best) but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.**

**\*\*\* God’s discipline is for our good**

**In a healthy family – discipline is part of the maturity process. Adults can often look back with respect and now understand why – and find ourselves doing the same with our children. \* “I would never do that…”**

**But yet – we often look at our life and get angry at God.**

**Why didn’t God get me out of that situation I put myself in?**

**Resentment – he should have stopped this… kept me from getting pregnant, from cheating, getting a divorce, from getting sick, being a bad worker and losing job, from getting drunk - hurting someone.**

**But if you are His child he disciplines for our good & maturity. To correct us and grow us up.**

**Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.**

**Discipline is supposed to be hard. We say we want the discipline of God – but just some light taps.**

**Ever had a child laugh when you disciplined them? How did that turn out? That was not discipline.**

**Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Trained - Again, an athletic word)**

**\*\*\* God’s discipline is about training**

**It is God preparing us for something greater**

**I think of a coach who gives laps to late team players, they respect the time and efforts of others – disciplined and corrected. Athletes trained by painful repetition to make them better athletes. Same…**

**God’s discipline has a training purpose - Our Fathers discipline**

* **In time produces fruit of righteousness – right living – holiness**

**(2 Pet 3:11-14, James 2:12-16, 1 Cor 6:9-10, Galatians 5)**

* **In time produces the fruit of peace – peace in your walk and life.**

**A deeper understanding of God’s goodness, faithfulness, and sovereignty = a peace that surpasses understanding.**

**Result of the Lord’s discipline is a harvest of peace and righteousness**

**Like a coach, the writer says in light of this correction - be encouraged.**

**Hebrew 12:12 Therefore, (since pain is not meaningless, and our difficulties are not random but for our good) strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 “Make level paths for your feet,” (Proverbs 4:26) so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. (Sounds strange…?)**

**“strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.”**

**Weak from fighting and running the race - Get strong again!**

**“Make level paths for your feet,”**

**Make straight ahead feet – lit. get back on track**

**(For a purpose) 13b so that the lame (spiritually injured, hurting, wounded, and stumbling) may not be disabled, (knocked out for good) but rather healed.**

**\*\*\* God’s Discipline is ultimately about helping others**

**The writer is saying – suck it up - take the correction, allow it to make you strong, get back on track- because there are people who need you.**

**Strengthen your feeble arms – get back on track – your kids need you! Your family needs you – your friends need you!**

**Notice there is no comparison to Jesus in the passage – that’s because he was never disciplined or corrected – he is the perfect flesh of God.**

**I want to talk a moment to the hurting…**

**What if you are the spiritually lame / injured?**

* **First – realize it’s okay to not be okay**

**Psalm 51:17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.**

**We don’t need to pretend everything is always okay.**

**When you’re struggling, how can anyone encourage you, if you pretend you’re fine.**

* **Second – Jesus invites you to come to him**

**Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (There is yoke – but the Lord enables you to bear it)**

**Thru Jesus you can come to God - He welcomes and invites you to come to Him. We do this through humble pray. Recognizing our need for grace and forgiveness.**

**Psalm 138:3 - On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased. (You strengthened me – when I prayed)**

* **Third - Remember the promises of the Lord**

**Writer started today by saying - Heb 12:5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son?**

**The Lord gives strength to the weak – peace the to stressed- healing for the hurting soul. He is working in us our good and his glory…**

**This is for someone today who is feeling spiritually weak and lame**

**Isiah 40:29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.**

**I want to pray for – those who need to stand us and be strong**

**Strengthen your feeble arms and legs and get back on track!**

**I want to pray for – those feeling too weak and discouraged to move**