

Embracing the Lord's chastening

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Notes prepared in fellowship with Victor Hall for the communion ministry, 24 January 2021

Introduction

- As we considered last week, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rebuke and chasten us in specific ways and with particular purposes in view. Deu 8:5. It is important that we embrace the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when They bring Their correction to our lives. We recall the chastening of the Father teaches us *sonship*. The chastening of the Son teaches us *discipleship*, and the chastening of the Holy Spirit teaches us to *walk according to the Spirit*. We are coming to understand, more clearly, how chastening is an integral part of the life of a new creation son of God. Specifically, we will consider further how we *learn* from the chastening of the Lord toward us.

The need to be spiritually minded

- We need to be *spiritually minded* in order for the chastening of the Lord to become effective in our lives. Why is this so? Those who are spiritually minded will appraise the fellowship of Christ's offering as the only context for their participation as sons of God. The apostle Paul taught that to be spiritually minded is 'life and peace', whereas to be carnally minded is death. Rom 8:6. Paul also taught that unless we are spiritually minded, the Lord's initiative to chasten us will appear foolish to us. Paul wrote, 'natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him'. 1Co 2:14.
- In this present season, the whole world is suffering under the judgement of God. For those who are spiritually minded and joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering, these sufferings are commuted to a chastening for their benefit. 1Co 11:32. However, for every person who is not born of God, these sufferings are not bringing forth any spiritual benefit whatsoever; they are simply a foretaste of eternal death.

What does it mean to be 'spiritually minded'?

1. In order to be spiritually minded, we must be *motivated by the love of God*. The love of God is the divine nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The love of God, as a motivation, enables us to live and walk as spiritual sons of God. We note, for example, that a sincere love of the brethren is evidence that we have been born of God. 1Pe 1:22-23.
2. Also, in order to be spiritually minded, we must have *the mind of Christ*. 1Co 2:16. The apostle Paul wrote, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who ... humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross'. Php 2:5-8. Christ laid His life down in obedience to the command of the Father. For us to have the mind, or mindset, of Christ is to offer ourselves in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Paul explained that priesting our own lives as a living sacrifice in this way is 'our *spiritual* sacrifice of worship'. Rom 12:1.

How do we become spiritually minded?

3. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit within our lives that *makes us spiritual*. Paul explained that illumination is only possible through the Holy Spirit. He

wrote, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God'. 1Co 2:12. Furthermore, our participation in the New Covenant is only possible through submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Let us consider further how the Holy Spirit makes us spiritual.

4. Specifically, the Holy Spirit pours the *love of God the Father* and the *affection of Jesus Christ* into our hearts. Rom 5:5. The love of the Father and the affection of Jesus Christ become our motivation as new creation sons of God.

What is the outcome of being spiritually minded?

5. The *love of God the Father* enables us to give ourselves to the fellowship of the Father's offering. The apostle John testified of the love of the Father when he wrote, 'In this the love of God [the Father] was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him'. 1Jn 4:9. When the love of God the Father is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are motivated to join Christ - for Christ is the Father's offering. 1Co 1:9.
6. The *affection of Jesus Christ*, also given to us by the Holy Spirit, enables us to lay our lives down in offering. Php 1:8. As we discussed in point number two, this is what it means to have the mind of Christ. In the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, we abound in knowledge and all discernment. Php 1:9. Paul taught that he who is 'spiritual' judges, or appraises, all things. 1Co 2:15. Having the mind of Christ, we are able to discern and approve that which is excellent - that is, the offering of Christ is 'the more excellent way'. The excellencies (or virtues) of Christ are learned in, and from, the fellowship of offering. This is what it means to be filled with the 'fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ'. Php 1:11. The result is that we are sincere and blameless before God, because as He is, so are we in this world. Php 1:10. 1Jn 4:17.

Learning through offering

- The apostle Paul gave the above framework in his letter to the church of Philippi, in order to explain how we become a spiritual new creation. He wrote, 'For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God'. Php 1:8-11.
- Sons of God who are joined to Christ's offering are a new creation. 2Co 5:17. As new creation sons of God, we learn through the fellowship of offering because the love of the Father and the affection of Jesus is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This is the key point: *We learn through offering!* This is how the chastening of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is made effective in our lives.
- New creation sons of God are not learning through the mistakes of the old creation. That is, our maturity as sons of God is not the result of learning from our mistakes, or from life-experiences, or from pain which causes a change of motivation. All of these ways of learning make a distinction, in the natural world, between those who are 'wise' or 'foolish' according to the principles of the world. However, as sons of God, we can only mature through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

Peter's denial of Christ

- Peter the 'zealot' learned the value of faith during the second and third chastening events that Christ endured on His offering journey to Calvary. At the last supper, Jesus explained to Peter that He had prayed for him, so that in the midst of the coming events, Peter's faith would not fail but would rather be strengthened through grace. Luk 22:32. 1Pe 5:10. As a result, Peter's faith and relationship with Christ would be recovered from his own denial of Christ.
- Peter's denial of Christ in the court of Caiaphas' house resulted from a number of factors, including: his underlying misunderstanding of the prophetic Scriptures that relate to Christ; his cultural heritage as a Jew; his struggle with the prejudice of the religious and secular leaders of his nation; and the spiritual fear and terror being generated by Satan during this season of spiritual conflict and warfare that Jesus called, '[their] hour and the power of darkness'. Luk 22:53. Eph 6:12.
- In this season of spiritual warfare, Christ was the conquering Saviour. He was taking away Satan's dominion and power. Joh 12:31. Heb 2:14-15. Also, He was taking captive the entire human race, who had been in bondage to Satan's dominion. Eph 4:8.
- In the court of Caiaphas' house, Christ was abused by the Jewish leaders. It was during this abuse that Peter's faith was beginning to fail. He recoiled and drew back from fellowship with Christ because of the pressure that was being exerted upon him as a follower of Christ. He began to curse and swear, denying that he knew Christ. This happened on three separate occasions when Peter was confronted about his relationship with Christ.

The recovery of faith

- Peter was in the midst of a fiery trial. This was a trial of faith. 1Pe 1:6-7. Christ joined Peter's failure to His offering by looking at Peter. Christ's eyes were as a flame of fire. Rev 1:14. Christ's gaze turned this fiery trial into a precious event in Peter's life. It became a season of purifying for Peter. His faith was being purified and was becoming more precious than gold. The fiery gaze of Christ made this offering event a crucible in which the dross of Peter's other law, which was the source of all his carnality, was being purged from his life.
- The gaze of Christ also imparted understanding to Peter's spirit, renewing his faith, and reconnecting him relationally to Christ. Peter's weeping was a response of faith, sowing to his future as an apostle of Christ. We note this same principle was expressed by the Psalmist when he wrote, 'Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.' Psa 126:5. Peter had the fruit of eternal life established in his life because of this event.

Conclusion

- Let's consider how we walk through the trial of faith. Through His Melchizedek priesthood, Jesus was fully acquainted with the experiences of our humanity and has joined all our failures, sin, trouble and pain to His offering on the cross. Heb 4:15. By the capacity of Eternal Spirit, Jesus suffered all these elements that belong to 'our death' and reconciled all of humanity to His one offering.
- Since Christ has already suffered the experiences of our humanity, they are no longer the reference point for what we are learning. Rather, His offering is our reference point. The Holy Spirit gives us the capacity of Eternal Spirit which strengthens and

enables us to join Christ's offering. As we participate by Eternal Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering, His chastening is made effective in our lives. He brings us back from the death of our sin by the resurrection life that was multiplied to us through the shedding of His blood.

- The various sufferings and seasons of spiritual warfare we encounter are trials of faith in our lives. Through His word, Jesus engages us with eyes as a flame of fire, so that we are illuminated by His love. The hope of our sonship does not disappoint because the love of the Father and the affection of Jesus are poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This love compels us to appraise the pathway of Christ's offering as 'the more excellent way', and to appraise all the matters of our life as already being joined to His offering.
- Through our participation in Christ's offering, the chastening of the Lord aligns us to the sanctification of our name, works and ministry as sons and priests. Peace is the result. As Paul wrote, 'Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 1Th 5:23.