

THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE BRINGS BLESSINGS

I. Unbelievers also experience God's grace and blessing in this life;

II. Believers experience God's grace and blessing for eternity.

Job 5:17-27

Grace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Amen.

TEXT: *Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth. For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth. You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season. We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself.*

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen. Ps 19:14
Lord, sanctify us by your truth; Your Word is truth! Amen.

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

The historical account of Job's sufferings is well-known. That Satan would challenge God's grace and that Job was caught in between Satan's challenge and God's power and wisdom challenges our ability to make sense out of these amazing revelations. Some will write the story of Job off as non-historical and just an ancient allegory. Those who believe the Bible to be God's inspired Word carefully accept this amazing revelation of what goes on, as they say, "behind the scenes" of life in this world, and find great comfort, even joy, in knowing that our Lord and Savior brings great blessings to all who are disciplined by His gracious will.

Was it God's will that Job should lose all his children and grandchildren in a devastating storm, lose his entire business and his servants at the hands of terrorist attack, all in one day? Was it God's will that Satan would touch Job's body with disease and painful boils? Was it God's will that Satan should strike Job with some of life's most painful experiences? No. But it was God's will that He would defeat Satan and demonstrate His amazing grace and power through this great Christian Job. I maintain that one of the greatest honors that anyone might experience in this life is to be used as God's instrument in bringing glory to His saving name. What Satan hoped would discredit God ended up setting before the eyes of the world one of God's great believers!

What Satan hoped to discredit is the truth that THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE BRINGS BLESSINGS. I. Unbelievers also experience God's grace and blessings in this life. But, II. Believers experience God's grace and blessing for eternity.

I. Today's Scripture text quotes the words of one of Job's friends named Eliphaz who has come to console Job after the horrific losses that suddenly and inexplicably had befallen him. I will tell you right off the bat that Eliphaz is a

religious intellectual who gives no evidence that he knows the Promise of the Savior Redeemer. I will mention later why I say that. But for now, do not be deceived by those who are able to speak pious words that are true about God. Eliphaz begins: ***Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*** What do you think? Are these words Scriptural? They sound true. In fact, they are true!

Then Eliphaz proceeds to give examples, perhaps from his own experience or from that of others: ***For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. ... You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth. ... You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth.*** Then Eliphaz offers the bases for his counsel: ***We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself.*** So what has befallen Job who has lost his family and all his property? Could these ever be restored?

We do not have time to read all that Eliphaz says, but if you would read him carefully, you will see that he applies these truths to Job with the intent of saying that Job must have done something to deserve this punishment. He urges Job to repent. He says: ***Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*** You will be happy and blessed if you repent. But note carefully that there is not one word of comfort to this suffering Job. In fact, it is Job himself who suddenly explodes with a confession of the faith that Satan was hoping to destroy. Suddenly, Job cries out: ***Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*** Job 19 With all that comes out of the mouth of Elphaz there is not one mention of the Redeemer. Job is a Christian, and it's obvious that Eliphaz is not.

Unbelievers are able to speak divine truths. They also enjoy the blessings of our gracious God and Lord. The Bible says this: ***The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.*** Ps 145 But without knowledge of the Savior, they will NOT stand in the end, but will be eternally damned, that is, cut off from God's grace and mercy forever.

But those who, like Job, know Jesus, they will enjoy the Lord's grace and every blessing forever, in heaven. For the greatest blessing is what Satan was trying to steal from Job: his faith in God's Savior.

II. All the blessings of God on this earth and in this life cannot surpass what is ours through Jesus who lives and who will someday soon stand on the Last Day to take all who believe with Job to heaven. For as Job declares: ***And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*** How Job's heart yearned while trusting in his Redeemer through all his bitter sufferings and pain!

But in the meantime, Job believed what David later wrote in the Psalms, that our Savior God ... ***does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we***

are dust. Ps 103 The blessed happiness of the man whom God corrects and disciplines is NOT in the painful discipline, but in the fact that the Almighty God is our Father who is at work, personally, in our life to guard and keep us close to His Word and Sacrament, and to our Savior.

Eliphaz could spout his pietism to poor Job and think that he is helping Job when he is not. It is Job who believes that God is not treating him as his sins deserve. If Eliphaz knew the Lord he would assure Job of God's grace and say something like what the Apostle writes in Hebrews 12: ***For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 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 our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 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.*** He 12 Like a coach, a teacher or trainer, the ultimate purpose for all that the student is forced to do is to become stronger, faster, better and successful. That's true in all worldly situations, and our Heavenly Father reveals that He is going to strengthen the faith of His redeemed children for the best spiritual outcome of all: ***that we may share in his holiness...*** and that we may produce ***a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained ...*** As I said earlier, no greater honor can be given a child of God than to be used to the glory of God's saving name. God uses Job even to shut down Satan's arrogance!

Few of us will probably ever be so honored as Job who was used by the Lord to bring glory to His name through his sufferings, but ALL of us are sons and daughters of the Lord through Jesus. We should expect the Lord's special and personalized disciple that works the same results for us who are so disciplined. He strengthens our faith in His Word. Eliphaz told Job: ***We have examined this, and it is true.*** You and I can declare: It is written in Scripture, in the Gospel that we preach and believe, in the promises of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, so we declare: This is MOST CERTAINLY TRUE!

The Lord's discipline brings blessings, spiritual blessings in the midst of our lives in this sinful world, and the eternal blessings of faith, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation! Amen