

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 22, 2020

The lord be with you.

I read one time that the Houston, Texas police department did a survey of juvenile delinquency, and from that survey, they came up with a booklet of commandments for how to raise a juvenile delinquent. I was curious about that, and I read the commandments and I was struck by the first commandment for how to raise a bonafide, genuine blown delinquent. Here it is, commandment number one. Begin in infancy, to give your child everything he or she wants. You know, I get that. 'Cause I've been a parent and for a time, I was a chaplain for the Department of Juvenile Corrections in our state, and I've seen that. No, you don't wanna give your child everything he or she wants. And I've seen parents have made that mistake. I don't know if they did not want to wanna upset their child, or they're afraid to say no, or what it was... And you know, there have been times for me as a child of God that I have been upset with God when He didn't give me something I wanted, something I thought would make my life better, something I was sure would make my ministry better. I pray about it and ask others to pray about it, and God didn't give it to me. Or perhaps you to like me, you have wrestled with God, you've argued with God when God said no to you and he didn't give you what you wanted.

Well, I wanna share with you a short passage of scripture that really helps me, it is a passage of scripture that helps me come to rest when things don't go my way, and when God does not give me what I want. I'm looking at the New Testament Book of Hebrews chapter 12, starting at verse 6. "The Lord disciplines those who he loves and chastises every child who he accepts. Endure trials for the sake of discipline, God is treating you as children, for what child is there who a parent does not discipline." Now, I skip down to verse 11. "Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Now, I read this passage and I just have to think back to that first commandment for raising a delinquent, and that is to give the child everything the child wants. The Book of Hebrews here begins by quoting the Old Testament Book of Proverbs, chapter 3 verse 12, where it says that The Lord disciplines those whom he loves. The discipline in fact is proof of God's love, it says that just like a father or mother love their children and disciplines them. So that is what God does for you and me. That God's discipline is proof of His love. It's proof that we are His children.

Now, when my boys were growing up and I disciplined them, but I didn't discipline the boys next door. It's what I did for my children, and God will discipline you because God has a purpose for your life, a big purpose to make you great, to make you Godly to make you more and more like Jesus. And that is, well, it's going to take some discipline. If you wanna be a good painter or a good ball player, a good musician, a good teacher, it's going to take discipline. It's not always gonna be easy. There will be times that it hurts, but it will be worth it. I think of my son Rett who last year, he ran a 100k, that's 62 miles, that's more miles and like to drive, but that took Rett discipline. Rett had to say no to some things that he wanted in order to reach his goal. The good news is that God loves you just as you are. God loves you just as you are, but the good news is that God also loves you too much to leave you just as you are. God is growing you, he's raising you, he's disciplining you for something big in this world, and something big in the world to come.

Water from Rock

I'm struck by Verse 11 of this text says, "Now discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time", and I say I hardly amen to that I agree with that, but later "later discipline yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it"... I've always thought it's interesting that the word disciple is related to the word discipline, and so if you are serious in wanting to be Jesus' disciple, if you sign on for that Jesus will discipline you... He did it from Peter, he did it for James, he did it for John. And he'll do it for you.

I'd like to come back to the bottom line when God doesn't give me something that I want, something that I'm sure that I need. The bottom line is that God loves me way too much to do that to me, and God loves you too much to give you a life without some trouble, without some heartache, without some disappointment. And he worked things like that in the lives of David, Moses, Paul, and he's doing it for you. Some time ago, I was in a store and over the next aisle I hear all this commotion screaming, and I go over to check it out, and you know what, it's a child screaming at her mother screaming, if you love me, you'd buy this for me. Well, I didn't stay around to see what happened, but I sure hope that Mom said No.

I wanna wind up by reading this Hebrews passage from The Message translation, "my dear child, don't shrug off God's discipline and don't be crushed by either... It's the child, he loves, that he disciplines. The child he embraces, he also corrects. God is educating you. That's why you must never drop out, he's treating you as dear children."

Well, I needed that today, and I hope it's a help to you.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening until next time.

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