

The Lord's Chastening

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's chastening as a necessary process for spiritual growth and transformation in believers' lives.

Duration: 1:03:00

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11, Jeremiah 48:11, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:6

Topics: "Chastening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of submitting to God's will and recognizing Him as our heavenly Father. He uses the analogy of someone being beaten or scolded by a stranger versus their own father to illustrate the difference in reaction. The speaker explains that in our Christian life, God is the one orchestrating and ordering all the events and circumstances around us. These events and circumstances are like vessels that God uses to purify and transform us. The speaker also mentions the prophet Jeremiah and how God used a metaphor to reveal the answer to his question about why God's people suffered while the nations who didn't know God prospered. Overall, the sermon encourages believers to trust in God's plan and submit to His refining process.

Transcript

This morning, O our Father, as we think of what we were in ourselves before we trust in Thy Son, we were but rebels, sinners, far, far away from Thee, and yet through Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast drawn us to Thee. We are so near to Thee that it cannot be nearer, because we are accepted in Thy beloved Son. O how we praise and thank Thee that today we are children of God.

We are partakers of Thy divine nature. O our Father, our hearts do bow very low before Thee in worship and in praise. Father, we ask Thee that this morning Thou will open our eyes once again to have a deeper insight into Thy way, into Thyself, that we may learn how to love Thee and follow Thee, that we may be delivered from misunderstanding, from murmuring against Thee, O that we may know Thy way.

We do commit this hour into Thy hands. We trust Thee for Thy Spirit's working, without which nothing can be done. O Lord, we ask Thee that Thou will give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Thou will open the eyes of our understanding, that we may know Him as we have never known before. We ask in Thy precious name. I would like to draw your attention to a verse which is often overlooked.

I do not know if you have ever read such a verse in the Bible. It is not a difficult place to find, but it is in the Old Testament. Will you please turn to Jeremiah chapter 48.

Jeremiah chapter 48. Jeremiah 48 verse 11. Jeremiah 48 verse 11.

Have you ever read this verse before? Let us repeat it. Jeremiah 48 verse 11. God often encloses His deepest truth in the simplest metaphor.

And here you find one of them. Before we go into this verse, I think we need to know a little bit about the background. We know that the prophet Jeremiah was called of God when he was very young.

He prophesied to the nation of Judah during the time of the end, closing of that nation. He had been very faithful in prophesying, in delivering the messages of God to his own people again, again and again. And we know that he was one of those who went into Egypt after the captivity of the nation to Babylon.

But towards the end of his prophecies, we find that he turned from the nation of Judah and Israel to the nations that surrounded Judah and Israel. It is as if he looked around and tried to see what about these nations that surrounded the nation of Judah. You know he was puzzled by one thing.

Being a prophet to Judah, to the people of God, he had to deliver very strong messages to them. He told them, he forewarned them, that if they did not repent, they would enter into captivity. And his prophecies came true.

The nation entered into captivity. And what was left went into Egypt. And we know that they perished there.

So after prophesying to the nation of Judah for such a long period, and after seeing what had happened to God's people, when he turned around to look at the surrounding nations, he was deeply troubled. Why was it that God's people suffered so much, while these nations, which did not respect God, seemed to have a peaceful time? He couldn't understand. So you find that in his prophecy concerning the surrounding nations, one of them being Moab, he was actually agonizing before God.

He had a problem he could not solve. He was faced with a fact which he did not understand. The fact was very simple.

God's people suffered greatly, while those nations that did not know God seemed to have a prosperous time. What was the explanation? How could you explain such a phenomenon? The Spirit of God inspired the prophet. God gave him a metaphor, a figure of speech.

And in that parable, God revealed to the prophet Jeremiah the answer, the answer to his question, the solution to his problem. And this parable was found in chapter 48, verse 48. We know that Moab came from Lot.

Israel came from Abraham, the friend of God. But Moab came from Lot. And Moab was born as a result of sin.

The very word Moab means from his father. In other words, Moab was just a reproduction of his ancestor. Moab as a nation lived at the east of Israel, on the other side of Judah.

Yet when Israel and Judah were in deep waters, Moab, the neighboring nation, a nation that did not respect God, a nation which was born out of sin, seemed to have a good time. And even when Judah and Israel were in trouble, they were standing by and joking, mocking and laughing. And probably they were putting their part of persecution.

They seemed to get by all right, while God's people was in trouble. So here you'll find the prophet said, Moab had been at ease from his youth. The ease of Moab is probable.

He did not enjoy ease just for a short period. The Bible said he enjoyed ease from his youth. Even when he was young, he had a good time.

And he continued to have good time for a long period. Moab had been at ease from his youth. Now dear brothers and sisters, is it not something that we look for? How we long that we may live a life at ease.

How we hope that even from our very young days, we will have a comfortable and easy life. And you know, some people have easy life when they are young, but have very difficult time when they are old. Now I do not know.

Some people said it is better to have a hard time when you are young, and have an easier time when you are old. I think there is psychological reason for it. But what we hope for is that from our very childhood, from our very youth, until the day of our old age, oh if only we may have a good time at ease and comfort.

This will certainly be the blessing many of God's people today. Still have that missing. Many of God's people today are still thinking that if they believe in the Lord Jesus, surely they will be blessed of the Lord.

And being blessed of the Lord means that they can live at ease and comfort. To many of God's people, God's blessing is still something physical and material. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, and you have a smooth time and prosperous day, everybody will say, well, you are blessed of the Lord.

But suppose you believe in the Lord Jesus, and you have very difficult days. You do not seem to have smooth sailing. You have problem after problem, trouble after trouble.

Even if other people are not saved, probably you will say to yourself, God must have cursed me. Otherwise, how can such things happen? You know, in our mentality, we always think to be at ease is blessed of the Lord. To have trouble certainly is not blessed.

Humanly speaking, that is correct. Moab has been at ease from his youth. Do you think this is a good sign of life? It seems to be.

Even the prophet Jeremiah was troubled, but God began to explain. Moab has been at ease from his youth, and has settled on his knees. God used the metaphor of wine making.

Making wine. You know, in the land of Palestine, in the old days, wine and grain are the two main things of life. Suppose you have grapes.

You gather grapes from the vine, and you put all these grapes in the wine press. Now in the old times, in the old days, the wine press probably is made of stone, or maybe just dig a hole in the earth. But here you will find all these grapes in piles being gathered, and they are thrown into that vat.

And people will step into the vat, and tread these grapes with their feet. Now that is the old-fashioned way. They treaded, they treaded the grapes until the grapes were crushed.

And the juice, the fluid, began to flow. And those juice will flow into a lower vat. Maybe deeper, but lower vat.

And all these juice will be collected in the lower vat. After they were collected, sometimes they will be left in the vat to be fermented. Sometimes they will draw off the juice, and put into jars, and let it be fermented.

But anyway, you will find that after you gather the juice, that the fermentation began. And in that kind of climate in Palestine, usually fermentation began on the very day. If you crush the grapes in the morning, fermentation will start in the evening.

In the very beginning you will just see a little form on the surface of the juice. But then gradually you will find the fermentation began vigorous and stronger. And in about a week, the first fermentation was done.

You had to put these juice in the vat, or a jar, strong vessel. Why? Because if you put these juice that were in the process of fermentation, in a weaker vessel, it will burst once in. But after about a week of fermentation, usually they will pull the juice, the fermented juice, into another jar, another vessel.

So that the heavier stuff, called the leaves or the dregs, will be remained behind. And that in the second jar, in the second vat, the secondary fermentation will begin. Another fermentation.

And after 40 days, the wine, you got the wine. And usually, again, they will pour the wine into wine skin for transportation, or into jars for storage. So here you find the panel.

Moab has been at ease from his youth, and has settled on his lease. Now what does that mean? It means that after Moab was crushed in the vat, instead of pouring it into another jar for fermentation, it was just left in the vat to be fermented. Secondly, after it had fermented, instead of emptying it into another jar for straining, it was still left in the vat.

So the first fermentation, the second fermentation, went on in the same vat. The dregs, the leaves, were never taken out. They were left at the bottom of the vat.

At the top you got the pure juice, the wine. In the bottom, there was the dregs. There was the leaves.

And it was just left there. It was never poured from vessel to vessel. It was just left in the original vat.

And you know what will be the result? The result is, because the dreg was still there, therefore it will gradually decay the wine, spoil the wine. And in the land of Palestine, it is very easy that the wine will gradually be decayed, and become vinegar instead of wine. Now that was the story.

Moab has been at ease from his youth. From his very beginning, Moab just stayed there. Moab had a good time.

He was in his original position. He just settled down on his knees. When you look at him, he looked like wine.

But at the bottom was the dregs. And the dreg and the wine were together, and continually a deterioration, degeneration, a decaying, a spoiling going on, fermentation going on. The result was, his taste had

remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

He remained as he was. His taste remained. His scent was not changed.

He was more vinegar than wine. Now dear brothers and sisters, does that explain something of God's way? Is it not as children of God? We are often puzzled by one question. Why is it that those who are non-believers, those people in the world seem to have a good time.

It seems as if God is prospering them. While we, the children of God, often seem to be passing through problems, difficulties. Why cannot God give us days of ease and comfort? Is it not our problem? May I put it in another way.

Do you think that we as believers can afford to have the luxury of ease? Do you think that God will allow us to be at ease all the time? Do you want to be Moab? Or do you want to be Israel? If you are Moab, God will not bother with you. God does not have time for you. He will allow you to settle on your lease.

He does not care whether you become vinegar or wine. But if you are Israel, He cares too much for you. He cannot allow you to settle on your lease.

He has to empty you from vessel to vessel. He has to change your taste and your scent. He has to do the work of transformation.

And the work of transformation is by emptying, is by pouring from vessel to vessel. Would you rather choose to live a life of ease? Do you know the words? You are left alone by God. Oh, very often, you know.

In our desperation, in our misunderstanding. Oh, how often we murmured against God and said, now leave me alone. Don't bother with me so much.

Can't you just leave me alone? If God should answer your prayer, woo to you. Because you will be Moab instead of Israel. Dear brothers and sisters, there is something in the Bible which is called the chastening of the Lord.

This chastening of the Lord is a mystery. And yet it is a necessity. Sometimes we think that to be at ease is a necessity.

But God says it is a luxury. And you cannot afford to have it. If you do, you will settle down on your lease.

That's the problem. While the chastening of the Lord is a necessity, since you have believed in the Lord Jesus, have you ever experienced this chastening of the Lord in the way of being poured from vessel to vessel? You know, when the wine is poured from vessel to vessel, it purifies. It is purified from its debt.

Yes, it is reduced. Yet it is pure. It becomes good wine.

Wine that can satisfy thirsty and hungry souls. Do you know why? After you have believed in the Lord Jesus, you have to be dealt with. Do you know why God does not leave you alone? God does not allow you to settle down on yourself? Your natural life, your natural energy, your natural temperament, what is yourself, must be poured and poured until it is purified? Do you understand why God does all these things? Do you know that He is aiming at good wine? Oh, if only you know that.

What a difference! If he should believe in the Lord Jesus, say, for ten years, or twenty years, and yet the Lord does not seem to deal with him once. Oh, that is impossible. If he is a child of God, certainly the Heavenly Father will look to it that he will receive his part of chastening.

If you are not chastened, you are a bastard. You are not a son. If you are a son, the Father surely would take care of you.

But dear brothers and sisters, suppose here is a Christian who has been a Christian for ten or twenty years, and it seems as if never once he was poor. Never once he was chastened. Is it possible? Has the Father forgotten him? Not at all.

The Father has not forgotten him. But when the chastening of the Lord comes to him, he either rebels or he flees. So you remember these precious verses in the book of Hebrews, chapter twelve.

Probably we'll look at it. Hebrews, chapter twelve. We'll read from verse five.

Hebrews, chapter twelve, verse five. And ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons. My son despised not the chastening of the Lord, nor fainted when reprov'd by him.

For whom the Lord loves he chastened, and scourges every son whom he receives. Ye endure for chastening? God conducts himself towards you as to a son. For who is the son that the Father chastens not? But if ye are without chastening, of which all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

Moreover we have had the fathers of all flesh as chasteners, and we reverence them. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirit and live? For they indeed chasten for a few days, as seemed good to them, but he for profit, in order to the partaking of his holiness. But no chastening at the time seems to be matter of joy, but of grief, but afterwards yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised.

When the chastening of the Lord comes to us, very often we take a wrong attitude. Sometimes we despise the chastening of the Lord. What do you mean by despising the chastening of the Lord? It means that you look down upon it.

You consider it just as an accident. It's incidental. It doesn't have any meaning in it.

It just happens. You neglect it. You just let it come and go.

You do not go to the Lord and ask the Lord for your lesson. This is despising chastening. Now, very often, even in earthly families, you find sometimes the parents are chastening the children, and you know some children just despise the chastening.

You'll beat me. I don't care. It doesn't matter.

Now, when a child should take such an attitude, the whole meaning of chastening is lost. You despise the chastening. You will never learn the lesson.

Dear brothers and sisters, very often when God begins to chasten us, He does. He always does. He will not give you the luxury of ease.

But when He starts to chasten you, you just despise it. You know, by despising the chastening of God, you despise God. You do not take Him seriously.

And in so doing, the chastening is lost. You may be a Christian for ten or twenty years, and it seems as if there has never been any chastening. Not because there hasn't been any, but because you have despised it.

Now, that's one attitude. And some people adopt the opposite attitude. They take it too hard.

When God begins to chasten you, you faint under the chastening. Oh, you will cry out, God, God, why are you so hard and harsh? Do you really love me? You want to put me to death. You just faint under His chastening.

Well, if you do, God cannot chasten you the second time, because you may die. Dear brothers and sisters, these are the only two ways to escape the chastening of the Lord, so far as God's children are concerned. If you are not God's children, God will not bother about you.

Moab has been at ease from his youth. God let him settle down on his knees. But if you are a child of God, He has to take you in His hands.

He has to chasten you. He has to discipline you. He has to train you.

But if you want to escape His chastening, there are two ways. One is, despise it. Yes.

If you despise the chastening of the Lord, you escape it, because it becomes meaningless. Or you just faint. Every time you faint.

That will ease you from the chastening. If you know, if you know God and His way. Dear brothers and sisters, can you despise the chastening of the Lord? Sure you faint under His chastening.

Moab has been at ease from his youth. He has settled on his knees. He has not been emptied from vessel to vessel.

You know, dear brothers and sisters, as believers, as children of God, our life is a continuous emptying, is a continuous pouring. God will never allow us to settle down on our knees. There are times God allows you to settle, but not true.

After you have settled down, and the drags are separated, God says, now is the time to be straight. You are just being poured from vessel to vessel. But you know our difficulty.

When God begins to pour us from vessel to vessel, we begin to quarrel with these vessels. Oh, how we quarrel with our environment. How we quarrel with people.

How we quarrel with events. How we quarrel with things. Now remember, all these are but vessels.

They are nothing in themselves. God arranges everything. God arranges your environment.

God provides for you, the people. God orders the event. Everything that comes to you and around you are just vessels.

They are just God's instruments. They are nothing in themselves. God is using these to purify you.

But you know, when we are being poured from one vessel to another, we quarrel with these vessels. We become very unhappy with our environment. We fight against our circumstances.

Oh, we begin to strive with people. Oh, why do you treat me like this? Why is it that you have such a bad attitude towards me? Why do you say such a thing to me? Why, why, why? And in quarreling with these vessels, we miss the whole point. It is not the vessel.

It is the father. The vessel has nothing to do with it. I remember how Brother Nee once used an illustration.

If somebody comes to you and beats you, what will be your reaction? Suppose a stranger comes, without any reason, out of the blue sky. He will come to you and start to beat you, or even scold you. What will be your reaction? Your reaction naturally will be, you will fight back.

You feel the whole thing is so unreasonable. You just cannot take it. That person that comes to scold you and to beat you is your father.

Can you fight back and scold back? If you are a child of God, if you are a child of the father, you cannot do that. This is my father. He is chasing me.

You cannot just treat him as a stranger. The only thing you can do is to submit. Submit to him.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you see that in our Christian life, it is the Heavenly Father who is ordering all our vessels? It is the Heavenly Father who is pulling us from one vessel to another. You know, it is very strange. God does not allow you to stay in one environment all your life.

God will change your environment from time to time. God does not even allow you to have the same people all the time. God will change the people around you from time to time.

God will not allow you to meet with the same events all the time. Events change everything from one vessel to another. When one vessel has done its work, God will pour you into another vessel.

Now, if that vessel hasn't done its work, probably you will have to stay there longer. Until it has done its job, and then God will pour you into another vessel. It is the Heavenly Father who is pouring and emptying you from vessel to vessel.

If this is the case, can you quarrel with the Father? There is nothing to quarrel about. All you can do is to submit yourself. Consider these vessels.

There is a great difference between chasing. You know, very often we think that God is punishing. When you meet with some unpleasant event, when you have gone through some sad experience, naturally you will think, now God is punishing.

God is punishing. You know, this concept of punishment is very strong in us. Very strong.

We always think that God is punishing us. But the Bible does not say so. There is a great difference between punishing and chasing.

Punishing is just to punish your sin or your fault. In other words, it deals with the past and nothing more. But chasing deals with your past fault, with a bright future.

In other words, a chasing has a purpose. Has a positive purpose. A chasing has an educational value in it.

Punishment has no educational value in it. So far as the law of the land is concerned. You know, if a man commits a crime, you will punish him.

Put him in a jail. In prison. Punish him.

But people begin to realize that there is no educational value. Or if there is educational value, it is just to make him worse. To make him worse.

To make him worse. But chasing is different. Chasing has an educational value in it.

The very word chasing means child training. God is training you. Training you as a child.

To make you a son. A grown up. A mature person.

There is a positive value in chasing. And this is what God... Do you realize, dear brothers and sisters, that the Heavenly Father is chasing you? If you are not under the chasing of the Lord, you are in a most dangerous situation. Why? Because you may never become a son.

Grown up. You remain just children. God has given you up.

There is no more hope for you. But if today you are still under the chasing hand of your really Lord, God believes in you. God believes that there is something that He can still make out of you.

God believes that He can transform you into sons, into women. What should be our attitude? When we are being chasen? When we are poured from vessel to vessel? Our attitude is, do not resist or resist, but learn to submit and to humble yourself. When you pour the wine from vessel to vessel, what is in there? The result is transformation.

The original taste. The original scent. All that is there.

With the dress. And here comes a new one. A new one.

With a new flavor. Dear brothers and sisters, this is what God is doing with us today. He is pouring us from vessel to vessel.

He is chasing us. And in doing that, He purifies us from our original taste and scent. And transforms us into the Savior.

Have you ever met Him? Ten years ago. That man was your Savior. You met Him.

After ten years, you meet the same person. And what is the impression you give him? The impression is, He hasn't changed. His taste remains the same.

His scent is just the same. Or sometimes you hear people say, Bullshit! I haven't changed. I'm still what I was.

It's a good thing. Why, there are so many systems. As in many years.

They are natural things. They are natural things. The appearance may change, but the taste may change.

The outward form may change, but the scent may change. You know, these are two things that it's very difficult to cover. You may change the color.

You may change the appearance. But there is a taste. If people try to taste it, Feel that taste.

Or you smell it. Feel that scent. You know, especially scent is very intangible.

It's something intangible, and yet it's something that cannot be touched. You cannot be touched. Your natural mind, your natural energy, or if you are very clever, your cleverness remains.

If you are very stubborn, your stubbornness remains. If you are strong-minded, your strong-minded remains. What you were in yourself remain with you and become the impression you gave to people even after 30 years.

Oh, brothers and sisters, if this should happen, it shows that you have accepted you have not been saved from that place. It shows that you lack the discipline of the living. You lack the patience of the living.

You are still what you were. You taste just the same. You smell just the same.

How can all taste be? How can all scent be? In the process of emptying, the transformation takes place. So after you have been poured from vessel to vessel, the result is the taste is gone. This is what is made by the Bible.

We are being made partakers of the people. This is what is meant. Chastening brings us to holiness.

That is to say, we are set apart. It is God who is incorporated. Dear brothers and sisters, do you want to be made? If you know God's mind and God's will, you would rather be Israel than Moses.

You would rather be one who is being emptied from vessel to vessel because the earthen will apply these to us individually. And that is true. As individuals, it is God's way that we must be poured from vessel to vessel in order to be good wine, new wine.

But you know, in this very verse, it applies also constantly because more than here is not an individual. More than here is an individual. So brothers and sisters, not only individually, God has to change the life, bring us through vessel after vessel in order to make us new wine but coffee.

As a church, as a church, God has to do the changes. Do you realize that in the making of the church there is this continuous pouring from vessel to vessel? How often we long to have a peaceful church life. Oh, if we can just settle down, be contented, be happy with what God has already shown us.

If we would just go on happily like this, oh, how good it will be. For dear brothers and sisters, God cannot afford to give us such luxury. Do not think that to be at ease so far as the church is concerned is a good thing.

It is not. The luxury of ease is not ours. God has to bring the whole church into crisis after crisis.

God has to empty the church from vessel to vessel. God has to allow us to meet new people. God has to allow us to enter into new environments.

God has to allow new events to come. God has to allow us to enter into all these things. For what purpose? Because He is afraid that we will suffer.

If we get settled on our leave, the faith and the faith will be ours. The church must give the faith of Christ. The church must give the faith of Christ.

And the only way that this transformation may happen to a people of God is by pouring from vessel to vessel. Sometimes we just fight, and other times we do not. Often we fight.

We do not know how to submit ourselves under the mighty hand and let God every vessel, every pouring, it is to make the church the new one that can not only satisfy the thirsting soul, but, brothers and sisters, does that explain a little bit of what God has allowed His people to go through? Sometimes, you know, you admire. You admire peace. You admire that peaceful, restful church life.

God loves you too much to allow you to have such behavior again. Yes. If we are not poured from vessel to vessel, if we settle on our leave, what will be the result? Fermentation will continue beyond this limit.

And the result will become this. Have you drunk vinegar? Have you tasted vinegar? Have you smelled vinegar? It is not sweet. It is sour.

How many Christians today, how church, God's people, the reason they try to keep instead of allowing God to pour them. So may the Lord be with you. May this metaphor be a warning to you.

Moab has been at ease. And he has settled. He has not been poor.

He has not gone into captivity. Therefore, our Heavenly Father, we pray that Thou will show Thy way. We pray that we may be with us as individuals.

We pray that we may not admire to the extent that we will not allow You. We pray that we may humble ourselves. Oh, we ask Thee that Thou would take away from us our original sin and give to us.

Make us.

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