52 Days of Building a Second Wall with the Word and Wisdom

**Upright are Thy Judgments**

Day 46, June 28, 2013

Before we can finish our study of the Tabernacle and journey into the Most Holy Place, our hearts must be right before the Lord. God must be treated as holy, and any rebellion in us, no matter how small it seems to us, is a hindrance to us going into the Most Holy Place.

**Deuteronomy 32:51-52** “because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin**, because you did not treat Me as holy** in the midst of the sons of Israel. For you shall see the land at a distance, but **you shall not go there**, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel."

Moses did so many amazing things with God, yet his one act of rebellion kept Him from going into the Promised Land. God is holy, and when we do not treat Him as holy, we invite others to rebel against Him also. There will be judgments for all of our rebellion.

**Psalm 119:137 “**Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.”

**We are so excited when we come to the Lord.** We have been outside the tabernacle walls and now we belong to God’s family. This is great! We tell everyone we know about Jesus and about how great it is to be a Christian, even though we really don’t know what that entails. We sign up for every work that can be done in the church, in the Outer Courts, to show God how much we appreciate Him. **But we never move from the Outer Courtyard.** We are busy working for God, but not getting to know Him. Because of all these self-efforts to prove to God that He made the right choice to let us into His family, we get hurt and wounded and burned out from serving the people, all in the name of God. **Somewhere along the way we lose our zeal for the Lord.**

**We hear a message about coming closer to the Lord and we say, “NO thank you. This Christian life is hard enough as it is, I will stay right where I am.** I can placate my wounded heart and my exhausted soul with the pleasures of this world. God loves me and He will forgive all my sins, I live under His grace. And anyway, most Christians are in the same place I am, so what is the big deal?”

**We might not say this out loud, but our sinful lifestyles shout this attitude very loudly to the Lord.** We are to be a light, yet we partake in the deeds of darkness. We are to be holy, set apart from the world; yet we look just like the world. We are to come into the Most Holy Place, into the Presence of Almighty God to minister to Him; but we are content to stay in the Outer Court where we want others to minister to us.

**Zephaniah 3:1-2** “Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the tyrannical city! She heeded no voice, she accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD, she did not draw near to her God.”

**The Lord has been sending His prophets to the church**, inviting His people to come into His presence, to abide with Him, and to fellowship with Him; yet she has not listened to them. **The Lord has poured out His Holy Spirit** on the church as never before, all to bring her close. But instead the church has argued over who is greatest in the kingdom, who has the greatest gifts and callings; causing great disunity.

The time is getting short and the Lord, out of His love for all mankind, is bringing discipline to our lives, since we lack it. A few weeks ago we had a study entitled, **Discipline, not Desire, Determines our Destiny**. God has called us to a lifestyle of discipline, but we have not walked it out; so He is now going to send His discipline to us. **His judgment is coming to shake us to an awareness of His love for us and a desire to draw us close.** He is trying to get our attention.

**Hebrews 12: 5-11** “…‘**do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord**, **nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.’** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.** **All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”**

Because of the wounds of our childhood, we do not understand that God disciplines us because He loves us. His discipline is always just; it is always out of love. He is the perfect Father who disciplines His sons and daughters perfectly. When we are going through discipline, it doesn’t feel good. We feel sorrow for getting caught and for sinning. But we must understand **discipline is to bring us closer to the Lord**. He is a holy God and only those who are holy can approach Him to come in to His presence. Discipline is for our training and if we endure through the discipline, the fruit of righteousness will be produced.

You may say, I am declared holy by the blood of Christ, I can live my life any way I wish. No, we are declared not guilty of our sins, and a way is made to come close to God. But we have to walk out the path of holiness and righteousness to come into His presence. Just like with the tabernacle. All of God’s people were invited into the Outer Courts of the Tabernacle, but only the priests could enter into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place to be with God. We are to be priests unto the Lord. Jesus came to make it possible for the process of sanctification and purification to start.

Will we listen to the voice of God’s prophets today when they speak of His coming judgment? They are speaking to the church first. God is determined to bring us close to Him. **How gently God’s judgment falls upon us is dependent on us. At first it will be gentle, but if we ignore His discipline, it will get more intense.**

In our previous passage from Hebrews 12, we see three levels of God’s judgment for those He loves.

**The first level of judgment is reproof.** The Greek word for **reproved** is **elegcho**- to admonish, rebuke, or to tell of a fault. Rebukes are **verbal warnings about a poor choice we have made**. They are meant to spare us further pain and separation. They can come to us in several ways: a prick of conscience from the Holy Spirit; a timely word from another person; a scripture passage we read; or the words preached by our pastor. We must always have our ears open to hear His reproofs.

**Job 5:17** "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.”

**The second level of judgment is discipline or chastisement**. The Greek word of **discipline** used here is **paideuō**- to train up a child; to educate; to chasten**. Chasten means to correct by punishment; to inflict pain for the purpose of reclaiming an offender; to afflict by other means; to purify from errors or faults.**

Whenour hearts become hardened to our sins, chastening causes us to go through emotional anguish, anxiety, frustration, and distress. Pressures increase at home, work, health, finances… What used to bring us joy, no longer does. We fail to see this as judgment, so we blame others for what we are feeling. We feel unfulfilled at church, critical of Christian friends, and on the outs with God. Our relationship with God seems blighted by an emptiness we can’t trace. When we find ourselves feeling this way, we need to look for ongoing unforgiveness and sin in our lives.

**Jeremiah 31:18** “…You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for You are the LORD my God.”

**The third level of judgment is scourging** - to physically whip, to inflict punishment, to cause excruciating pain. When we live in open sin with a flagrant disregard for what we know is right, and when we have not heeded God’s previous attempts to rescue us from our rebellion; He must resort to intense pain to bring us back to our senses. God takes long-term sin very seriously. He must get our attention. God doesn’t allow His children to sin successfully.

**2 Samuel 7:14** "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,”

When we see that we are going through times of judgment from the Lord, we must understand they are from the Lord. We only have ourselves to blame. We must get back our zeal for the Lord and repent. Remember, He is doing this out of His love for us, so we can come closer to him. We must endure the judgment until it is over. He has much to teach us all the way through. We must allow His judgment to result in a positive change in our lives. We are cautioned in Hebrews 12 to not let bitterness spring up, because it will only cause us more trouble.

**Revelation 3:19** “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

We must repent and turn wholeheartedly back to the Lord. Repentance is a lifestyle, not a one-time act. Every time a priest would go into the holy Place, he would wash in the brass laver, every time. There is not a limit as to how many times we repent in our lives, just that we do repent! When we repent and turn from our sins, He purifies us so we can draw near to Him.

**Titus 2:11-14** “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

Christ died to redeem us from our sins, **will we let Him purify us for Himself, so we can come close to Him?**

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

Please spend time with the Lord asking Him to shine the light of His love into your heart to expose the areas of rebellion that are keeping you from coming into His presence.

Please read and then pray **Psalm 119:129-152** to the Lord today, as an act of repentance.

Remember our memory verse: **Psalm 119:130 “The unfolding of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”**