

The Bride: The Father's Love - Jason May - Friday Night Gathering 1-23-26 Elaborating on Letter #1 - Is the bride of Christ ready for His return? Written 10-8-25.

The bride of Christ must know that the Father loves her. She must walk in the truth of it. But we often do not believe God when He says that He loves us. We do not believe that the Father would give us all that He is and all His love. What has the bride of Christ received from the Father?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
Ephesians 1:3

The Father gives us all things: every spiritual blessing in Heaven and all of Himself. Do we believe it? Do we walk in His love? Jesus, in His final moments before going to the cross and at the end of His time in the upper room with the disciples, prays to the Father to give us the fullness of God the Father and of His Son whom He sent.

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

John 17:20-23

From this prayer, we, the bride, know that we have the glory of God, which gives us all of the unity and love that the Father has shared with the Son. Every spiritual blessing. The Father loves us as He loves the Son and holds nothing back. Do you believe that's true? Do you believe God? Can you walk in this love?

My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD
Or loathe His reproof,
For whom the LORD loves He reproves,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.
Proverbs 3:11-12

From the Father's love comes the fruit of correction and how God leads us, teaches us, and trains us as a loving father deals with his children in whom he delights. This is why we've talked this month about the bride and obedience, authority, and faith. The Father's love pursues us passionately in these things. It's the full picture of who God is. But we often do not believe God. We often want God's love, but not correction and discipline. We often don't believe that God delights in us, especially during times of correction, trials, or training. God is delighted in you because you are His.

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,
"My son, 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.
Hebrews 12:4-11

God's love and God's holiness are one and the same. He gives us all of it. We cannot take one without the other. In holiness, there is correction. God requires of us. But we often don't like that. In times of struggle and trials, we try so hard to manage our circumstances and pain with the philosophies of the world, or just deal with emotions, when we need to do things God's way. We need to surrender. God is using *all* of those times to deal with our hearts.

God dealt with Jonah in the belly of a fish as he ran from God's call. Even then, you could question whether he received God's discipline, but he did obey God's call. God dealt with Joseph, being sold into slavery and put in prison, not because of any apparent sin, but because God was preparing and training the man for a kingdom purpose. God wants heart change. God "deals with you as with sons" (from Hebrews 12:7). This happens through God's training, correction, and discipline. Look to the Father and submit to Him. Ask Him what He wants to change in your heart. God will require of us, and it will bear much fruit if we submit. As we go on with God, He will require more and more! We must receive God's love and His holiness and His correction. We must receive Jesus. "Do not reject the discipline of the Lord." (from Proverbs 3:11).

For a long time, while I was in Honduras, God was after me and was requiring more, yet I was not surrendering to Him. I was happy serving God and found ways to devote myself to ministry more and more. However, the ministry did not turn out the way I had hoped. God brought trials that He wanted me to learn from and go deeper with Him, but I couldn't see it, and I would not surrender. All of this led to the darkest and most confusing time of my life. I wanted God so deeply, but could not find Him, all because I did not receive God's correction in trials. I could not see that God wanted to change my heart and set me on the solid foundations of Christ. During this period, I struggled to understand God's purpose or why I was so miserable. My first reaction was to manage my problems as the world does. I pulled back from the hardest work in ministry. I sought counseling and tried every way I could think of to continue in my identity as a missionary. But God did not want me to manage my pain and continue on; He wanted me to simply stop and submit to His correction. He wanted me to give up completely.

Thankfully, God broke through, told me to stop what I was doing as a missionary, and just get to know Him again. I came back to the United States and did just that. I had to choose a very different path than what I had planned. However, I'm so very grateful that I didn't find a way to just manage my pain and continue on serving God while keeping Him at a distance. If you deny the correction and the training of God, He will either come down on you like fire, or worse yet, He will give you over to your desires for a superficial faith. What will you choose?

What will you do? Will you receive God's love and trust Him? Will you receive adversity and trust Him? Correction and trust Him? Even long periods of training or preparation? And trust Him? What if things don't turn out the way you wanted? Will you trust Him? Will you receive all of who God is, or do you want certain pieces of God that you choose? A good friend often tells me, "God will not be known falsely." He will not. He is all love and all truth and all grace and all Father. Receive all of Him in Jesus Christ.