

Reading: Psalm 139:1-12

***“He who spares his cane hates his son;
but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov 13:24)***

God generally warns His people through His Word and Spirit. When they do not give heed to His warnings He will be forced to use the rod of correction. Even a small child understands a cane! The cane is the most powerful attention-getter! It works instant miracles as every parent knows! The writer of Hebrews warns, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks” (Heb 12:25). The Heavenly Father has no spoilt children. He loves them too much to allow that (v 6). God punishes us most when He punishes us not!

Traffic accidents are becoming common. True we have the promise that God’s angels shall keep us in all our ways (Psa 91:11,12). The Lord is our Protector and He neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa 121:4). But in a surge of anger, He may hide His face from us for a moment (Isa 54:7,8). Which father will be silently watching his son going the wrong way? The donkey crushed the prophet’s foot against a wall when he went against God’s perfect will (Num 22:25). Another prophet was thrown away from a ship into the sea because of disobedience. He landed inside the belly of a large fish. There he repented and found time to prepare his next sermon! This does not mean that all accidents are God’s punishments, but we must take an immediate stock of our lives when unpleasant things happen (Job 13:23).

Has holiness taken to wings? God wills that His children hate sin with perfect hatred and love righteousness with perfect love. He does not lay down the pruning knife until we become like His eldest Son. God Himself testified that Job was more upright than anyone else in his times (Job 1:8). But after going through God’s furnace, at the end of the book, Job confessed to God, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5,6).

When King Hezekiah became proud, God declared that his days were numbered. Hezekiah wept bitterly and repented. God forgave him and extended his life. It was then he sang, “I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul” (Isa 38:15). The blessedness of suffering!

*It is necessary to heal the pride of my heart
that trials should come!*

(George Whitefield, 1714-1770, Prince of Open-air Preachers)

Almighty God, the Father of spirits,

We come to You with brokenness and repentance because of our rebellious nature and disobedient spirit. Have mercy on us, O God! We cannot bear it if You deal with us according to our sins. In spite of our repeated transgressions, You still love us, O God. We cling on to Your mercy at this moment, and seek an abundant supply of grace.

Though painful, we thank You, O Father, for Your rod of correction. If You do not chastise us, we will keep going our way and perish in our foolishness. Our sin, stubbornness and stiff-neckedness blind our eyes, O Lord, lest we see Your guiding hand. Thank You, O God, for loving us too much to let us drift away from You. Your love is more than that of our earthly parents, even though we are Your children by adoption only. Your love is eternal and everlasting. We thank and worship You for it.

Some of us are going through severe periods of chastisement. Tell us, O Lord, where we erred. Show us, O Lord, where we have deviated from Your ways. Forgive us, O Lord, our transgressions. Cleanse us, O Lord, from our sins. Restore us, O Lord, to a life of obedience that pleases You at all times. Grant us, O Lord, Your deliverance from this valley of tears.

Where else shall we go, O Lord, than to Your presence? Receive us, O Lord, as we return to Your bosom. Help us never to forget the precious lessons we learn through this disastrous experience. Let us walk with extra care and more watchfulness in all the days of our life. We thank You for the fires of refining to remove all the dross from our life.

Forgive us, Lord, for the difficulties our family members and fellow believers had to go through because we disobeyed You. You are a God of glorious restoration! Restore unto us the joy of salvation. Let us no more grieve or quench Your Holy Spirit.

We pray for those of Your children who pass through similar situations like ours. Help us to comfort them with the same comfort with which You have comforted us. Help us to gently pass on to them the costly lessons we learnt during Your chastisement. You are good, O Lord, Your mercy endures for ever! We thank You in Jesus' Name! Amen!

(Heb 12:9; Psa 130:3,4,7; Heb 12:5-7; 12:8; Acts 7:51; Isa 53:6; 49:15; Heb 2:11-13; Jn 3:16; Psa 51:7-11; 84:6; 139:7-10; 51:12; Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19; 1 Pet 5:9b; Psa 100:5)