

Sonship
Raising Up Sons, Part 2

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[The apostle Peter wrote], “Think it not strange that you go through fiery trials of many kinds. For the spirit of glory and of Christ rests on you.” (Inserted – actual verse —**“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” – I Peter 4:12-14**) And concerning Jesus it was said, “He learned obedience by the things He suffered.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” – Hebrews 5:8-10**)

In raising up sons, the sons of God start as small children—they are fully sons, they are not waiting to become sons—they are fully sons. When you are born of the Spirit, you are a son of God. “As many as receive him, He gives the power to become the sons of God.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” – John 1:12,13**) Now there are different words that speak to the various stages of the sons of God growing up. For example there is: “paidon,” which is the reference to a small son, and there is the reference to the term “teknon,” which is more like a teenager, and you begin to be apprenticed into the family business. Then there is the word that is most commonly used in association with mature sons, and it is “huios”: the sons of God. This is a son who is capable of handling in a mature way, the things of God. In short, this is a son who is capable of receiving greater and greater endowments of his inheritance.

Before we get to the matter of the inheritance of the sons of God, it is imperative that we talk about your readiness to receive that inheritance. In the previous broadcast we spoke about how the Spirit of God prepares you internally to respond as God would respond and then prepares you externally to minister according to your gifts and your callings. So, spending more time yet on the internal development of a believer, I want for us, in this broadcast to at least attempt to examine the relationship between adversity and the

raising of sons. “Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation.” (Inserted – **Hebrews 5:8-10**) And again, as I said, [Peter] said, “Do not think it strange that you should suffer fiery trials of many kinds.” (Inserted – **I Peter 4:12-14**)

Now in the current church culture, when a believer goes through trials the normal response is for people to think that he is doing something wrong because in the Christian culture in which there is a predominant belief that struggles and suffering have no redemptive value to them and can only be explained as the displeasure or disfavor of God, we are wasting one of the most valuable assets that the believer may be given and that is: the role of trials. Trials are a valuable asset in the development of a believer. Now the general view is that trials are to be avoided because trials are associated with failure. So if you are going through a period of failure and it is characterized by trial then your objective is to find out how you can “fix it,” so you can get through it.

As a result we waste some of the most precious and valuable gifts that God gives us because, you see, if God is simply trying to correct something in you that needs urgent attention, He is not going to keep you in a prolonged period of discipline. He will bring it to your attention very abruptly. You do not plan to spank your child over a two-month period. If your child is needing some behavioral correction you will take the child aside, correct the child and put the child back on course. When you desire to change the structure of one’s thinking then that takes a longer time and it takes a more intrusive pattern of interaction.

The structure of one’s life is that series of central and core beliefs and values around which that person has built up his or her life. Another way of saying the same thing—a more popular way—is a paradigm: the way you overlay reality with your experiences and your conviction in order to interpret that reality. Well if that is your point of view, if you have a point of view that has been rooted in the soul—which point of view is primarily how you can take care of your responsibilities and how you could secure yourself in ways that you deem to be important—then when you come upon suffering and trial, the way you will surely look at it is: adversity to be avoided.

But there is a more enduring purpose in God for suffering. Suffering is the way that God intends to change the structure of your very life. Typically, before we have been disciplined by the Lord, we behave like children do. We cry and we throw a fit whenever we want something to go our way, or when we are disappointed or scared we quickly seek refuge in the predictable norms. Well if God is going to take you into a relationship of trust—namely that you would trust the Lord—He has to work that in you over time and that, when it is done, produces a structural change, a change in the way that you think... and a permanent change in the way that you think. When the trials are finished, the Scriptures say, they produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who have been trained by it. That’s from the book of **Hebrews, chapter 12** and it is the

very chapter that speaks about how God disciplines sons. (Inserted – actual verse—**“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” – Hebrews 12:11**)

Now when God works in you in this fashion He changes your point of view, He doesn't just extend your resilience and your ability to endure suffering. He literally changes your point of view because He takes you through, as it were, a fiery trial and in this trial you are refined. The false assumptions that you have made are proven to be false. The false foundations on which you have based your lives are shown up for what they are but you begin to understand something else, and that is that past all of the hardship is enduring truth: eternal things that appear in your life and appear in the lives of others in time.

For example: that the justice of God will prevail, that the righteousness adorns your character with nobility, that when you see and discern, in the life of someone else, that they are scared and you don't engage them in confrontational engagements but instead you show mercy even if you have the upper hand... that that changes people around you. That depending upon how people are thinking in their hearts, they are going to relate to you in such a fashion as that. And if you see how they are thinking in their hearts you have the advantage of relating to them in a way that will bring out the best in them. All of this has to do with how God's own character begins to be evident within you. Well isn't this what being a son of God is actually about as opposed to whether or not you eat pork, or whether or not you don't work on a particular day? What do these things have to do with becoming a partaker of the divine nature?

It is rubbish for someone to say that you can be saved by the Spirit of God and by the blood of Jesus on the cross... and perfected by the law. How on earth does the law hope to incorporate in you the nature of God? All it does is that it restrains what you may do and what day you may do it upon, but it doesn't alter who you are inside. It doesn't make you aware of what is in other men's hearts. It doesn't cause you to operate in the Spirit of God with discernment and wisdom, council, knowledge, understanding, power and the fear of the Lord—it doesn't touch any of that. And if anything, the law will ensure that you behave as a slave bargaining for your daily bread and not as a son who has received the entrustments of God's grace and mercy to you. So first God works on your inside and he does it through suffering because suffering disabuses you of any notion of your sufficiency.

Suffering exposes you to the reality that you must trust God. When you begin to see how absolutely trustworthy God is then your life changes because then you could go anywhere, you could do anything, you could be anything and you will not end up being thoroughly disappointed in the way that your life has gone because you discover what actually works in life. It is what it means to be a son of God, it is what it means to be a partaker of the divine nature, it is what it means to handle the authority of Christ with a

reliable expectation of seeing God work after you have declared the purposes of God. That's what everybody wants—that's what a son has... it is why we were chosen to become sons of God.

Now there is a secondary aspect to this and that is: as the work is being done *internally* God turns over more of the affairs of the kingdom to you *externally*. And it is when God begins to hand over to you the incidences of your sonship—more authority, more opportunity—that you begin to take up your ministry because your ministry is not some religious work for you to do. Your ministry is your living of a life as a son of God because the nature of sonship is: God lives in you to will and to do his good pleasure. In short, God put you on the earth because God anticipated in this moment of time that He would desire to live among humans in a particular and unique fashion. And you were created with exactly that in mind. You, therefore, are God's opportunity to live the life God does want to live among humans in time, in your day.

Now as God does that you are living out your ministry. Your ministry is his life being lived through you—his presence in your vessel, his presence in your person being given form and being given reality—that's what this is about. Now in order for this to be brought forth, God will subject you to the authority of his kingdom because that is what allows you to come forth. Because before anybody can function, he or she must see the model of that functionality, he or she must learn how to handle authority and must understand that the power by which you are operating is his [God's] power working in you and not your power working on his behalf. That means that He has all authority and you are his delegate. He has plenary authority and you have delegated authority because the source of the authority to conduct the purposes of God in this world does not come from you but comes from God. You are therefore the instrumentality by which this power of God operates in the world around you.

Since it is not your power, it is inherent that you be made accountable, that you must give an account for the way you utilize his power and his authority. Now that is where his government comes in. The Word says, in the book of **Ephesians**, the **4th chapter**, beginning at **verse 11**, “Jesus ascended on high, led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” “It was he,” the risen Lord, “who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ until we all reach unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, to the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’ (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.” It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare**

God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” – Ephesians 4:7-13)

Now this is telling us: Beyond being known as a son, how are you prepared to function as a son? Well you start out of course as a small child and you are disciplined and raised up to become a fully mature son. And when you are, then you are handed the incidences of your citizenship in the kingdom and incidences of your inheritance as a son of God. So then you can begin to function to display the generosity of God your Father, the goodness of God your Father. That is what you are saved for... ultimately that Christ may live in you and Christ may live through you. That is the purpose of God for your life.

The way that the government works is that it leads you into—by sequence—it leads you into your functioning as a believer. These 5 gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given “for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.” How do they equip you? Well the apostolic gift equips in the way of showing you the relationship between power, order and understanding. There is power, order and understanding. There is power, which is the source by which anything may be done in the kingdom of God. Jesus says, “I have all of it in heaven and on earth...so I have power.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” – Matthew 28:18)**

But if power is simply given without any direction or encasement then that power may be used as destructively as it is used constructively. So order is: the power flows to accomplish the purposes for which this power exists. Jesus was given all power, in heaven and on earth, and He said to his disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** – Matthew 28:19,20)

So the purpose for which the—or one of the principle reasons—for which this awesome power of Jesus Christ exists is that of making disciples. Now you did not hear me say, “making converts.” You begin to make a disciple by first making a convert, but after someone has been converted to Christ then that person begins the process of being made into a disciple. A disciple first, internally changed to have the nature and the character of God. We’ve seen that that is as much accomplished through suffering as anything else. And one who walks with a disciple in his time of suffering helps the disciple understand the value of suffering, the things that God is correcting and changing—more than that, the things that God is opening up in your life as a believer.

One of the things that you must know is that when you go through suffering... when you go through suffering, part of the purpose of suffering is that God is extending your capacity to handle more of his grace. Suffering is not always about how you are being dealt with unfairly or even how you are being taught patience. Suffering is the way that you break through to new planes of understanding of the eternal nature of God—and yourself being born of that nature. And when your capacity to receive the understanding of God has been extended in such a fashion as that, God will give you more of your inheritance.

Suffering also has this value: how do you know when you are able to handle more of your inheritance? Suffering often is the test by which God reveals to you where you now stand in your relationship to God. Now when these things have been accomplished, that is when God has extended your capacity to receive more of who He is in you. And when God has confirmed who you have become, then the next rounds of his discipline in making a disciple out of you go on to handing over your inheritance to you in greater measure.

So that is where the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers come in and, as we were saying about apostles: Apostles teach you about power, and accountability in relationship to power; order—which is the orderly flow of power to accomplish the purposes for which power exists; and the third thing that the apostolic brings—which is this understanding of how his government works to raise up a son—is that it reveals to you a heavenly point of view. If you like, you may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of Christ that you may understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Now with that being said, you begin to operate in the power of God but in an orderly fashion. And you begin to operate with understanding. What does this mean? How is this to be conveyed and how are the ways of God to be explained and inculcated in somebody else?

You begin then to take up your ministry because this is what ministry actually looks like: where you operate in power you bring order to arrange the lives of people in a way that rescues them out of a crisis-management—which is the way that most people live. Most people, in their relationships to God never anticipate that structurally their lives will become orderly, intelligible and functional. They just expect to lurch from one place to another, from one occasion or time to another and eventually you grow old and you die and you hope to go to heaven. Well that's true; all of that is true (that you are going to heaven) but that's not the main purpose for being on the earth.

If that is your main purpose then you ought to pray that once you are saved you are quickly taken to heaven. There is a point to being alive and it has to do with being a son of God. And that point is that you first, internally, receive the transformation of your nature so that you may externally handle more of what your inheritance is about. I mentioned in passing, and perhaps we will develop it at a greater length, that internally

the purpose of trials is to bring out your understanding of the nature and the character of God to discipline you that you might be a partaker in the holy nature of God.

Another purpose of trial in the life of a believer is quite the opposite of punishment, it is the extension of your capacity to understand and to handle more of what God has in store for you as a son of God and then finally, to confirm to you that you are capable of handling the authority of heaven—to confirm where you have come to. With these three things in place internally, you change. Externally, the discipline of God through his government—through the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—equip you; these disciplines equip you to actually handle the things that are yours that God is giving to you in greater and greater measures because you have greater and greater maturity. Now the law has no capability of making you into this. The law does not recognize and cannot recognize that you have the capability of functioning to the glory of God. The law is not meant to train you up to take up any of this. So a son of God is trained, according to the Spirit of God, to be a partaker in the nature of God. We will continue our discussion. I'm Sam Soleyn. God bless you.

Scripture References:

I Peter 4:12-14

Hebrews 5:8-10

John 1:12,13

Hebrews 12:11

Ephesians 4:7-13

Matthew 28:18-20