

Old Testament Lessons

DEFINING TERMS: Temptation, Testing, Reaping what you have sown, Chastisement (a form of discipline), Punishment March 15, 2020

- I. Direction of teaching for the next several weeks or months.
 - A. It has been a number of years since we took a detailed look at the Old Testament. And though it is not my intention to work through a whole book, I do want to take some selected portions of the OT and use them to teach us or remind us –
 1. how God sees and deals with us,
 2. common weaknesses in human nature,
 3. how easy it is to distrust God when our sense of well-being is threatened in some way,
 4. how complaining affects our view of God, faith in God, thinking, attitudes, and behavior,
 5. why God hates religion without godliness and worship without a settled, ongoing trust in Him and contentment with Him in spite of the circumstances,
 6. why God blesses us when we trust Him and show heart-felt gratitude for what He has done, is doing, has allowed, is allowing,
 7. and principles essential to living a godly, faith-based, God-pleasing life.
 - B. Today, I want to lay a foundation for future studies by defining certain words and terms that are essential (1) for understanding the devil's tactics, (2) for discerning some of the ways God deals with us, and (3) for comprehending "the why" of some of the things that have happened or are happening to us. Therefore, we are going to look at and define temptation, testing, reaping what we sow, chastisement (*a form of discipline*), and punishment.
 - C. Prayer
- II. Temptation, testing, reaping what you sow, chastisement, and punishment.
 - A. **Temptation:** Temptation comes from three sources: (1) the devil, (2) our sinful and selfish desires, fears, and passions, and (3) the world – or the people around us. We see the truth of this in God's word.
 1. For example, we see the devil's part in temptation in **Luke 4:1-2a**, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness [2] for forty days, **being tempted by the devil.**"

- a. This same truth is conveyed in **1 Chronicles 21:1**, “Then **Satan** stood up against Israel and **moved David** to number [the fighting men of] Israel.”
 - b. And finally, the book of Revelation supports this truth in **Revelation 2:10**, “(Smyrna) Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, **the devil is about** to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
2. Samson – God’s chosen judge to restore godliness in Israel – is an example of being tempted from within. His desires for sensuality led to his involvement in sexual immorality.
 - a. He got involved with a prostitute in Gaza (**Judges 16:1**),
 - b. and he gave the secret of his strength to Delilah – a woman who gave him what he wanted to get what she wanted (**Judges 16:15-21**).
 - c. James supports this truth about being tempted from within in **James 1:13-15**, “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. [14] But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. [15] Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
 3. As for being tempted by those around you and the world at large, we have only to read about Joseph being tempted by Potiphar’s wife to know how true this is (**Genesis 39:6b-12**).
 - a. Paul points to this same source of temptation in **1 Corinthians 15:33**, “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.”
 - b. And finally, we are warned not to be conformed to this world (*that is, to the beliefs, values, and practices of this world*), but be transformed by the renewing of our mind (**Romans 12:2**).
 4. Therefore, temptation is anything that entices, seduces, or allures us into doing what we know is wrong. Though temptation always promises some immediate reward, its goal is our destruction. And though Satan has lost the war between himself and God, his goal is to take as many people with him to eternal damnation as possible in order to prevent God from enjoying them for eternity.
- B. Testing:** The scripture says that God does not tempt anyone (**James 1:13**), but He does **test** people.

1. We first read about this in **Genesis 22:1-2** . . . Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And [Abraham] said, "Here I am." [2] [And God] said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."
2. Moses reminded the Israelites that God was testing them during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. We read this in **Deuteronomy 8:2-3**, "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, **testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.** [3] He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know...that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but...by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."
3. James teaches this truth in **James 1:2-4**, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that **the testing of your faith** produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
4. The point here is that God tests us by bringing or allowing certain kinds of circumstances or people to come into our lives and create some kind of difficulty or turmoil or suffering in order to determine the genuineness and the quality of our faith, loyalty, obedience, and dependability – which is important for discerning how He will use us in building His kingdom and serving His purposes.

C. **Reaping what you sow:** Just as God created the law of gravity, so He created the law of reaping what you sow. Therefore, reaping what you sow is a law or a principle that is just as dependable, just as certain to bring about its promised results as the law of gravity.

1. In other words, just as you need to be careful when standing on the very top of a shaky six foot step ladder, so you need to be careful what you sow in thought, word, and deed – for the time will come when you will reap what you have sown.
2. The clearest statement describing this principle is found in **Galatians 6:7-9**, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the

one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. [9] Let us not lose heart in doing good, for **in due time we will reap** if we do not grow weary.

3. An OT statement that conveys this same principle in a fairly clear way is found in **Proverbs 1:24-31**, “Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; [25] and you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; [26] I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, [27] when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. [28] Then [you] will call on me, but I will not answer; [you] will seek me diligently but [you] will not find me, [29] because [you] hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD. [30] [You] would not accept my counsel, [you] spurned all my reproof. [31] **So [you] shall eat of the fruit of [your] own way and be** (sash-e-ated) **satiated with their own devices** (*filled so completely that it is not possible to receive or enjoy more*).”
4. The scripture gives us some examples of what we reap when we sow to the our own flesh:
 - a. **1 Corinthians 11:27-30**, “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord...[29] For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. [30] For this reason many among you are **weak and sick, and a number sleep**.”
 - b. Samson chose to sow pleasures with Delilah and reaped the loss of his strength, his sight, and his freedom.
 - c. Lot sowed the choice of what appeared to be the better land and reaped the loss of all he had in the destruction of Sodom.
 - d. David sowed adultery and murder and reaped the death of two sons, the loss his kingdom for a time, and the loss of his good reputation.
 - e. Ananias and Sapphira sowed pride and reaped death.
5. Just as you cannot jump out of a tree without plummeting to the ground, so you cannot sow to your own fleshly desires without reaping some form of loss, destruction, or death. Whether you reap natural consequences – like Samson, or God’s specifically chosen consequences – like Ananias and Sapphira, you will reap according to what you sow. Therefore, this law or principle applies to our next two words: chastisement and punishment.

D. **Chastisement (a form of discipline)**: Chastisement, which is a form of discipline, is the activity of inflicting some kind of pain – be it physical or emotional – for the purpose of teaching the one who did wrong the seriousness of what they have done and to motivate them to no longer commit the sin or do the wrong they had done.

1. The most well-known scripture concerning God’s discipline is found in **Hebrews 12:5b-11**, “**My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord**, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; [6] **for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines**, and He scourges every son whom He receives. [7] It is for [the benefit that comes from] discipline that you endure [it]; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons (*in other words, being disciplined by God is proof you are a child of God*). [9] 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? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **[God] disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness** (*which is the purpose of His discipline*). [11] 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 (*the outcome of God’s discipline*).”
2. The essence of these verses in **Hebrews 12** comes from **Proverbs 3:11-12**. And Proverbs has more to say about God’s discipline.
 - a. **Proverbs 12:1**, “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.”
 - b. **Proverbs 15:5**, “A fool rejects his father's discipline, but he who regards reproof (*treats it as something good*) is sensible.”
 - c. **Proverbs 19:20**, “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.”
3. Chastisement – which is a form of discipline – is a teaching method, made up of God-determined consequences, which God uses to get our attention and teach us how we ought to think, speak, and act so that we grow in godliness, in loving others as we ought, and in Christian maturity.
4. Now remember, chastisement comes in a form that inflicts some kind of physical or emotional pain. Therefore, I urge you, give careful consideration to the possibility that a particular challenge

or difficulty, tribulation, sickness or suffering that comes into your life **may be** – and I reiterate **MAY BE** because not all of them are – **may be** God’s form of chastisement for the purpose of correcting a particular desire, thinking or behavior pattern, or activity that is ungodly, unloving, unkind, unmerciful, unforgiving, immoral, or just plain foolish.

5. And though discipline in the moment is somewhat painful, I urge you to keep in mind these words that come from God, himself, as found in **Revelation 3:19**, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.” **Or in other words, make the most of God’s disciplinary love instead of resisting or ignoring it, for that will only lead to His punishment.**

E. **Punishment:** Punishment is for those whose sin is of an exceedingly evil nature (*such as murder, rape, adultery, physical or sexual abuse, fraud – on a grand scale, robbery, and kidnaping*), or for those whose sin has been willfully practiced over an extended period of time (*repeat offenders*).

1. The purpose of punishment is three-fold:
 - a. **First Purpose:** to exact the kind of price that will punish the sinner for doing such a horrible evil.
 - (1) A general and universal example of this first purpose comes from God in these words, “The wages of sin is death.”
 - (2) A more specific example is found in **Genesis 9:6**, “Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed.”
 - b. **Second Purpose:** to send a clear, deterrent-producing message that the cost of committing such an evil is greater than whatever is believed to be gained.
 - (1) For example, we read in **Exodus 21:15**, “He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”
 - (2) And in **Acts 5:1-11**, we have the story about Ananias and Sapphira which sends a clear, fear producing message for the purpose of deterring others from committing the same kind of sin.
 - c. **Third Purpose:** to protect the community from a repeat offender by removing him or her from the community so they can no longer harm others in the community.
 - (1) For example, we put the serial killer and the serial rapist in prison for life – without any chance of parole, and we do this

not only to punish such evil doers, but to protect the community from further harm at their hands.

- (2) As **Proverbs 29:1** says, “A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.”

III. Conclusion

- A. As I said at the beginning of today’s teaching, a good understanding of these words and terms – temptation, testing, reaping what you sow, chastisement, and punishment – a good understanding is essential (1) for understanding the devil’s tactics, (2) for discerning some of the ways God deals with us, and (3) for comprehending “the why” of some of the things that have happened or are happening to us.
- B. We will end here today. However, I want to take this part of our OT study one step further by looking at the **Blessings and Curses** as found in **Deuteronomy 27 (part), 28 (all), 29 (part)**.
1. I understand that these blessings and curses are by far national in scope rather than individual. But they can teach us about God’s ways of dealing with sinners, sin, the righteous, and righteousness.
 2. In turn, this understanding can improve our understanding of the situations in our own lives, the life of our church, the life of our nation, and the world.
 3. And with this improved understanding can come a wiser response to what God is doing to either correct us or bless us.