

The Purpose of Discipline

And I'll be honest, it's been an extremely tough week for me, not knowing words to say, not knowing responses to have in regards to some of this.

But as I...

spent my time in praise and worship this morning, it's easy to know two things.

Actually, at 5.30 this morning, I was in the barn milking the cow and asking the Lord to help me because I

It was going to be a difficult day.

I knew it was going to be a difficult day for me.

And asking the Lord, what do you say?

How do you move forward with stuff like this?

And the Lord dropped this verse of Scripture in my heart that was very reassuring to me.

Because I've also been asked several times, you know, what do you do with this?

The Scripture that God gave me this morning, sitting in my barn, talking to my cow,

was this, is we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but we wrestle against principalities and wickedness in high places.

And that really has to be the focus that we have here.

Because the enemy will always seek

to tear down that which God is using.

And I was speaking to one of my mentors this week, sharing the information, and he had a very astute observation in regards to this.

He said, it's very interesting how the enemy will always attack what seems to be a strong point of your ministry to try to cause questions or doubt to fill your mind and to chase you away from what God is doing.

And so with all that said, we're not backing down.

We're not shying away from proclaiming the gospel.

Jesus Christ is the only way.

And there will be some people who abuse that.

There will be some people who try to use that to get in to do whatever they want to do.

But God is greater than that.

He's not abandoned us.

He's not left us.

Rather, he has pushed closer to us, and he's drawing us together as a family.

And so please be in prayer for the church.

Please be in prayer for Veronica and Mandy and the family as also the victims at the school.

And again, if there's anybody who'd like information or would like to talk to me, you can do so.

Probably the best way to do it right now is just to call the office and Bree will get you on the calendar.

I've got several to do this week.

But amen.

Amen.

Well.

How many of you enjoyed last week's sermon about discipline?

As it felt like we lived it out this week to a degree.

But last week we covered a very difficult passage of Scripture and I heard from several small groups that they had some really good discussions this week about talking through these difficult passages in Hebrews chapter 12 and

My whole goal was to present the sermon within the context of Scripture as the main thrust, because we can take some of this out of context, we can use it this way or that way, but we get the best definitions of Scripture when they're used and presented in context.

I wanted to remind us, as we get ready for our sermon today, that the writer is speaking to us in terms of running a race where the goal is not to win first prize.

There have been many who've gone before you.

You're not going to get first place, but the goal is to finish the race.

That's the whole purpose we run this race of faith.

is so that we can learn more about Jesus, we can grow in who Jesus wants us to be, and that we might finish the race well.

And because the goal is to finish well, there's a couple things we have to do.

We must keep our focus on Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

He's the one who is our coach.

He gets us there if we keep our eyes upon Him.

Because, of course, He ran the race well, as we're going to learn this week and next week with Easter.

He endured the cross and He finished with obedience.

He finished with obedience and He finished well.

And God's goal for us is to be like Jesus, to take up our race of faith and to finish the race so that we can be in heaven for eternity with Him.

That's the whole purpose God has done all of this, is so that we could be His children with Him in heaven for eternity.

But we have to make sure that we don't drift away.

There's lots of things that want to pull us to the right or to the left.

There's lots of things that want to distract us.

There's lots of things that want to make us give up and quit and say, you know what?

It's just a bunch of hypocrites in there.

No thank you.

I'll take my chances outside the world.

I'll take my chances outside in the world.

But discipline...

is a part of being a disciple and a son of God.

God disciplines us so that we don't quit the race.

The discipline is to help us show that this life is very temporary and there is an eternity that's coming.

And because He loves us so much, He wants to see us in heaven with Him.

And because He loves us so much, He disciplines us.

Not because He's mad.

Not because He hates you.

Not because He wants to just exercise His power to inflict pain.

No, He disciplines us because He loves us and He wants us to be with Him.

We dealt with how God disciplines us.

many times we will experience a rebuke or a verbal correction from God.

And this can come from Scripture.

As we read our Bibles in the morning, as we spend time in our devotion and praying, God can give us rebukes and correct and nudge us and move us in the right direction.

But He can also use other people to speak into our lives.

To say, hey, fix yourself.

I see an area.

I see a weakness.

I see something that needs to be strengthened in you.

Fix yourself, Michael.

This is what we can do as the body of Christ.

Of course, we do that in love.

It's coming alongside, and it's not to tear down, it's not to embarrass, and it's not to distinguish the flame of faith, but it's rather to cause us to say, hey, you know what?

You're right.

I'm struggling.

I need to do better.

I can do better.

Thanks for loving me enough to correct me.

We have rebukes in our lives, and God will do it.

And I find that we handle this one really well, actually, because as adults, most of us experience this type of rebuke, whether it's work or different things.

This is often the type of correction we get where someone's like, hey, you know what?

You need to shape up.

You need to do better.

We tend to handle verbal correction pretty well, and it keeps us in our proper lanes, and it keeps us functioning and moving, whether it's in life, in our jobs, anything like that.

But it also includes our race of faith.

But God is not limited to giving us verbal commands.

Just like as parents, we're not limited to just saying, hey, do better.

There are other options.

There are other options.

And this one is a little bit more difficult.

Because it says, to those that God loves, it says in verse 6, those He scourges.

And scourges can come in the form of physical pain.

It can come in the form of other kinds of pain.

But it's meant to bring us back to God.

We talked of Hosea and Gomer last week, where Gomer, who...

was a prostitute, was married by, Hosea took her as a wife to show God's love for us, the bride, but yet Gomer wasn't satisfied with that and chose to chase her lover.

She strayed away.

And we learned that God said he would hedge up her path with thorns, but not to destroy her, not because he hated her, not because he was mad at her, but to get her to see that it was better for her with her husband than it was when she strayed away.

See, God's discipline is not to drive us away, but it's rather to press us back towards himself.

He gives relief from the pain whenever we turn to him.

Because God's desire is for us to be with Him in heaven.

Everything He does, even if it's scourging, rebuking, any of that stuff, it's because He loves us.

I wanted to make sure that you guys understood that it's all from love when it comes from God.

And the other side of this, I told you a story about my cousin.

There's no amount of pain that we can suffer in this life that is not worth it if we make it to heaven for eternity.

Because as I said earlier, this life is temporary.

It is appointed unto man once to die.

Unless Jesus returns, each of us will breathe our last breath.

This life is temporary.

But what you do in this life determines where you spend eternity.

That's why there's no pain in this life that isn't worth it if it gets us to see and understand who God is and turns us towards Him.

To spend an eternity in His presence.

So if you will turn with me this morning, we're going to start in verse 7.

We're going to finish out our passage talking about discipline today.

And this morning we're going to look at the purpose for discipline as the main thrust of our sermon.

And we're going to look at three purposes that discipline serves for the sons of God.

It serves to make us holy.

Discipline serves to yield peaceable fruits of righteousness.

And discipline serves to bring about healing.

But to get to these purposes, we must first be willing to endure the discipline.

And if there's a catch in Scripture, that's the catch.

Verse 7 starts out, If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.

For what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

But if you are without chastening of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect.

Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the father of spirits and live?

Let's pray this morning.

Father, we thank you for your word this morning, Lord, and I pray that you would lead and guide us as we walk through yet another discussion, talk about discipline.

Father, it serves a purpose in our lives.

I pray that you would help us to see if we're in the midst of discipline, Lord, that there's a reason for it.

To help us understand that we can turn to You and we can be saved, we can repent, and we can find freedom that only comes from knowing and a relationship with Your Son, Jesus Christ.

So Father, I pray that You would be with us this morning.

Anoint my lips to speak words that You want me to say.

Words that bring life.

Anoint our ears to hear what the Holy Spirit would speak to our hearts.

Because it is only then that we can apply them and make them a part of who we are.

Bless our time this morning in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Last week was a tough sermon for me to give.

I told a few people as I was in worship last week, there was a few times where I prayed the words of Jesus as he was in the Garden of Gethsemane and they were, Lord, if it be your will, let this cup pass from me.

And I was like, if you give me any other word, I'll speak a sermon on it without hesitation.

And I didn't get it.

He said, no, no, you just go right ahead.

And I had to take my father's age old advice that he gave me.

And I've heard it since I was a kid.

And I know I've told you before, but this is his age old advice.

He says, no matter what happens on Sunday, never quit on Monday.

I took that advice this week.

There was part of me that was like, you know what?

I don't know.

That's right, turn your phone off.

I do, I don't respond very much.

But as I read this passage this week, it reminded me of verse 11, because it says that no discipline is joyful in the moment.

And I learned last week, neither is speaking about it.

It can be just what it is.

But it sparked a conversation in our family this week, which was very good.

Because we were talking about a few things, and me and my sons were talking, and I said, you don't just wake up one morning and decide to walk away from God, breaking every one of the Ten Commandments, indulging in massive sins.

You don't just wake up one morning and flip a switch.

It's always a process.

It always starts very small.

And I shared with Billy kind of what our Scripture speaks to this morning.

Because as a father, which I am and those of you who are fathers, we discipline our sons in minor issues so that they don't become major issues.

That's the whole purpose of this.

And Proverbs tells us that, you know, discipline your son and drive the foolishness from their heart when they're small issues.

Because if foolishness has a place to grow, they become large and very difficult to handle.

And this is part of what God has given us as fathers to do.

So why would not God do the same for us?

Disciplining us in minor issues to try to get our focus and to try to get our trajectory back in line with Him before we reach the point where we are tempted with committing very major things in our life.

There's a passage in Ecclesiastes that says, it's little foxes who ruin the vines.

They come in and they nip and they chew and they bite.

It's not big things.

It's little things that we allow unfettered into our life that end up growing up into things that become things that we can't handle on our own.

And God will discipline us to keep us in the race, to keep our focus on Jesus.

So with knowing that, we can answer the writer's question in verse 9, which I know the slide was a little bit off so you didn't get to see it.

But verse 9 says, Shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits and live forever?

If we understand this concept about discipline and that God is only doing it to make sure that we keep ourselves focused and we keep on the right path, running the race of faith so that we can finish it well, shouldn't we not submit to this discipline?

Because it's for our good, not for our punishment.

It's meant to bring life where we seek to go on our own only brings death.

So I want you to think about verse 9 as we talk about everything this morning.

Because it says, shouldn't we submit even more so to the discipline that God has?

Because that discipline leads to life evermore in heaven.

So as we look at the benefits of the purposes of discipline, we're going to start in verse 10 with the first one.

It is for our benefit or our profit.

It says verse 12, I'm sorry.

Verse 10 says for.

Talking about our fathers indeed for a few days, chastened us as seemed best to them.

But he speaking of God for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

God disciplines us for our profit, for us to prosper in following Him.

The word profit is translated as beneficial, translated as advantageous.

How many of you would use that to describe discipline from God?

It was very advantageous for God to discipline me today.

It also talks about a coming together for the good.

In other words, some of us need more than one form of discipline, but we can look at it as it all comes together for the good.

And we spoke last week about discipline, and I shared that God's perspective on discipline is not punitive.

Rather, it's meant to be restorative.

It's meant to be redirecting us from where we want to go.

In other words, it's for our profit to make us holy.

It's for our benefit.

As I thought about this and I thought about my children and

Some other instances came to my mind.

How many times have we been in Walmart or in a public area where a child that wants something gets told no?

And you're very aware that that child has never once experienced discipline in their life for anything as they melt down on the floor and screaming in a tantrum because they were told no.

The problem is that child, who is never disciplined in the minor issues, becomes an adult who expects life to revolve around them.

And they are confused and frustrated when the realization hits that it doesn't.

We've all been around adults like that too, haven't we?

God does not want spiritual tantrum-throwing Christians.

See, discipline at its core gives us the ability to grow and mature into physical and spiritual adults.

You don't just do that by accident.

You do that through the discipline first of our fathers, our parents.

It drives the foolishness out of us, so that allows us to understand that, hey, there's going to be difficult times in life.

I've got to buck up and handle this.

There's going to be times where I'm told no.

There's going to be things that I want that I can't have, and I better be okay with it.

That's a sign of maturity.

And if we were to turn this spiritually, a mature Christian...

is one who is in the process of becoming holy now that's not a big scary word holy at its base definition means a separation it separates us from the world

that's what holiness is it's a separation from that which is dirty first corinthians chapter 11 verses 31 32 says for if we judge ourselves we would not be judged in other words if we were to judge ourselves we wouldn't be judged but when we are judged we are chastened by the lord that we may not be condemned with the world

The whole purpose that God brings chastisement to our life is so that we can be separate from the world and not experience the condemnation that God is going to give those who don't follow Him.

Discipline's whole purpose is to separate us, to make you holy, to walk with God.

See, God doesn't need childish adults.

But he desires mature, holy men and women who can run the race.

Because when God has holy, mature men and women who run the race, guess what?

They're not selfish.

They're sharing the gospel.

They're trying to bring people with them.

They're making other disciples.

They're obeying what Jesus gave us to do.

Go into all the world and live life to the fullest.

No, go into all the world making disciples, teaching them to obey every command that I've given you.

That's the sign of a mature spiritual man or woman.

And we only arrive at that place through experiencing and responding correctly to the discipline that God gives us.

So God disciplines for us for our profit.

to make us holy.

That's the first benefit of discipline.

Can you say, thank you Lord?

It's good for us.

Because the next one is not as fun.

The next purpose of discipline is so that we can grow fruit.

No discipline is enjoyable while it's happening, verse 11 says.

It's painful.

But afterward there will be a peaceable harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

As I thought about this passage of Scripture, I got to thinking about an old quote.

And its author is unknown.

But it helps us.

It helped me understand this passage a little bit.

It says no discipline is enjoyable while it's happening, but afterward.

And here's the quote.

You might know it.

It says marriage is hard.

Divorce is hard.

Being overweight is hard.

Being fit is hard.

Being in debt is hard.

Being financially disciplined is hard.

Communication is hard.

Not communicating is hard.

Choose your hard.

Because life will never be easy.

It's always going to be hard.

Pick wisely.

Pick wisely.

And that quote reminded me of this verse.

Because we can either experience discipline, which is hard, and gain life eternally for it, or we can reject discipline, which might make it easier in the moment, but we'll experience death for eternity, which is hard.

See, life is hard and painful.

Painful.

And it doesn't matter if you're man or woman, saved or unsaved, life is hard.

But for the Christian, when you and I choose to endure discipline from God, it benefits us.

It gives us the ability to produce fruit in our lives.

When we endure discipline, it's not meant to magnify and increase the pain of life.

Life's already hard enough.

But rather, it's training or pruning

so that we can multiply the fruitful harvest of right living before God.

It's training on how to live right before God, to live good lives.

Paul spoke to Timothy about this several times, but I pulled out 2 Timothy 3, verse 16 and 7.

It says, "...all Scripture is given by God, by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete."

Thoroughly equipped for every good work.

See, we are reprov'd and corrected and instructed that we might become complete in our faith, that we might finish the race.

That's when we arrive at completion.

Lacking nothing and equipped for every good work that God has called us to.

See, God doesn't just train us when things are going bad.

He trains us even when things are going good.

Brother Bill mentioned this this morning in Faith Journeys.

Because God wants the best for us.

He wants us to reach a harvest of 30, 60, and 100-fold in our life.

He disciplines us even if we're bearing fruit.

John chapter 15 verse 2 says, every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

But every branch that bears fruit, you could take that word out prunes and put he disciplines that it might bear more fruit.

See, no one is exempt from discipline.

But we can choose not to endure it if we so want.

We could be like Gomer.

We could continue to chase the things of the world.

We could continue to try to press through the thorns running away from God.

But it's only going to become more painful.

Discipline is a form of training.

And it's painful training.

But its benefit is teaching us how to live right, how to walk after Jesus, how to follow God, how to keep our eyes upon Jesus.

And when we do that, it produces a harvest so that other people can know about him.

The third benefit of discipline is that it leads to healing.

Verse 12 and 13 says, So at the beginning of this passage, there's the word therefore.

We have to understand what it's there for.

It says, because of these things, talking about the benefits of discipline, because of the profit of discipline, because of teaching us to live right and to bear fruit, begin to move correctly is what this passage says.

Strengthen your hands and your feeble knees so that you can walk the path that God has called you to walk.

See, the goal of discipline is to put us back on the straight and narrow, eyes on Jesus, moving forward.

If discipline comes and that's our response, not only have we won, but God's discipline has succeeded.

See, in our efforts to stray from the path,

We often suffer weak hands and feeble knees.

There's lots of pitfalls out there.

There's lots of rocks.

There's lots of boulders.

And we trip and we hurt our ankles and we hurt our knees and we scrape our hands trying to crawl through the mess and the thorns.

And that's what the enemy wants.

He wants to weaken you.

He wants to get you discouraged.

He wants to get you to the point of thinking, man, I just can't.

do this anymore i don't have the strength i don't have the ability he wants you to give up the only way he wins is if you choose to give up he has no power to take away your salvation of any kind there's nothing that he can do to make you lose your salvation except make you give up to come to the point where like man this isn't worth it this is all a lie i quit

When you choose to give up, when you choose to reject the salvation of God, what options do you have left?

None.

Zero.

So if we choose to endure the discipline, it gives us the ability to gain strength in our hands and feet.

It's training.

It's teaching us.

With our hands strengthened, we're able to meet the needs of those around us and be Jesus to them.

With our feet strengthened and healed, we can continue to run the race of faith slowly and steadily on straight paths.

See, it is God who straightens the path and gives us the strength and the healing to finish through the discipline that He gives us.

Isaiah 40, verse 4 says, Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain hill be made low.

The uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places plain.

As we continue to focus on Jesus, as we continue to endure the discipline, life begins to...

Be shaped by God.

And it doesn't mean that everything's going to be easy, that there's going to be no difficulty.

But what it says is he begins to make the path before us very plain so that we can see the goal.

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, if you will.

We can be encouraged and say, you know what, I can make it because the path is being straightened for me.

These are the benefits for those who choose to endure discipline.

that God gives so naturally the question is what about those who choose not to endure the discipline of God just as the writer gave three benefits of of enduring he's going to give us three benefits of not enduring and don't worry these are going to be much abbreviated they're not going to be as long

But Hebrews 12, verses 15 through 17 says, Looking carefully, lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, and by this many become defiled, lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for a morsel of food sold his birthright.

So here is a threefold result of refusing to endure the discipline that God brings.

First, it sends us spiraling towards falling short of the grace of God.

If we are going to choose to get off the path and to not finish the race, we are going to abandon the grace that God gives us.

Paul spoke to this, a little bit different wording, but the same thing, in Romans 3, verse 23.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

That's talking about the condition of man.

But it's similar to this passage in Hebrews where it says, if we choose not to endure the discipline, we're going to go spiraling off course and eventually fall short of the grace of God because we're going to abandon the grace that God has for us.

We're going to walk away from it just as Gomer did.

The second is lest any root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, leading others to become defiled.

The problem is these things build upon themselves.

So if someone begins to spiral out of control and is falling away from the grace of God, nobody likes to do anything alone.

We want to take people with us.

It encourages us to feel like, hey, we're all falling, but whoo, at least we're doing it together.

As we begin to spiral away from God and pain begins to increase,

if we're not cognizant of the idea that God is trying to get our attention, it can build up bitterness, thinking, man, look, God doesn't love me.

I just keep getting, it just keeps getting harder.

And it just, God has left me.

He's abandoned me.

It's just, this is way worse than it was.

Maybe if I could just get through this pain on the other side of it, there's something better.

And it brings bitterness up because we're just like, oh.

God is a liar.

God is not true.

And we find people who are in those same situations, birds of a feather, right?

There's lots of men in the Bible who are examples of this.

I'm reading through the Old Testament right now, so I'm going to give you the one I just read most recently, Korah.

In the Old Testament, he was a Levite.

He thought, well, Moses shouldn't be the only one who can do this.

I can do this too.

Right?

And so he gathers 250 men and says, Moses, I'm just as holy as you and I'm just as called and I'm just as appointed.

I can do it better than you.

Moses is like, hey, let's let God decide, right?

And Korah took 249 other men with him to their grave because of bitterness that sprang up in his heart because he spiraled away.

from what he was supposed to be doing.

See, as we harden our hearts with bitterness and unforgiveness, we draw others with us.

So that's the second step for those who choose to not endure the discipline.

The third says, lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

We're all very familiar with the passage of Scripture that says, Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.

And there's been lots of debate about this passage of Scripture, thinking, well, poor Esau, he never had a chance.

That's not true.

See, Esau, the problem with Esau is he despised the promises of God to Abraham and Isaac, his father.

He regarded it as worthless.

Only to be traded for a bowl of watery soup.

All that God had promised Abraham about a nation and multitudes of people that would bring blessings to the earth, to him it was worth...

A bowl of soup.

He didn't care about it.

Like, I'm going to die.

Who cares about the promises of God?

If I don't have something in my body, I'm going to die.

And the promises are moot.

See, when we refuse to endure discipline, which brings spiritual life and the strength to keep us running the race of faith and finish well,

We are basically trading our spiritual eternity for a bowl of earthly soup.

Thinking it's better now than it will ever be.

I'll take my blessings now.

Thank you.

That should be the definition of foolishness.

If you value this life, the wealth, the power, the pleasure, over the spiritual life that God offers, you are a profane and foolish man like Esau.

And as I begin to wrap this up, I want to address verse 17 because...

Just as that passage that says God loved Jacob and he hated Esau, this passage as well stirs up a lot of weird feelings if you take it wrong.

So I want to read the verse and then we'll talk about it.

This is talking about Esau.

It says,

Though he sought it diligently with tears.

At first glance, when you read this, you might think, well, Esau saw the error of his ways and he repented.

He's like, oh, I was wrong for wanting the soup.

I'm so sorry.

That's not what he did.

He did seek repentance, but

But his desire was not the promises of God.

If you go back and read the story in Genesis chapter 27, the whole point comes of this story is the fact that Esau was rejected because he despised the inheritance of the birthright.

They were one thing.

Esau saw them as two things.

They were two separate things in his mind.

There was the promises, but then there was the inheritance.

There was the birthright.

They gave him the ability to carry on God's word, which he didn't care for.

He didn't like that one.

But he liked the idea of the inheritance because he was a profane man.

See, Esau, if you read chapter 27, as he's repenting, as verse 17 says, with tears and with sobbing, he's repenting because guess what he lost?

He lost the inheritance.

He lost the sheep.

He lost the goats.

He lost the servants.

He lost the land.

He lost the name.

He wasn't sad that he lost the promise.

That was gone.

He was sad that he lost the stuff.

He was repenting because he lost his bowl of soup.

That's all he wanted was the resources, the stuff, the fame, the power, the money.

He didn't care a lick about the promises of God, even towards the end.

See, when we reject God and His discipline, which gives us the strength to continue to pursue holiness and become fruitful sons of God, we are left as Esau, a profane man seeking earthly pleasures from a God we have rejected and walked away from, despising the spiritual blessing while desiring the riches that He can give.

Discipline serves a very valuable part of our lives as Christians.

And if we choose to reject it, to not endure it, it's equivalent to Esau looking at the birthright saying, you know what, God, I don't want any part of what you're doing.

I'll take the sheep and the land and the money and the stuff.

I'll take the gifts.

I'll take the blessings.

I'm not interested in your spiritual life.

I'm not interested in your church.

I'm not interested in living right.

I want to be my own master.

I want to live life my way.

And that comes to the point where earlier on, it says that God disciplines His sons.

And if we choose to endure the discipline, we have the right to be called his sons and daughters.

But do you know what it says of those who choose to not endure the discipline?

They're illegitimate children.

They're not wanted.

They have no right to be called a son because they're rejecting the father.

They want no part of the father.

When you want no part of the Father, you become an illegitimate son.

When you're not enduring or receiving the discipline of a father, you're an illegitimate son.

As Jesus said in the Gospels, if you don't like my father, then you're obviously of your father.

That's my paraphrase, but we have a father.

Father.

It's either God in heaven or it's the father of lies who rejected.

This morning, I want to leave us with this thought.

Life is hard.

It's hard.

It'll be hard to the day you die.

And following God doesn't take away the hardness.

There's still going to be pain.

There's still going to be difficult seasons.

There's still going to be rough days where you're like, holy cow, what the heck.

You're not going to want to get out of bed.

You're not going to want to do anything.

Following God comes with painful discipline.

Running from God comes from a painful end.

We get to choose our heart.

The great thing about it is if we choose to run the race of faith, Scripture says that Jesus comes alongside of us and he puts his yoke upon us and then he runs the race with us.

He strengthens us as we go.

He gives us encouragement as we go.

He gives us the ability to encourage others as they go.

Thus the body of Christ.

Thus what we do for one another.

Stand with me this morning.

The purpose of discipline is to give us the strength and healing for our weak hands and our feeble knees so that we can run the race, if you want to boil it down to its simplest form.

Our hands are strengthened and our knees are strengthened whenever we endure the discipline that God gives us.

It's for our profit.

He gives us the ability to learn to live right and to produce fruit, to make disciples of other people.

As we think about discipline and as we contemplate discipline in our mind, we have to have this one thought in the back of our heads.

That God has one goal for you and I.

And that is to see us finish the race of faith well.

I have one goal for you.

It's to see you finish the race of faith well.

God wants us to be with him in heaven.

The whole purpose he sent his son is so that we could have a relationship with him.

We're celebrating Easter this week because of the love that God has for you.

He was willing to sacrifice His Son on the cross so that He could have a relationship with you and I. He was willing to discipline the perfect Son, Jesus, and put Him on a cross so that you and I could have salvation.

Amen.

Hebrews 5, verse 8 says, Jesus learned obedience from suffering on the cross.

How much more do you and I need to learn obedience than Jesus?

We learn obedience through the discipline that God gives us.

It causes us to keep our feet on the path of

It gives strength to our hands.

It gives strength to our knees.

It gives us encouragement to continue walking.

And because of that, we celebrate Easter.

So you have a task this week.

Bring someone with you to church next week that needs to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We're going to share...

how Jesus endured the cross, why Jesus endured the cross.

We're going to see how much God loves us.

Be willing to bring someone.

Most people will come if they're asked personally.

Be willing to step out.

Be willing to do that.

Let's pray.

Father, thank you, Lord, for

Father, thank you for letting me get through this this morning.

I'll be the first to say, Lord, I don't like discipline.

Not my favorite thing.

As my daughters would say, zero stars out of five.

Do not recommend.

But yet as I read your word...

I understand how foolish that statement is.

Because it's through your discipline, Lord, that I'm able to see how I... It's through your discipline that I'm able to see how my heart is wrong.

How my heart, which is desperately wicked, is leading me astray.

Which is seeking to distract me and to turn me to the right or to the left.

When I look to myself, that's the result.

But it's your discipline that comes in those moments that snaps me out of my selfish gazing.

It helps me to put my eyes back upon Jesus.

The author and the finisher of my faith.

Who endured the cross and who bids me to follow his example.

Knowing that if I run the race and finish, there is an eternity of heaven awaiting.

And Father, while most of us here in this room understand and know that, I pray that you would give us the strength to mature in our faith to the point that we do not go alone.

but that yet we will put our hands to the plow and we will choose to disciple those who need to hear.

We will share our testimony, we will share our faith, and we will bring life to those who are dying and on their way to hell.

Help us to be that mature Christian to those who need to hear about you this week.

Give us the courage to invite those to church that need to hear.

Father, I also want to call us to prayer as a church.

There's lots of suffering in this house.

There's lots of heavy hearts.

There's lots going on, Father.

But two things I know.

Prayer works.

And prayer brings revival.

So Father, I want to publicly call our church to a time of prayer and fasting.

That you would cause us to seek your face.

That You would cause us to seek Your presence in new, in deep, in amazing ways, Father.

That the status quo would no longer be good enough, but there has to be something deeper and more.

Give me the desire to search it out and to seek it out and to dig into the Word of God to know You more, to become more like Your Son.

I ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Amen.

Lord bless you guys.

Be in prayer about Northwestern and be in prayer for our church.