

Good morning. Great to see a good full room here on a Friday. Trust that you'll have a wonderful weekend. Lots going on, as you can see from the chapel and the stage. There's a concert tomorrow. I think you have a coffee house this evening. There are a number of guests on campus as well for Experience Cairn Day. Let's give them a warm Cairn University welcome. Great to have all of you here, and But as Eddie said, you've been smushed to the center. We do ask that those guests for Experience Cairn Day would remain seated after chapel, and then we'll dismiss you for lunch from here. It's my privilege to be here this morning to open the word for you to continue this series from this fall semester series, Strong Medicine for the Soul. We're going to do that by reading a piece of Scripture. If you have your Bibles, you can open them to chapter 12 of the Book of Hebrews. I'll be reading from verses 5 through 13. In the way I want to make this presentation this morning, I would encourage you, if you have a Bible, to open it, because I will be referencing the passages directly as we go through.

So please, if you have a Bible, open it to Hebrews Chapter 12. I'm going to read verses 5 through 13. "Have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord. Do not be weary when reproofed by him, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplined us for our good that we may share his holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we do indeed thank you for the days that you give us. We thank you for the privileges and freedoms that we enjoy. We thank you for the freedom that we enjoy to gather in a room such as this, to open your Word, to read from it, to pray to you, to sing praise to you. We thank you for these freedoms and privileges that we enjoy, and we pray that you would make us grateful for them, to not take them for granted and to steward them well as we serve you on this earth. We thank you for this place. We thank you for the students who study here, for the men and women who serve here. We thank you for these families who are gathered here with us, looking at the university as they consider what will be next for them. We pray that you would grant them wisdom. For all those who are already here, we ask that you would grant them grace and strength to finish this semester and to finish it well. Father, we do pray for this community that you would keep it in your care, make a blessing and encouragement to one another.

Strengthen us in our faith. Strengthen us in our walk and in our work as students and teachers and servants here. Strengthen us as your followers that we may be good proclaimers and representatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Make us grateful for the responsibilities that you've given to us and give us a wise perspective full of faith to see that you are working for our good to conform us more and more to his image, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

So this morning, I want to continue this series, Strong Medicine for the Soul. Just a couple of weeks ago, we looked at the construct of obedience from the Scriptures. A few weeks before that, we looked at seeing the word of God as the Bible describes itself, useful for reproof, for rebuke, for teaching and instruction, for the equipping of us for every good work. Today, I do want to talk about this issue of discipline, not the issue of self-discipline, what it means to discipline yourself, to control your life and world and body and mind, but rather the discipline that comes from God. I think this is fitting to put in a series entitled Strong Medicine for the Soul, because as I said a few weeks ago, this title comes from that colloquially that strong medicine is a hard thing.

I made the distinction last time, and I think it's important to remember that when we're referring to strong medicine colloquially, in our cultural understanding of the use of that phrase, we don't just mean something that's potent with powerful effect. The strong medicine that I'm thinking about in

this is old-school approach to medicine. It means things that are difficult to take, hard to swallow, bitter pills as they were, all for your good, but not something we would choose to partake of if left to our own devices. That's the whole point of strong medicine in those old movies where someone's pinching their nose while they take a spoonful of something that's supposed to make them feel better. In the immediate, it's not pleasant, it's not pleasing, it's not enjoyable, but it's meant to be for your good. There's so much of the truths of the Bible and the Word of God and the instruction to us as his people and as followers of Jesus that are just that. Hard things to take, but for our good. I think this idea of discipline is one such concept. It is hard to get away from this word discipline in the Bible, much like last time we saw it's difficult to find a way around the concept of obedience for us as God's people.

The Bible talks about discipline in a number of places. I've chosen this passage in Hebrews 12 because I think it's particularly profound and clear in terms the benefit of discipline to us as the people of God. But as I want to challenge you to think about discipline biblically, I think it's important to recognize that when we think of this idea of discipline in the current day in which we find ourselves, there's probably not a warm, fuzzy feeling about it. We might have a warm, fuzzy feeling about self-discipline, the controlling our appetites, disciplining ourselves with regard to exercise or practicing. If you're a musician or an athlete, you know the benefits discipline. But when we're talking about discipline that comes from someplace else, a source of authority where discipline comes down to bear upon us, that is not something that we are predisposed to have a warm and fuzzy feeling about.

In fact, you might say it's counter to our nature as sinful human beings to want to face the music, so to speak, in terms of correction. We see it in the garden. As soon as sin enters the fall, sin in the world at the fall. Where's Adam when God comes is looking for him to correct him. He's hiding. It is part of who we are as human beings in this sinful world to want to avoid that discipline and correction. But it's also true culturally that this is something that we don't just say we shouldn't really... It's understandable that we don't feel good about it and have a warm, fuzzy feeling about discipline. My concern is that the world in which we live would actually chip away at our convictions understanding or shape our sensibilities in thinking about such things that it whispers to us, discipline is a bad thing. Discipline is an oppressive thing. Discipline is meant to make you unhappy. Discipline is not very affirming. Discipline isn't something that you're going to smile about. Discipline is really a harsh thing that you should try to avoid. The world will whisper to you that this should be your disposition towards the idea of discipline, and it is 180 degrees from what we read in this passage in Hebrews. 180 degrees. The construct of discipline in this passage of Scripture is something over which we should rejoice and something we should actually embrace.

How does the culture around us begin to affect us? Well, one of the things I think it does, and this has been one of the points I've been trying to make all semester, is that it would have us believe that attitude, which is a big word in the contemporary world in social psychology and the study of humanity. Attitudes are how you feel about something, what your reaction or response is to something, your general tone or mood towards something. But it's technically incorrect. An attitude is an assessment or an evaluation. If you form an attitude about the construct of discipline based upon how you feel, guess where you're going to end up? Nine times out of 10. But if you stop and think about it, to form an assessment of it, to evaluate it, to actually think on what you think about discipline, you might come to a different conclusion. I think that's what the writer of Hebrews is doing here and now to these Christians who are experiencing an extreme degree of hardship and pressure. This morning, I want us to think about how ought we to think about discipline? What is it? What is its purpose?

How do we respond to it? How do we live with it? How do we learn to benefit from it the most? It's interesting to me that we don't like the word discipline very much. I talk to people even in the church about the construct of discipline. It makes us uneasy. Who will decide? Yet we use the word disciple all the time. Disciple and discipline in the English language are words that are very much akin to one another. The disciple is a student who puts themselves under the authority, the correction, the instruction of a master or teacher. That's what a disciple is. We want to be disciplined. We want to be disciplined by others, and some of us even want to disciple others. But heaven forbid that we have a positive view of discipline. It's impossible to resolve those two things. Now, the word for disciple in

Greek is a different word than is used here for discipline. The word for disciple, *methetes*, is a word for disciple. The Greek word used here in Hebrews is the word *paideia*. But it's interesting that the word *paideia* here, discipline, translated discipline in this passage of Hebrews is not discipline in the form of punishment. It is discipline in the form of correction, of instruction, of building up, of raising up, of training. It's a very powerful, powerful idea. I'd like you to look at this passage of Scripture with me because I think this is a very, very powerful passage of Scripture that has a lot to say about our disposition when it comes to the things we experience in this life. First of all, in chapter 12, verse 3, A verse that I didn't read earlier, and this is akin to what was said earlier when we were singing, that we run the race with endurance that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right-hand of the throne of God. The writer of this letter to these Hebrew Christians, these Jewish converts to Christianity, is to remind them of who Jesus is and what he did for us. We should constantly be in the practice of rehearsing in our minds who Jesus is and what he has done before us. That's what the passage means to set our eyes on him.

It doesn't mean that we look at a picture of him or a painting of him. It means that we're constantly looking to him and what has been done for us by him. That's really a strong exhortation here because the context of Hebrews is that these Christians who have converted to Christianity, who have come to faith in Jesus, they're Jews. As a result of converting Christianity and becoming Christians and followers of Jesus, their families, their community, the culture of which they are a part, has now rejected them, rejected them socially, rejected them commercially, is rejecting their ideas, is criticizing them, is fomenting criticism against them, such that they're trying to bring every degree of pressure to bear on these Christians to give up Christianity and return to Judaism. Don't you want to see your family? Don't you want to be with your loved ones? Don't you want to prosper in this community? Don't you want to sell more animals? Don't you want to build more buildings? Don't you want to take care of your family? All these things are constantly being forced upon these Christians. Give up on this Christianity and come back to Judaism. It will be so much better for you.

Why would you endure this hardship when all you have to do is come back to us? The writer of Hebrews is saying, Don't even think about it. Don't even think about it. What you will give up will crush you for all eternity. Don't even think about it. You stay the course. You endure. You fix your eyes on Jesus. Don't take your mind off of who he is and what has been done. No matter what else is happening, look to Jesus. That's the whole message of this letter, to strengthen these Christians to not drift or reject Christ or turn away. Don't do harm to yourself, spiritually, because of this outside pressure. Rather, endure it. Jesus endured so much on your behalf. Think on that. Don't lose sight of that. So what the writer here is doing is framing for these Christians a way of understanding their life, the circumstances of their life, which are not easy to bear. All of us should be able, in one way or another, to relate to circumstances in life that are not easy to bear, whether it's an illness or a relational problem or a struggle with assignments or some other aspect of life, an employment or a financial problem.

All of us as human beings in a sinful and fallen world should not have trouble understanding circumstances that come to bear on you and make life difficult. That shouldn't be a hard thing for us to imagine. If you're actually successful, you're probably spending too much time imagining it. Walking through life in a Pollyannish fashion, pretending that everything is okay with you and everyone else, when the reality is there are things that happen to us in our lives and in this world that are disturbing and troubling and hard to bear. Hard to bear. How do we respond to all of that? Well, it's very interesting. After calling the attention of these Christians to who Jesus is and what has been done for them, for their benefit and in their place, in saying to them, 'Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. If you think on Jesus, it will actually buoy your resolve and strengthen you.' Consider him who endured such hostility against himself that even to the point of death, that when you're so doing, you might actually have a different perspective on your own circumstances.

Then he says this in verse 4, In your struggle against sin, you've not resisted to the point of shedding of your blood. Now, this is important because I think this is the key to understanding this passage, the hardship and the discipline that this writer is talking about. I do not believe that what he is referencing

here is the sinful temptations that come our way. Rather, I think what he is saying is that you are now struggling against the sin that is calling you from Jesus. I'm not alone. Others read it this way as well. In your struggle against sin, those who would draw you away from Christ, who would lead you to stray, that hardship is bearing down on you in all these kinds of ways. It's really not a matter of the sin in terms of temptation. Rather, it's the struggle against the the sinful context and circumstances that we're enduring, the hardship that we're enduring as Christians. I think then the best way to read this construct of discipline is to see it as hardship or suffering. Now, the tricky thing about that is, hardship or suffering is something that we all can relate to in some degree or another.

Some of it's self-inflicted, isn't it? We do something stupid or we do something sinful, there's a consequence for that, and we have to bear that. Some of it happens to us completely beyond our control. These acts of God, these acts of nature, these other kinds of things, someone else's will. There are all kinds of things in our life, both things that we bring upon ourselves and things that happen to us, things that happen in the world around us. But it's really a good thing to actually understand that all things that are hard are used by the Lord to discipline us, to correct us, to instruct us, to train us, to make us stronger. In that way, I think the writer is attempting to reframe things. Here's the passage that was read. Have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? This writer, writing to Jewish Christians, is saying, You know these passages from Job and from Proverbs. These are things that you should be familiar to. Have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? Now, why would he say that? Well, I think this is a key. Not just can we relate to suffering and hardship as human beings, we also can probably, with a very little bit of effort, understand what kinds of reactions we have to hardship and difficulties and adversity and suffering.

We can choose to be broken by it and give into it. We can choose to get angry about it. We can be bitter about it. These are things that are not. He's reminding them, Whatever your case, have you forgotten this exhortation? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord. Not be weary when reproved by him, for the disciplines the ones that he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. What is he saying here? Wait a second. This discipline, this hardship, this suffering that comes in life, it is actually something we should think rightly about. Well, what do we think? Don't regard it lightly. You should take it seriously. Well, what does don't regarding it lightly mean? Well, you know that I'm concerned about the flippancy of our culture and the ways in which we just dismiss things. It doesn't take them too lightly. This, I think, is that idea that you actually don't... You take it too lightly. You either blame it on someone else or you blame it on yourself. You just dismiss it. Oh, well, it's really nothing to learn from. It's just the way life is. How many of us have heard, said ourselves or heard someone say, It is what it is.

Oh, it is what it is. People do what they do. Of course, that's true. Whatever it is is usually what it is. I got no argument with that. My issue is if you say it is what it is and then walk away from it like there's nothing to learn from it, you're missing an opportunity. There is something to be learned. There is a way in which we can be strengthened by these circumstances in life. They should not be taken lightly. Don't be weary when you're reproved by him because you must remember this, the Lord disciplines the ones that he loves. He chastises his sons whom he's received. I think this is a good point to stop and challenge another cultural construct with regard to discipline. We hear the word discipline, and it's very tempting to think punishment. And by punishment, I don't even mean psychological punishment, where you add an unpleasant consequence to reduce the occurrence of a behavior. Any skinnarians in the crowd will get that one. I'm not talking about that. I mean that we think of discipline as punishment, which is you did something wrong and we all want our pound of flesh.

It's so tempting to let the world tell us that's what discipline is. Discipline is God's way of getting his pound of flesh from you. But discipline, biblically, is not punishment in terms of God getting his pound of flesh or making you pay for something you did wrong. It isn't even here referencing God's judgment for wrongdoing. The word here is *paideia*. It means your instruction for your good, your raising up. You're being trained up. It's meant to be for your good. It's not punishment or judgment here. Rather, the hardships in life are God's discipline. You should take them seriously, and you must understand something. It's because he loves you. You say, Well, that's ridiculous. Why would someone who loves me let me experience hardship? Because he loves you too much to let you stay in your current state. He loves you so much that he wants your faith to be stronger, your will to be more resolved, your

maturity to be greater, your courage in the face of fear to be better. He loves you too much to leave you where you are. The discipline that comes from God is to be taken seriously, and it's out of love, and he gives it to us. We experience it as his children.

I want to take a minute to unpack a couple of things here because I think there's some things here for us to think about in terms of our lives and the way the world looks at some of these things. The writer of Hebrews is telling these Christians who are experiencing hardship, Listen, this hardship is the Lord's paideia for you. He does it. It happens because he loves you. You're his children. Then he says in verse seven, It's for discipline that you have to endure. You endure for discipline. James talks about this, counter it pure joy when you encounter various trials. For trials, Develop perseverance. I'd ask the question, not only do we have a problem with discipline, if you ask people, What do you think about perseverance and endurance? Well, I'd rather not have to develop them. Because you know if we said, Well, I really want to be someone who perseveres. I really want to be someone who endures. Guess what that means? It means you cannot take the easy way. Because we all know physically, some of you are in these programs, you know about atrophy. You know about psychological dependency.

You're studying all these things. You know that the less we do and the more we hide from things that are difficult, the weaker we get. The reality is that you endure, and I think that's a problem. I think culture is that, endurance and perseverance, those are culturally, they're just being forced upon you to make you work harder or do something for someone else. Well, the Bible is saying here, you have to endure. It's for discipline that you endure, for your paideia that you endure, for your instruction and your training up and your strengthening and your correction. This is all for your guidance. This is why you endure, because in so doing, he says in verse 7, God's treating you as sons for What son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you're left without discipline in which all have participated, then you're illegitimate children and not sons. He's not just saying the discipline comes because God loves you. He's saying, Look at it like When it comes, you know that you are his child. Because what he's saying essentially in this passage is, as a follower of God, as a child of God, if God is not disciplining you, if you're not experiencing discipline, things that are meant for your paideia, then it's like being fatherless.

You say, Well, I don't want to be fatherless. I want to be the father's son. I want to be the father's daughter. I'm part of this family. I'm an heir. I'm a joint heir with Jesus. Here we are. We're part of this collection. Yes. Discipline is part of that. It's not just a manifestation of his love. It's an indication that we're part of his family and that he is, in fact, our father. I think the writer uses this because it's something that would have been known to everybody. Not only would they have known about fathers and the cultural associations with fathers, which in antiquity, both in this Hebrew tradition and even more so in the Roman tradition, the absolute authority of a father. This writer uses the construct of father and draws the attention. Everybody would have known it. The other thing it would have known is how dangerous it is in antiquity to be illegitimate, to be fatherless, is to be destitute, is to be the outside of care. These people who are worried about their livelihood and their comfort and their families because they've converted to Judaism and being converted to Christianity or being tempted to give it up and return to Judaism.

The writer here is saying, Whoa, you're part of a family with a father who's perfect and loves you perfectly. If you don't experience discipline, that means you're without a Father. Trust me, this Father is better than any earthly Father you could ever imagine. He's drawing this issue of Father because it's known to them, but it's a powerful image. He says, Look, if you're not disciplined, then you're fatherless. Just a word about that because the writer does it. He then references Earthly Fathers. He says, Besides this, we had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. I would put a parentheses there. Some of us respected them sometimes. Why we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? This connection to earthly fathers is worth parking on for just a minute. I've referenced these kinds of things in chapel for you before, and I think it's, again, another illustration of how the thinking of the world and the culture in which we live wants to challenge us, and this would be it. I had a bad father experience. I had an absentee father. I had a harsh father. I had a critical father.

I had a judgmental father. I had an overbearing father. I had a father who disciplined in anger. I had a

father who this, I had a father who that. The conclusion that you come to is the problem then, because that was my experience or was the experience of someone I loved or someone I love or someone I knew or someone I know, the temptation then is to say, what's broken with that picture? What's wrong with the picture that people have experienced that with regard to father? The problem is father. The problem is fatherhood. The problem is discipline. No, brothers and sisters. The problem is sin. If you come to the conclusion that harsh fathers means fatherhood is a bad thing, you are off the tracks. Fathers who are bad fathers are bad fathers not because they're fathers and not because they're men, but because they're sinners. Fathers who are bad fathers who discipline their children in a harsh way that does damage, They didn't do that because they used discipline or were trying to correct. They did it because they were sinners and did it for the wrong reasons in the wrong ways, under the wrong motives, with the wrong things in view.

I think that many of us who are fathers have to understand something. It's a great principle. It's an easy one. If discipline, if paideia is instruction, reproof, guidance for your training up, then we should never do that in anger because we lose sight of the purpose. But we don't say, Well, we're never going to do it.

I was disciplined as a child, and I talked to people all the time. I was just at a conference, and I was talking to some older folks, older than me, although I remember this, too. Retired teachers, their faces light up telling stories about the good old days when you could paddle students. One guy was talking about he had a paddle that he drilled holes in. It would whistle on the way to its target. He got some joy out of it and whatever. He'd reminisced. I'm thinking, Yeah, unless you're on the receiving end of a whistling paddle, that's a pretty cruel thing to do, right? What's the issue? Those kinds of things that happen to us, That's not to blame on the idea of discipline or the construct of father or father figure. That's to blame on sinfulness.

You take joy in hurting someone else. That's not the problem because you're a man or a woman or a father or a mother or a stepfather or a step mother. The problem with taking joy in harming someone else and hurting someone else is because sin is ruling in your life. You actually have to be careful to guard the construct of fatherhood is a blessed sacred one, as is motherhood. They're outlined in the Bible. We shouldn't allow the world to say, Well, I know people who had bad experiences with discipline and bad experiences with fathers. Therefore, this passage must mean something else, or we shouldn't even be thinking about it. That's not the problem. The problem isn't the father being a father or the father being a man, or discipline being brought to bear, the instruction, reproof, correcting, training. The problem is sin. This writer is actually accounting for that because he's actually drawing a contrast between earthly fathers who are flawed and your heavenly Father who is not. So if you come to the conclusion that all fatherly discipline is inherently wrong because people on this earth have experienced pain and suffering as a result of it, you will reject the discipline of the Father who is perfect and loves you in ways that are unimaginable and immeasurable.

Don't do that, because if you reject the loving, gracious, kind, perfect discipline of the Father, you lose. You lose.

That's what the writer of Hebrews is saying. This is actually for your good. Verse 11, For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness, those who have been trained by it. Not only do we have to see the love that's in discipline, what it is, what its purpose is, the love that's there, the fact that it demonstrates that we are God's children, not just that it has benefit for us as our paideia, but also that it's difficult now, but the fruit is often yielded later. That requires a degree of maturity. Psychologically, we refer to it as delayed gratification. I will actually Do something now that is difficult that will benefit me later. But the problem is your nature doesn't want to endure something that's difficult now. The culture says, Are you nuts? Don't delay gratification. If it doesn't feel good now, avoid it like the plague. If it doesn't feel good now, avoid it like the plague. But if you do that, you lose. Because the Bible says, Discipline is unpleasant for a moment, but eventually, later, it yields the fruit. What fruit? The fruit of righteousness, the peaceful fruit of righteousness. We're better for it.

Let me give an illustration. Some of you know that years ago, I used to teach and work with horses,

and in recent years, I'm back doing a little bit of that. Working with a horse now who every time I go to get on him, he moves. Now I know that I'm not the lightest guy in the room. I get it why a horse might move if I'm looking for the stirrup. But he'll stand there and I go to get on the stirrup. He used to take three or four steps. I know people who say, He's just a horse being a horse. It is what it is. Just follow him. Well, pretty soon you're following him all over the place till you get him up against the fence and he's got no place to go and he's stuck. That's not what I want for him. What I want for him is to learn the benefit because it's safer for every other rider and better for him if he stands quiet for anybody who mounted. What do I do? I go to put my foot in the stirp and he moves away.

Well, then I take the lead and I work him around in a circle. Once, twice, three, four times. You can see him throwing his head and his tails ringing. Why? Because he doesn't want to walk in a circle. He wants to stand still. Yeah, not really. You don't want to stand still. Can I go put my foot in a stirp? You move. So what are you doing? I'm saying, Look, you're going to give up peace right now because I'm going to discipline you. I'm going to bring some paideia to bear on you and make this uncomfortable at the start. But if you learn to stand still, everything will go better. Guess what? It's literally Two sessions and three steps is reduced to half a step. Half a step is reduced to nothing, to the point where you could set off fire crackers and that horse won't move. Not because I beat him into submission, but I want what is best for him, which means he needs paideia. He doesn't want it. He wants to stand still. He wants to do his own thing. But in the end, he's better off for that. That's this picture.

For the moment, all discipline seems painful. Why is this happening to me? I don't deserve What is God trying to do to me? Why would he do this? Why would I have to endure this? Instead, we have to actually change our perspective and paradigm. Isn't this what was happening to Job? Remember, Job's afflicted with all of these cataclysmic sufferings, loses his children, he loses his livestock, he loses his reputation, he loses his health. Remember Job's friends come to visit him. The Bible says there's Job sitting in suffering, and his friends came and sat with him. I'm quite They're fond of saying, If those guys had just done that, they would have gone down in history as the three best friends a guy ever had. But the Bible says, Then they spoke. And what are they saying? Job, there must be some sin in your life. Job, you got to figure out what God is trying to teach you. Job, you must have done something wrong. Job, who did you offend? Job, what did you steal? Job, have you searched your heart? In reality, what does Job's repentance look like in the Book of Job? I'm going to place my hand over my mouth.

I'm going to repent in silence. I of things I didn't understand, things far too wonderful for me to conceive. I will sit here. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him, for I know that my redeemer lives. Job's lesson is to trust God in the midst of those circumstances. Job doesn't know that God is allowing his suffering to take place, to prove to Satan and all his fallen angels that people will serve God by his grace no matter what their circumstances. God is doing that for the good. It's so easy for us to lose sight of it as soon as things get difficult and say, This isn't fair. There's another cultural implication. Life is about everything being fair. It's not fair that I have to suffer and he doesn't. It's not fair that she has to suffer and she doesn't. We look at it that way, and it's very easy for us to lose sight of the fact that this strong medicine is always unpleasant in the moment, but it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Such that Job actually think he repents and wants to He sees God when he thinks he's going to die because his eyes are completely off his circumstances and only on the Lord.

That's what discipline does for us. That's what righteousness is. We want God and the things of God, and everything else pales in comparison. That faith. So what do we do? Well, we do our part. Therefore, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. This work that is taking place, this idea that God has in store for you, is not to be shunned or taken lightly and avoided or become bitter about. It's actually to see God loves us. It's part of being a child. It's for the betterment. Peaceful fruit of righteousness is down the road for you. So what do you have to do? Well, you don't just wait and you don't just complain. Rather, he says, what? Lift your drooping hands. I'm here to tell you that part of embracing Paideia is that you take responsibility. It isn't just the one, the perfect God, creator and sustainer of all that is, the one who loves us beyond measure, who has responsibility for

Paideia. We have to take responsibility and do our part.

I want to give some guidance on that. It's very tempting. I've listened to Christians over the entire my Christian life, which is now well over 40 years, in the midst of suffering, say, I could take it if I knew what God was trying to teach me. If I only knew what God's trying to teach me in this, I think I could take it easier. What do you think, Todd? I say, I think the Book of Hebrews says you should take it because he loves you. Yeah, but if I just knew, I think God's trying to teach me this. Yeah, except that heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I wouldn't trust my own heart on this one. God's not revealing that. So guess what you should do? Endure it all as a patient soldier. Endure it all. Endure it all. See, every good and perfect gift is coming from above. Stop trying to read the tea leaves. You know when you'll know what God is trying to teach you? When down the road, the peaceful fruit of righteousness is born. That's when you'll know. What was God trying to teach God was trying to teach me patience.

Of course he was. There are so many verses in the Bible that say God's trying to teach you patience. He doesn't need to give you a disease to teach you patience. God's trying to teach me to be more responsible with my money. Of course God wants to teach you to be more responsible with your money. There's lots of Bible verses that talk about being responsible. What does God want you to do? Trust him and endure. See what is happening in your life as that which will strengthen your faith and produce in you the peaceful fruit of righteousness. That's what he wants to teach us. I think that if we actually embrace this discipline in this way, powerful things begin to happen in our lives and in the lives of those around us. See, I think we do our part here, both in terms of our attitude and our actions, both in terms of our responses to paideia and our responsibilities with regard to paideia. I say this to most of my classes on the first week of classes. Every educational setting says the same thing. When something goes wrong in a classroom, teachers blame the students and students blame the teacher.

You know who's to blame? Everybody. Everybody. Teachers who get frustrated because a student or students are not taking their class seriously, need to get over it. Not everybody takes everything seriously. They're not doing all the assignments, really. I've been in education a long time. I didn't know students don't do the assignments. I've been in education over 30 years. You mean they don't read? But I asked them to. Yeah, guess what? Not everybody takes responsibility. Students all the time say, I could learn if I had a better teacher. You know what? This is the teacher you got. But it's hard. Yeah, guess what? You're hopefully going to get a job when you leave here. I don't think you want me praying for you this way, but this is the way it is. I pray for all of you. I pray that the Lord will bring challenges to bear in your life after you leave us that will strengthen your faith. I know you'd rather have me pray that you make more money and have a bigger house and everything goes well. But I actually pray that God would have his hand in your lives and bring to bear upon your life those things which will make you better followers and servants of his.

Take responsibility, see it the right way. Understand that the Lord's paideia is a manifestation of his love and your sonship or daughtership to the Father.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we do indeed thank you for your goodness and grace. Thank you for your word, which is living and active and able to divide between joint and mara. We pray that your spirit would use this teaching of your word to strengthen our faith, to convict us about the ways in which we view the circumstances of life, to give us what we need, not just to bear up and not just to grit our teeth, but to endure in ways that produce Godly character, that we may see the peaceful fruit of righteousness produced in us. We pray these things in the strong name of Jesus, who endured so much for us. Amen.