

JOSHUA 13:15-33
GOD IS NOT MOCKED!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 13 as we continue our study through this book on victorious Christian living.

We are currently in a section of this book that deals with the division of the land, and for many, this is not that exciting and some even feel it is not that important. And maybe you are wondering why it is even in the Bible!

Keep in mind that God had promised them the land of Canaan and now, with the division of the land in Canaan and the land on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land, we see that what God had promised them, He has brought to pass. All they needed to do was walk by faith!

This morning we will be focusing on the 2½ tribes that wanted to settle on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land. Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh saw that the land here was good and they did not want to cross over into the land of Canaan, which is never a good thing. God called them to cross over and they refused, and in the end, they will be some of the first tribes taken into captivity by the Assyrians!

But that is another story. What I would like to do is give you an overview of this chapter and then we will be focusing on an important issue that emerges from this text, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

And yes, for the unsaved, it has eternal consequences attached to their actions. But let us not forget, that what we, as Christians, sow, we will also reap. And we will see that in our study this morning.

Now, before we get to that topic, I want to review what is going on in this chapter, the division of the land on the east side of the Jordan River, outside of the Promise Land.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 13 and I will share some of the verses in this chapter, I am not going to go through all of the names of the cities that they occupied, and then I will give you an overview of what took place. We will pick up in Joshua 13 starting in verse 15, and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at the topic, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

JOSHUA 13

VERSES 15, 22-23

We start out with the tribe of Reuben and the portion of land that was given to the tribe of Reuben on the east side of the Jordan River.

They occupied the land in the area east of the Dead Sea or Salt Sea in the southern part of the land.

We also see this character by the name of Balaam, and we see that the children of Israel killed Balaam the soothsayer here.

If you remember the story, he is the one that was hired by Balak, the King of the Moabites in Numbers 22 through 25:2 to curse the children of Israel and Balaam couldn't, he blessed them but then he gave the King the information needed so that the children of Israel would bring the curse upon themselves as they were involved with pagan women and idolatry! And he did make a profit, but not for long as we see here!

And it is Balaam and his mocking of God that we will be looking at and see how it applies to our lives and those that are not saved. Remember, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

We will also look at these 2½ tribes that remained on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land and in this disobedience to God, they too were mocking God. But remember, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

But before we look at that, let's finish looking at the remaining tribes and the land that they were given on the east side of the Jordan River.

VERSES 24, 28

Next Joshua tells us the portion of land that was given to the tribe of Gad on the east side of the Jordan River. They occupied the land from the northern part of the Dead Sea to just below the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Chinnereth.

Now we do need to deal with this issue of this land of the Ammonites. You see, in Deuteronomy 2:19 we are told, **“And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.”**

That is interesting to me because here in Joshua we see some of the land of the Ammonites was given to the children of Israel and yet, as we have read in Deuteronomy 2:19, God said it was forbidden for them to have this land, the children of Israel. So what is going on here?

I think the answer to that problem is simple. We need to keep in mind that this land of the Ammonites was taken by Sihon, the King of the Amorites and thus, the children of Israel did not take the land from the Ammonites, but from the King of the Amorites, Sihon! I hope that makes sense to you!

VERSES 29, 32

And now we come to the last tribe or the half tribe I should say that received their portion of the land on the east side of the Jordan River.

This was the half tribe of Manasseh. The other half of the tribe of Manasseh was going to live in the Promise Land, the land of Canaan, on the west side of the Jordan River.

But this group here, on the east side of the Jordan River, occupied the land from around the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Chinnereth northward.

And we will look at these tribes more as we look at what happened to them because of their disobedience, because they, in a sense, were mocking God by not listening to God. And we will see how this relates to believers today!

But there is one more tribe that we need to talk about in Joshua 13:33. Look at what we are told.

VERSE 33

Keep in mind that wherever the tribes of Israel were located, there needed to be Levites there to guide them in the things of God. And that is what we see here. Even though these tribes are not in the Promise Land, they needed Levites to be among them to bring God to them and to bring the people to God.

And we see again the tribe of Levi not getting an inheritance because the Lord was their inheritance as they served Him.

And this is the fulfillment of what Jacob spoke of in Genesis 49:5-7, that they would not have an inheritance but be scattered throughout the land.

Listen to what we are told, **“Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.”**

And as we have seen, this did come true for the tribe of Levi! They were scattered throughout Israel.

What is interesting is that they become priests and served the Lord and we see the grace of God extended to them. They also were there in the cities of refuge throughout the land on the east and west side of the Jordan River!

And yes, they never possessed their own land, as the other tribes did, but what an honor it was for the Lord to be their possession!

Now we are going to look at this topic, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED*** by first looking at Balaam and then these 2½ tribes who lived outside the Promise Land. And what we will be looking at, specifically, is the unsaved and then the saved!

Before we deal with Balaam and what he did, his mocking of God, let me share this with you regarding what the mocking of God is all about.

We are told,

Every day, in every part of the world, there are people who mock God. Many go out of their way to blaspheme, to ridicule, and to shake their fist at their Creator. The amount of mockery is disheartening, and its audacity is often breathtaking. God sees all this, and surely He could do something about it. Why does He allow it to continue?

God created mankind with free will. Revelation 4:11 reads, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (KJV).

The Almighty created us for His glory and pleasure, and what greater pleasure could there be than being loved by someone willingly and joyously and without being forced to love?

God did not create mindless drones that would simply do His bidding. He wanted children, similar to the way that human parents want children, not as servants but thinking individuals, complete with their own quirks and personalities. God wanted to have fellowship with us, a relationship with us. *True, genuine* love is voluntary.

And because God created mankind this way - of course, He did not have to, but chose to - we have the free will to disobey Him, blaspheme Him, and, yes, even mock Him.

But we are warned in Galatians 6:7 that God will not always be mocked. The blasphemy and derision are temporary. There will be a day of reckoning, and, ultimately, a man reaps what he sows.

We have the ability to choose good or evil, right or wrong. God also gave us a solution, a way out of sin and into eternal life. Jesus Christ has provided the means of restoring a loving relationship with God, through His sacrifice on the cross.

How true that is and that leads us to Balaam, who will have a choice, to obey God fully or to disobey God.

We read of this man, this prophet in Numbers chapters 22, 23 and 24 and the first few verses of chapter 25. And it is a fascinating study, you can go through our notes on Numbers to get the full picture, but we are going to focus on this issue of mocking God and how Balaam mocked God.

Let me set the stage for what is happening here and why the King of the Moabites was terrified of the children of Israel.

The children of Israel are camped on the east side of the Jordan River, and across this River is the Promise Land.

On the other side is the city of Jericho, this fortified city, their first enemy they must destroy in the land of Canaan!

For the children of Israel, their victories are making the news. So much so that Balak, the King of the Moabites was terrified of them. He thought that they were getting too close to them and that they would be next in their conquering of the land.

You see, Sihon, King of the Amorites defeated Moab and took some of their land.

Then the children of Israel defeated Sihon.

Thus, if Moab couldn't defeat Sihon, then they were not going to be able to defeat the children of Israel, they are in big trouble!

Balak's solution to this problem is to call for Balaam, a soothsayer, to bring a curse upon the children of Israel.

And Balaam's accomplishments were well known, for Pethor, where he lived, was a town in Mesopotamia, located on the west bank of the Euphrates River.

And I don't believe that this prophet knew the Lord, not at all.

Balaam is nothing more than a pagan prophet who sought *ANY* god to bless and curse people by. And he heard about the God of Israel and thus, he will implore the God of Israel to curse the children of Israel. I am getting ahead of myself here but hang on.

You see, this is a problem for many. God did speak to this pagan prophet, but why?

Because God will use even unsaved people to carry out His plans and purposes as we see here.

Does God speak to the unsaved; does He speak through the unsaved?

Yes, He does!

In Genesis 20:6-7 He spoke to Abimelech the King of Gerar.

He spoke to Pharaoh in dreams back in Genesis 41:25.

And in Daniel he spoke to Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon.

And we even see this in the New Testament where God spoke through the High Priest of Israel and he was not saved!

In John 11:49-53 we are told, **“And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’ Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.’ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.”**

And believe it or not He even uses Satan to carry out His plan and purposes!

And when God speaks to Balaam, He is very clear on what He wants him to do. He said, **“You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.”** Numbers 22:12.

Now how many ways can we take that? There is only one way to take this, ***DON'T GO!*** You see, there should be no confusion, but Balaam wants the money and he will find a way to go!

And as you read this story you see that Balaam persisted and God allowed him to go but God was going to tell Balaam what to say.

But keep in mind what King Balak wants Balaam to do, he wants him to curse the children of Israel!

But instead of a curse, he blesses them. In fact, this happens four times!

You see, Balaam could not curse God's people and that was a problem because now he was not going to get paid. Remember, he was a for profit prophet!

So he tells Balak that he can't curse the children of Israel but they can bring a curse from God upon their own lives. And he tells the King what to do so they would be cursed!

Make no mistake about it, he was more interested in the money than what God desired. In II Peter 2:15-16 we are told, **“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.”**

You see, Balaam loved money, wealth, possessions and that was his sin.

In Jude 11 we are told, **“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”**

Isn't it interesting, isn't it amazing what people will do for money!

And this is what took place. The women of Moab came before the men of Israel and seduced them, enticed them to sin.

How did they do this?

They dressed themselves up, wearing their short little skirts; make-up to the hilt and the men of Israel fell for it.

You see, many of the pagan religious practices were centered around sexual immorality and thus, as they got the children of Israel to have sexual relations with them, it was based on the worship of their gods!

Since Balaam could not curse the children of Israel, he got the children of Israel to move away from the blessings of God and by doing so they were cursing themselves!

Now how do we know that it was Balaam who gave this plan to Balak?

We are told in Numbers 31:16 that it was Balaam. Listen to what this verse tells us, **“Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”**

And in Revelation 2:14 Jesus tells us in His letter to the church in Pergamos, **“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”**

In other words, Balaam told Balak, *“Look, I can't curse these people, but you can get them to curse themselves by having them turn from the Lord!”*

And guess what, it worked then, and it still works today. May we not fall prey to these devilish schemes but learn the lesson God is showing us!

What did God tell Balaam?

He told Balaam that he needed to speak forth the words that God gave him and he did that but then he went a step further and he gave Balak the plans to see Israel fall prey to sin and cause the Lord to bring a curse upon them.

And I believe at this point Balaam was paid for his counsel, but he only enjoyed it for a short time.

Remember, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

In Numbers 31:7-8 we are told, **“And they warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed - Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.”**

And what did we read here in Joshua 13:22, **“The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them.”**

Make no mistake about it, what you sow you will also reap. It is an agricultural principle that is also played out in our own lives. We see that here with Balaam, he was killed because of what he sowed!

Yes, there is pleasure in sin, in disobeying God and doing your own thing! If there wasn't no one would fall into it. But that pleasure is short lived and in the end is death, as we see here with Balaam!

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 6:7-8, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“Do not be deceived and deluded and misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, that and that only is what he will reap. For he who sows to his own flesh (lower nature, sensuality) will from the flesh reap decay and ruin and destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”**

We are living in a day when the hearts of man are evil and getting towards the time of Genesis chapter 6, where the hearts of man were evil continuously! Mocking God, doing whatever is right in their own eyes, and they think they will get away with it. But they won't.

Have you ever wondered what God thinks about those who are rebelling against Him, those who are mocking Him? We don't have to guess because the Bible tells us.

In Psalm 2, listen to what the Lord has to say about the rebellion of man who thinks he can fight against Almighty God and win.

We are told, **“Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.’ ‘I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.” Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”** Psalm 2.

God laughs at the rebellion of man, thinking they will win this war with God. In fact, God says that He laughs at their futile efforts! All the mocking, all the rebellion, and one day they will have to stand before the King of kings and Lord of lords! They will face the judgment of God and it won't matter if they believe in God now or not. Judgment will come, not might!

Look at what we are told in Psalm 2:4, that the Lord **“will hold them in derision.”**

In other words, the Lord will make a mockery of them, He will put them down.

Let me show you what I mean with this story about a man who tried to destroy God and you will see what happened to him.

We are told of this man named Voltaire, the noted 18th century French philosopher. And Voltaire said that it took centuries to build up Christianity, but **“I’ll show how just one Frenchman can destroy it within 50 years.”**

Taking his pen, he dipped it into the ink of unbelief and wrote against God. In other words, he thought he could fight against God and win.

Well, twenty years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society purchased his house for printing the Bible.

And it later became the Paris headquarters for the British and Foreign Bible society.

The Bible is still a best-seller; an entire 6-volume set of Voltaire’s works was once sold for 90 cents.

Just before his death, the noted atheist swore: **“I wish I had never been BORN!”**

In other words, if people want to fight against God, He **“will hold them in derision.”**

In Psalm 2:10-12 I believe the Holy Spirit begins to speak to us.

Why do I say that?

Think of it like this.

What is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the world today?

The Holy Spirit is here to draw men to Christ, to point them in the right direction. And thus, when you read these verses that is exactly what He is doing here. He is telling those in rebellion to **“kiss the Son”** or pay homage, worship the Son.

To put that into a New Testament thought, it would be **“. . . ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . .’”** Acts 16:31.

And just like this Psalm is saying, it still applies today, if they would continue to refuse to turn to Christ, then they will be judged for their rebellion. They are not going to win in this battle against God.

And for those who come to Christ, those who put their trust in Him, they are blessed, they are happy, for they will enter into the Kingdom Age and eternity with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And that is truly God's desire. He wants all to come to the saving knowledge of Him, but tragically many will not, and many will gather together in battle against Him, but they will not win!

And I guess we can sum up this Psalm like this.

For those that want to defy God, they will be broken.

But, for those that want to receive Him, who depend upon Him, who Kiss the Son you might say, they will be blessed.

The choice is open for every one of us and the choice is this – ***BROKEN*** or ***BLESSED?***

Make no mistake about it, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED***, as Balaam found out and as everyone who is mocking God will find out one day when they have to stand before Him!

Now we do need to deal with this point as well, because we as Christians can mock the Lord by what we do, what we say.

Now we would never think of it that way, but if we are doing what God told us not to do, aren't we mocking Him? Of course we are. We are telling God that we know what He is saying but we are going to do what we want, and we think there are no consequences to our actions. But there are!

In other words, we are ***MOCKING GOD*** and we need to remember, ***GOD IS NOT MOCKED!***

Remember these 2½ tribes that remained outside the Promise Land; Ruben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh?

God instructed them to enter the land of Canaan, but, because of the bountifulness of the land on the east side of the Jordan River, they chose to negate what God had said and, in a sense, mocked Him.

God had what was best for them, but they did not listen and in the end, what they sowed, they reaped. Like I have said, they were the first to go into captivity by the hands of the Assyrians!

And this is so true for us as Christians. What we sow we will also reap!

I realize that some laugh at this, they don't believe it, but it is a law of God! What you sow, you will also reap!

And I am sure we can all say that we did things that maybe God would not approve of and nothing really happened!

First of all, God is gracious and merciful, and He is longsuffering.

But there are laws out there that we can try to break but in doing so we will suffer some very severe and many times deadly consequences.

Think about the law of gravity. You don't violate this law without consequences. Yes, sometimes those consequences are minor but I can tell you from experience, if you are up on a ladder and you violate the law of gravity, it is going to hurt and it will cost you a lot of money as you are taken by ambulance and have to be treated in the emergency room!

You break the law of gravity and you will pay for it!

In Galatians 6:7-8 Paul reminds us of this spiritual principle when he wrote, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”**

The Living Bible puts these verses like this, **“Don’t be misled; remember that you can’t ignore God and get away with it: a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows! If he sows to please his own wrong desires, he will be planting seeds of evil and he will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death; but if he plants the good things of the Spirit, he will reap the everlasting life that the Holy Spirit gives him.”**

Make no mistake about it, God designed this law and it is not open for debate. He did not ask us if we like it or not. This wasn’t the result of popular opinion. This is the law of God and we can accept it or reject it, but there are consequences to our actions.

Now some feel that this is not fair. How can God do something like that?

Think about being a parent. Did you have rules in your home for your children to follow? Of course you did.

Did they like those rules? Did they say, ***“Mom and Dad, we love your rules!”***? Of course they did not. In fact, they rebelled against them from time-to-time, and there were consequences regarding their actions!

Here’s the thing. God loves us so much that He has told us what is right and what is wrong! He has told us what we should do and what we should not do! He is not trying to ruin our fun but to protect us because He loves us more than we will ever know!

And yes, this law of God is not just for Christians, the entire world operates under this law of ***“cause and effect.”***

Think about it. If you choose to be slothful you will live a life of poverty. *Cause and effect.*

If you are one who loves to destroy relationships, you will end up lonely. *Cause and effect.*

If you spend more than you have you will end up in debt and in trouble. *Cause and effect.*

Remember what Hosea 8:7 says, “**They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind. . . .**”

You see, this mocking of God will produce the same results in our individual lives, in our families and in a nation and we have seen that!

Think about this for a minute. We’ve been thumbing our noses at God’s moral law and as those actions grow in popularity and acceptance, we assume we’ve either eliminated God’s control over the effects or possibly pulled Him over to our view. ***NOT AT ALL!***

We don’t jump off the roof of a building and think we can break the law of gravity. We will break some bones, but not the law of gravity!

And we don’t snub our collective noses at Almighty God and get away with it.

He loves us too much to allow us to make our own rules.

And for us as Christians, the practice of sin, of ***MOCKING GOD***, is not or should not be the normal lifestyle of believers.

Look at some examples of what sin can do in our lives if we continue down that path of ***MOCKING GOD!***

In I Thessalonians 5:19 we are told, “**Do not quench the Spirit.**” The Living Bible puts this verse like this, “**Do not smother the Holy Spirit.**”

In other words, sin is like throwing water on a fire, it will put it out. And thus, as we continue in sin we are smothering, in a sense, the work of the Spirit in our lives. We are stopping what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives. There are consequences to what we are sowing!

GOD IS NOT MOCKED!

One writer put it like this as he looks at what Paul said here in I Thessalonians chapter 5, “Quench means to throw a wet blanket over. Sin is not acknowledging the will of God through preaching (1 Thessalonians 5:20), not being thankful in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18), not praying spontaneously (1 Thessalonians 5:17), not rejoicing in whatever circumstances we find ourselves (1 Thessalonians 5:16), and not abstaining from evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). All these small things quench the Holy Spirit’s teaching ministry in our lives and takes away our sharpness to understand spiritual truth.”

You see, the practice of sin is not to be the normal lifestyle of believers. When we sin, it has an effect upon us as well upon others. For one thing, it robs us of our ability to understand spiritual truth. The Bible says that it is the Holy Spirit that helps us understand the will of God.

As we continue in sin and mock God, our study of the Bible becomes unfruitful. James reminds us in James 1:22-24, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**”

Instead of the Word of God being a mirror to show us our sin so we can deal with it, we ignore what we see, and we put on a façade and pretend to be something we are not! Or we make excuses for our sin and in reality, we are just ignoring what God is showing us! We don't apply the lessons God is showing us into our lives, it is just information and there is no application! And that is very dangerous!

Remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 1:1-2, "**Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.**"

Delighting in God's Word and allowing the Word of God, opened up by the Spirit of God to transform us into the men and women God desires us to be!

And sin in our lives will rob us of the joy God has for us. God desires that our joy may be full, not lacking. So if you are missing that joy in your life, do a heart check!

John reminds us in I John 1:4, "**And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**"

John wants them to be full, overflowing with the joy of the Lord. Thus, as you read this letter, may your joy be full, John is saying! And thus, sin will rob us of that joy that the Lord has for us!

I also see that sin will take away that excitement of living that Christian life. It is like living in the wilderness you might say.

Think about David after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah.

David understood that his sin had robbed him of that joy and excitement he had with the Lord and he did not feel saved. He felt dry, his bones ached, his heart was broken, and he cried out to the Lord in Psalm 51:12, **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”**

And what happens many times when we lose that excitement is, we try to replace it with worldly pleasures, and that never works!

And make no mistake about it, sin robs us of our peace with God. Sin causes anguish of heart, a loss of that peace.

David said in Psalm 32:3-4 that the result of his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, **“When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.”**

And here is the solution to that problem. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

If you want the peace of God in your life, then you need to repent and give it to Him, and He will fill your life with His peace.

Sin robs us of that peace!

Not only that but sin will hinder our fellowship with God. It is not that God is far from us, but we are far from Him.

John tell us in I John chapter 1, **“that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. . . . If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”** I John 1:3, 6.

Sin has consequences in our lives. The believer experiences a lost or alone feeling until they get things right with God

When we sin, it has an effect on us as well as others. We lose our spiritual sharpness. Confession is the only thing that can bring that back. Therefore, it is vital that Christians confess their sins.

Yes, God chastens us, He corrects us, because He loves us. Listen to what Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:4-11 regarding the chastening of God. He said, **“You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with 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? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”**

The Greek word for “**chastening**” is PAIDEIA, (paheee-di’-ah) and it is never used of punishment.

It is a word that is used of parents who discipline their children through training and education.

So get the correct picture here. What the Lord is doing with us is like the training of a child so that they may grow and mature. Now, please understand that God’s chastening is not punitive or retaliatory, but it is corrective to His children, to believers. Yes, outside of Christ there is judgment, it is punitive, but not in Christ!

Why doesn’t the Lord punish us, why is His chastening not punitive in nature?

Because Jesus has already paid in full the penalty for our sins and He bore the punishment that was due us.

Thus, if God did punish us again, He would be unrighteous because the debt for our sin was already paid in full!

So what the Lord is doing with us is teaching us, training us, educating us in how we are to live out our faith and it is not always easy, it does hurt many times.

Thus, as Christians, as we go through chastening, times of stress, trials, what happens many times is we forget the basics or the basic principles of the faith just like these Jewish believers had done! Or, as Paul put it, “**And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons . . .**” They had forgotten what God’s Word says!

Also, Paul tells us that we are not to “**. . . despise the chastening of the LORD . . .**” In other words, we might not see the chastening of the Lord as a big deal. We may take it lightly and that is never a good thing because you will not learn from it! It is hard to learn from your mistakes if you don’t see them as mistakes in the first place!

The other thing we are not to do when we are chastened by the Lord is pretty simple and yet we forget it so often. Paul tells us that we are not to “**. . . be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.**” The Greek word that is used for “discouraged” is EKLUO, (ek-loo’o) and it can also be translated “faint.” In other words, “*do not faint when you are rebuked by Him.*”

Some people, as they are going through difficult times, a chastening of the Lord, they are so overwhelmed that they become depressed, they are immobilized and can’t do anything. They kind of collapse.

We see this played out for us in Psalm 42:11 where we are told, “**Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.**”

In this we not only see the problem but the solution to the problem, which is so important. First of all, the Psalmist is overwhelmed, he is cast down. He is depressed. He is immobilized by the things that are happening in his life. Thus, he is doing nothing but collapsing in a pool of depression.

The solution is simple, hope in God! And it is not just saying, “*God will work it out!*” but also praising Him for all that He is doing in your life. In other words, by your words and actions it shows that you are truly hoping in the Lord, you are resting in Him! If you are hopeless then hope in God as the Psalmist did and your countenance will not be cast down!

So we have looked at the unbeliever and the believer in regard to what God is doing. God is not mocked, what you sow you will reap, make no mistake about that.

But in that we see God trying to draw the unbeliever to Him. And God has incredible grace and mercy that He extends to people, He is longsuffering.

The best example is that of the son of Hezekiah. His name was Manasseh. And he was a wicked King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

Listen to what the Scriptures have to say about this man and the judgment of God that he brought upon the nation of Judah.

We are told in II Chronicles 33:1-11, **“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, ‘In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.’ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers - only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.’ So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. Therefore the Lord brought upon**

them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.”

What Manasseh sowed, he was now reaping, and he is in captivity. And you read that and think there is no hope for this guy, he has gone too far!

There is always hope with the Lord! I don't care where you are at, what you have done, how far you think you have gone, God's grace and mercy is there for you to receive if you would repent and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life!

For Manasseh, looked what happened in II Chronicles 33:12-13, **“Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.”**

Wow, the grace and mercy of the Lord. Manasseh repented and got right with God and God restored him. And yes, there were consequences for his actions. Because of his sin and the sin of the people, they were going to go into captivity, but not yet and not by the Assyrians, but the Babylonians!

But Manasseh got saved, he turned to the Lord because of the affliction he was going through! What about you?

And for those here this morning, and I would say most of you, you know the Lord. That is not the issue. But, how is your walk with the Lord? Are you following Him or are you doing your own thing? Are you mocking God by your actions, by your sin? God is not mocked, turn to Him and repent of your sin, get right with God!

Remember what Jeremiah 29:11-14, **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity . . .”**

GOD IS NOT MOCKED, but if you turn to Him, repent of your sin, He will restore you!