

2 Samuel 15

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Well, our text tonight that we'll be looking at is 2 Samuel chapter 15. That's page 266 in the Pew Bible. Let me encourage you to turn there with me.

We're also going to be looking at a few verses in Hebrews chapter 12. That's page 1009. So if you want to stick a finger in Hebrews chapter 12 too, that'll make that easier to get to a little later in the sermon. I don't know how you put a finger in a chapter when you're reading on a tablet. Is there like a bookmark you can use? See? Technology. Not always a good thing. No, I'm kidding. So let's look at 2 Samuel chapter 15. Let's start by reading the first 14 verses of 2 Samuel chapter 15. After this, Absalom got himself a chariot and horses and 50 men to run before him.

And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, from what city are you? And when he said, your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel, Absalom would say to him, see, your claims are good and right, but there's no man designated by the king to hear you.

Then Absalom would say, oh, that I were judge in the land and every man with a dispute or cause might come to me and I would give him justice. And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

The end of four years, Absalom said to the king, please let me go and pay my vow, which I vowed to the Lord in Hebron. For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur and Aram saying, if the Lord will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the Lord. The king said to him, go in peace. So he arose and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel saying, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, Absalom is king at Hebron. With Absalom went 200 men from Jerusalem who were invited guests and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counselor from his city, Gilo. And the conspiracy grew strong and the people with Absalom kept increasing. And a messenger came to David saying, the hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom. Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, arise, let us flee or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest you overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword. Let's pray together.

[3 : 0 6] God, as we open your word now, we do so with an expectation based upon your promise that you will speak to us and you will do your work in our hearts as you see fit. God, we thank you for scripture.

And we thank you for inspiring it and giving it to us for our good. Lord, we pray that by your Holy Spirit, you would come and you would illumine our hearts so that we might hear what you're saying to us tonight. So Lord, be honored by our meditations on this text and be praised by the change that results, we pray. Amen. So 2 Samuel chapter 15, not a sort of classic Christmas text. We get that.

We're just sort of working our, if you're new tonight, we're just sort of working our way through 2 Samuel here in the evening service. And the sermon series stops for no one, not even for Christmas. But anyway, here we are in 2 Samuel chapter 15. And this chapter is the story, as you caught, of Absalom's conspiracy. That's David's son. And David, who is the king in this chapter, David's flight from Jerusalem in response. That's kind of the basic narrative. But, you know, when you put this chapter sort of in the context of 2 Samuel, you start to see that the message of this chapter is really a lot about how to respond rightly to the Lord's discipline.

How to respond rightly to the Lord's discipline. Let me explain that. What we've just read, Absalom stealing the hearts of the people, making a move for the throne, gathering basically an army at Hebron. All of this is actually a fulfillment of what God told David would happen as a result of David's failure in sin back in chapters 11 and 12. That's the infamous Bathsheba story and his confrontation by Nathan. And even more immediately in chapter 14, just before this one, we saw that David, you know, really just refused to deal with Absalom as he should have. Remember in chapter 13, Absalom murdered his brother Amnon in order to avenge his sister Tamar. Absalom then runs away into exile.

In chapter 14, Joab kind of maneuvers to get Absalom back into Jerusalem. And at the end of that chapter, David makes a pretty shallow, practically meaningless reconciliation with Absalom in verse 33 there.

[5 : 34] In other words, David doesn't actually deal with Absalom's sin. He doesn't correct him. He doesn't absolve him. He kind of does nothing. And now in this chapter, in chapter 15, in many ways, David, having sown to the wind, as it were, is now reaping the whirlwind. And so this whole uprising, Absalom's conspiracy and rebellion, the army is about to march on Jerusalem, all of it really from one angle is part of the Lord's discipline of David. It's the consequences of his sin.

But an amazing thing actually happens in this chapter, in the story of 2 Samuel. David, at long last, wakes up. You know, in chapter 13 and 14, David is almost a non-entity in the events that start swirling around him. He's passive. He's permissive. He's just sort of there, almost asleep. But now, as the Lord allows the consequences of his sin to mount, as the Lord allows Absalom's conspiracy to grow, as the Lord begins to discipline David in and through it all, David is at last, it seems, jolted to spiritual life. So I want us to consider tonight, through this text, how we can respond rightly to the Lord's discipline in our own life when it comes. Perhaps the Lord's trying to get some of us to wake up tonight. And this text can help us to do that. So I want to think about two big points then.

First, the Lord's discipline. And second, how to respond. First, then the Lord's discipline. And quickly, we're going to move through this point quickly. There are really just three things I want to sort of knock off here or tick through. First, the reality of the Lord's discipline, its purpose, and then its meaning. One, two, three, to just sort of get a grasp on what we mean by the Lord's discipline or what it means.

So first then, it's reality. And I've already alluded to a lot of these. So again, we'll go quickly. But think about the reality of the Lord's discipline in this section, in this chapter of Scripture. Absalom's rebellion, his stealing the hearts of the people, shows and proves that God actually disciplines his saints. It's a real thing.

That sometimes God will allow the earthly consequences of our sins to affect us in big ways, to chasten us. Now, that sort of challenges some of our sort of popular misconceptions of God, doesn't it? The reality of God's discipline. On the one hand, we often want to think of God sort of like a great, big, cuddly, benevolent grandfather in the sky, right? He's sort of like a supercharged Santa Claus who just sort of doles out treats and wants us to be happy.

[8 : 30] Well, clearly, this isn't the picture of God that we get in this chapter or in the rest of the Bible. But on the other hand, you know, actually, the reality of the Lord's discipline also goes against another kind of popular misconception of God. And that is the idea that God is some sort of stern negotiator who's really just, his involvement with us is always just sort of tit for tat. You do this, I'll do this, sort of this moralistic understanding of how God works. You know, it's very interesting that the reality of God's discipline that we see at work here undermines that picture of God too, doesn't it? Because discipline, rightly understood, is actually a very loving activity.

It's not a tit for tat, evening the score kind of thing. It's the activity of God that will not let us go and will not let us remain as we are, but his pursuing of us, his persisting in pursuing of us to get our attention and to draw us away from habits and patterns and idols that will destroy us and undo us.

And ultimately, it's God's activity in our lives because he wants to make us holy. He wants us to make, he wants to make us more like him. C.S. Lewis wrote this, I think it's helpful in this score, in his book called *The Problem of Pain*.

He says, love in its own nature demands the perfecting of the beloved. Then he goes on to say this, he says, when Christianity says that God loves man, it means that God loves man. Not that God has some disinterested, indifferent concern for our welfare, but that in awful and surprising truth, we are the objects of his love. And then he says this, he says, you asked for a loving God, you have one. Not a senile benevolence that drowsily wished you to be happy in your own way, not a cold, philanthropic, conscientious magistrate, but the consuming fire himself. The love that made the worlds, persistent as the artist's love of his work, provident and venerable as a father's love for a child, jealous, inexorable, exacting as love between the sexes. In other words, God's purifying work in our life is a work of love.

And that brings us to the second point about the Lord's discipline, its purpose, right? Look over in Hebrews chapter 12. If you turned there, look at verse 10, Hebrews says there in verse 10, God disciplines us for our good that we may share his holiness. You see, at this point in David's life, God has forgiven David of his sin. Nathan told David in chapter 12, the Lord has put away your sin.

[11 : 53] So when we experience the Lord's discipline, it's not because God is punishing us for our sin. If we've placed our trust in Christ, all the punishment for our sin has been dealt with and dealt out at the cross. There cannot possibly be any more punishment for the sin of those who have placed their trust in Jesus. There is no more punishment for sin. All of your sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven. And you are at peace with God. And that means that God disciplines us not to punish us, but in order to perfect us, you see. In order, as Hebrews says, that we might share his holiness so that we can begin to become more and more beautiful and robust and strong the way God is.

God wants to rid our lives of indwelling habits and sins that weigh us down and drag us through the mud. And that actually brings us to the third point here under this heading, the meaning of God's discipline. What does it mean that God is disciplining us? Well, friends, it means this. It means that God is actually our Father who loves us.

When we who have placed our trust in Christ experience the consequences of our sin and we experience the Lord's discipline, you can know that it's God's fatherly love of us wanting and working to make us partakers of his own nature. And what greater love could God have for us than that to want us to share in his own infinite, joyful, robust nature.

The Lord's discipline in our lives is this pursuing love that seals and affirms God's fatherly commitment and care and pursuing love for us. Again, Hebrews 12 says it really clear as almost a sort of, you know, theological description of this passage we're looking at in 2 Samuel. In verse 7, Hebrews 12 says, God is treating you as sons.

If you were illegitimate children or if you were just sort of around the household, God wouldn't care to discipline you. He'd leave you alone. But because you're sons and daughters, he's going to pursue you and make you into his own nature.

[14 : 34] Now let me pause here then and give us all some time to think. And let me say too that, of course, not all of the hardship that we face, not all of the trial and suffering that we experience is the Lord's discipline. Not every bad thing that happens to us is the Lord's direct discipline for sin in our lives.

We live in a fallen world and Jesus said that in this world you'll have trouble. So, you know, not every painful thing is this reality at work in our life.

But there are times when God in love will act in this fatherly way. When he sees us going astray, when we've committed sins and he allows some of those consequences to play themselves out, friends, he's working to wake us up and to bring us back to himself.

Now maybe you're tonight experiencing some of this fatherly, loving discipline in your own life. And if so, no doubt, it feels uncomfortable.

Back in Hebrews 12, if you look at verse 11, the writer says, almost obviously, for the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant.

[15 : 51] I'm sure David did not like having to flee with his entire household out of the city of Jerusalem. The Lord's discipline is not comfortable. It often hurts.

But then Hebrews says this. He says, no discipline is comfortable when it's happening. But later, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

That God is at work in and through that activity to bring forth peace and righteousness in our lives. So how do we respond to that? How do we respond so that we can sort of yield this harvest of peace and righteousness when we experience the Lord's discipline?

And the rest of 2 Samuel chapter 15 that we haven't read yet gives us this picture in David of how to respond well. David, as I've said, it finally seems to be kind of woken up from his spiritual stupor of the last couple of chapters.

And we see sort of through his life, through this sort of episode in his life, as he's fleeing Jerusalem, we see four things in these verses that show us how to respond rightly to the Lord's discipline.

[16 : 59] And the first one, they're all little commands. The first one is this, submit. Pick up the story in verse 24 of 2 Samuel 15 here.

David and his servants are fleeing the city. And what happens is that the leading priests come to meet him as he's on his way out of the city. Look at verse 24. And Abiathar came up, this is one of the priests, and Zadok came also with all the Levites bearing the ark of the covenant of God.

And they set down the ark of God until all the people had passed out of the city. Then the king said to Zadok, carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place.

But if he says, I have no pleasure in you, behold, here I am. Let him do to me what seems good to him. The king also said to Zadok the priest, are you not a seer? Go back to the city in peace with your two sons, Ahimaaz, your son, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar.

See, I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me. So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem and they remained there. Now I want to kind of focus in on verses 25 and 26 here where David willingly submits his situation in trust and in love to the Lord.

[18 : 19] Notice that Abiathar and Zadok bring the ark. They're ready to go out with him and they bring the ark, that symbol of God's presence along with them.

Now think of what David could have done here. David could have tried to use the ark like some sort of good luck charm, right? Sort of like the people did back in the beginning of 1 Samuel. If you remember back then when they went out to fight the Philistines, they got beaten and they said, well, let's bring the ark.

That'll probably help. And then they get smashed again. But you see here, David is starting to see something spiritually that maybe he's sort of forgotten. David knows that God isn't a God to be manipulated.

He's not some sort of candy dispenser that if you just figure out how to pull the lever hard enough, he'll sort of start spitting treats out at you. No. No. This is the holy God.

The God that you can trust and the God that you submit yourself to. The ark, David knows, belongs in the tabernacle and the tabernacle belongs in the midst of the people.

[19 : 26] And David is not going to interrupt the right worship of God just to try to get himself out of a jam. Instead, what does he do? He actually himself worships God as God by saying, I'm in the Lord's hand.

Let him do what seems best to him. That's his posture before the Lord. Let the Lord do what is best with my life.

Now, we also see in this paragraph in verses 27 and 28 that this isn't a sort of just kind of let go and let God mentality.

David doesn't just sort of become resigned or inactive. And we're going to explore that in just a minute. But, you know, we see here that David's submission, his entrusting himself to God actually sort of liberates him to act the way he should be acting.

But for now, the point to see is that when we experience the Lord's discipline, it is right to respond fundamentally with trust and to submit ourselves to God.

[20 : 33] Not to try to manipulate God to get you out of a jam or to manipulate the people around you.

But to embrace what God's doing, as hard as that might be, and to humble yourself and to give yourself to him and to give your future to him.

There's the first thing, submission. Second way to respond rightly to the Lord's discipline, not just submission, but we see that the next thing that David does here is that he weeps.

Pick up in verse 30 where we left off. But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered.

Those were signs of mourning in that culture. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up weeping as they went. So get the picture here.

[21 : 39] David is sort of making his way eastward out of the city of Jerusalem. He's just crossed something called the Kidron, which is a little stream bed that runs on the eastern side of Jerusalem.

And he's going up the Mount of Olives, which is a mountain on the eastern side of Jerusalem that sort of overlooks the city. And as he's going up the mountain, what's he doing? He's weeping.

And he's publicly mourning. Now why is he doing that? Why is David weeping in this moment? Well, I think he's weeping over his sin.

Now on the one hand, yes, what's happening, Absalom's rebellion, is incredibly painful. It's painful on a personal level for David. I mean, his own son functionally wants him dead.

When Absalom proclaims himself king in Hebron, the only way you became a king in the ancient world is if the other king died. So Absalom is very clearly here saying, I want my father dead and I want his place.

[22 : 45] So David has experienced a lot of pain on the personal level. This is a very painful situation for him on the family level. His household's being torn apart and now he's on the run with the rest of the people that he can gather around him.

This is a painful experience on the national level. I mean, here the nation itself is being ripped into and weakened because of political instability in the midst of their enemies. And you know, the fact is that David could be weeping for all of these reasons.

But above all, I think he's weeping for his own sin. He's mourning for his own brokenness and for the ways in which he's disobeyed God.

And I think, friends, for us, it's very easy to mourn over the consequences of our actions. For example, it's very easy and right to mourn and to be sad and to be broken when your infidelity has ruined your marriage.

And it's easy to weep because your spouse maybe has left you and you're alone or other things have happened. Your relationship with your children has been fractured. It's easy to be broken and sad when patterns of lying and deceit maybe ruin your career and no one will hire you because you've cut corners and tried to cover it up too many times.

[24 : 08] So now you're jobless and in debt. It's easy to weep over those consequences. But, friends, if we're really going to begin to change, if we're really going to experience the Lord's redemptive work in our hearts through his discipline, we need to begin to weep not merely for the consequences of our sin, but for the sin itself.

You see? We need to weep over the fact that we've dishonored God. And we've spurned his law. And we've tried to put ourselves in the place of God and make our own rules and follow our own way.

And we've refused to trust the one who is utterly trustworthy. And to love the one who is utterly lovely. And that through our actions we've made the creator of the universe small.

Rather than showing him to be the awesome, holy, and infinite one that he is. This is what David's doing. And this is how we need to respond as well.

And let me just say that it's okay to lament and to grieve over our sin. Yes, Christianity is a message of joy.

[25 : 26] Right? That's how we started our service. Christianity is a message of good news, of great joy for all the people. Joy that our sins are forgiven. Joy that God is with us in Christ and will remain with us.

But friends, within that great glorious joy that is the gospel, there needs also to be a room. Because we live in a fallen world and we still give in to our sinful nature.

There needs to be room to mourn for our sin. Because when we mourn and when we weep over our sinfulness like David here, we're actually doing two things.

When we weep, we're actually honoring God. Because we're agreeing with God that our sin is heartbreaking. And we're aligning ourselves with God's own heart that is broken over sin.

And second, as we weep, we're actually weaning ourselves from the sin in our lives. That we're undergoing a process of heart change.

[26 : 35] And that as we mourn our sin more and more, it loses its power over us. Third thing that we see, David not only submits, he not only weeps here, but he also acts.

He does something. Pick this story up in verse 31. And it was told David, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

While David was coming to the summit where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head. Also signs of mourning and weeping. David said to him, if you go with me, you will be a burden to me.

But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king, as I have been your father's servant in time past. So now I will be your servant. Then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel.

Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, their two sons are with them there.

[27 : 43] Ahimaad, Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son. And by them you shall send to me everything you hear. So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

Okay, lots of old Hebrew names in this paragraph. Did you catch what David is actually doing though? In the midst of mourning, David is maneuvering.

He's basically maneuvering to set up, in the midst of this conspiracy, a counter-conspiracy in the middle of the capital. David's working to architect this fifth column right under Absalom's nose.

He's sort of building a spy network that will allow him to track the enemy's movement. And hopefully, even as he sort of tells Hushai here, he's hoping to even kind of undermine Absalom's best counselor, the traitor, Ahithophel.

Okay, that's kind of cool, whatever. But what does that all mean for us? Well, take a step back and look what David's doing.

[28 : 52] What we see here is that David is finally starting to take some steps to do what he should have all along been doing. He's finally starting to do something to deal rightly with Absalom.

Now, he's in a pickle, so he's got to do some funky things. But he's finally doing something. He's finally acting. And friends, let me just say that this is what real repentance looks like.

That it means a change of heart. We weep. But it's a change of heart that results in a change of action. David wept over his sin.

And now, out of that change of heart and that renewed perspective, that God-centered perspective, finally, he's starting to do the right thing. And when the Lord disciplines us, we too should not just mourn, but now begin to act.

To do what God would have us do, whatever the situation is we're in. Because, you know, if we weep, but we take no action, I mean, that's evidence that we're not really being changed, right?

[30 : 03] Weeping without action is probably just a sign of falling into self-pity. But on the other hand, if we sort of act without the weeping, we're probably just trying to fix things ourselves.

And think that I can kind of make things right. And I can sort of do this without any reference to God. And functionally, that's just kind of self-help and self-righteousness. Which is mostly the problem, the thing that gets us into the problems in the first place.

It's certainly not repentance and it's certainly not change, but when by the Holy Spirit we do both, when we weep and when we act, friends, that's repentance.

That's responding rightly to the Lord's discipline, to make him more like himself and to liberate us more and more from the power of sin. Last thing.

Finally, this text shows us that we should not just submit and weep and act, but that we also need to hope. There are two things in this text that show us that.

[31 : 08] First, look back at the verses that we skipped. Verses 18 through 23. If you were actually following along, you probably realized, hey, wait a second, he skipped the whole verse. Or the whole paragraph, what's going on?

Okay, so in this paragraph, verses 18 through 23, we meet this guy named Ittai. And he's a Philistine Gentile military commander who, through David's sort of sojourn in the land of the Philistines back in 1 Samuel, has come to serve and be a part of David's army.

And in this paragraph, as David's fleeing the city and Ittai and his men sort of come out to follow David, David turns and he tells Ittai, basically, look, Ittai, go home. Go back to your people.

Don't come with me into the wilderness. Basically, David is saying, I don't want to drag you down with me. You don't have to come. In fact, I will give you the Lord's blessing to go.

You are free. I absolve you from all of your responsibility. Go with the Lord's blessing. And how does Ittai respond? This Gentile, hardened military commander who's come to know David and know the Lord.

[32 : 14] Look at verse 21. But Ittai answered the king, as the Lord lives and as my Lord the king lives, wherever my Lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.

Ittai swears unreserved allegiance to David and to the Lord. You know, the only other instance of a Gentile in the Old Testament showing this kind of devotion to the Lord and to the people of God is probably Ruth, actually.

If you've been coming to the morning service, we've been looking at the book of Ruth. And in the beginning of that book, Ruth's oath to Naomi, it really resonates here, too. But here's Ittai showing this unbelievable loyalty to David.

And take a step back and look at the whole chapter. Isn't that what's been going on as David's been fleeing the city? Not just Ittai, but the priests, Abiathar and Zadok. They've been coming out and showing their loyalty with David.

And then Hushai, David's friend, his counselor, his close, intimate ally, he comes out and affirms his loyalty to David. And even a large number of the people who are weeping with him, going up the mountain, showing solidarity with their king.

[33 : 33] They're showing loyalty to David. They're all still loyal to him. Even though in many ways David's kind of blown it at this point. And that loyalty that David is just being surrounded with in this moment, All of that, of course, is an expression and a sign of God's own continued loyalty to David.

No matter what David has done or failed to do, the covenant that God made with David, the agreement, that binding oath that God made with David, remember it back in 2 Samuel 7?

Listen, you'll be my king, David, and your house is going to rule, and you'll have a king who will rule forever. That promise God will never break.

And here, even in the midst of being disciplined and perfected, the Lord remains faithful and loyal to David. That steadfast love doesn't waver one bit.

And friends, that's exactly what we need to know. When we go through and experience the same sort of thing as David, when we experience the Lord's discipline, God is still faithful to his children, and he does not give up on us.

[34 : 54] But you know, there's another reason how we know that God remains faithful to his children. Faithful to us. You know, on the one hand, we'll see, kind of like David, we'll see God's faithfulness to us through our brothers and sisters in Christ who stick by us even when we're undergoing hardship and trial and discipline.

But even above and beyond that, we know that God's loyalty and faithfulness to us is unbreakable because of Jesus Christ. Because of what God did for us through his own son.

It's hard to read this chapter in the context of the whole Bible and not to think about another king, isn't it? Not to think about another king who also stood on the Mount of Olives weeping for sin.

In Luke chapter 19, Jesus, the son of David, the Christ, the king, stands weeping on the Mount of Olives. But Jesus isn't actually weeping for his own sin there because he had none.

But there Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives weeping for the sins of the people that he'd come to save. And Jesus in that moment in Luke 19 isn't actually fleeing Jerusalem.

[36 : 17] He's actually descending into Jerusalem. He's going into Jerusalem to go to the cross to deal with sin once and for all so that you and I and all those who believe could become sons and daughters of God so that we could be welcomed into his family.

And as Luke continues to tell the story, on the third day God raised him from the dead so that we can trust in him and hope in him and through being united to him by faith we can know that God will never break his promises to us.

That God will always love us even though he may discipline us. And that even when he disciplines us it's for our good that we might share in his holiness. So friends, let me end just by saying that if you want to know God, if you want to know God not as some distant, benevolent, grandfatherly figure in the sky or if you want to know God not as some harsh judge but if you want to know God as the loving, fatherly, caring, holy God that he is, if you want to be reconciled to him and know peace with him, then come to the Father through Jesus the Son.

Put your trust in the one who came and wepted and died and was raised again for your sins. And if you are a follower of Jesus and if tonight the Lord's doing a work of discipline in your life, then tonight I hope you'll begin to respond rightly.

That you'll open up your hands to him and you'll submit and you'll mourn rightly for your sin and you'll begin to act and change and you'll begin to hope.

[38 : 11] And you can know that you can hope with an assurance, with a deep assurance that not because of you but because of Jesus, God is for you and God will remain so forever.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, we confess it's a heavy topic to think about your discipline and yet, Lord, it is one that we need to hear.

So, God, we want to just say thank you for loving us as a heavenly Father with an unswerving, faithful love that would not leave us alone but love us enough to change us and to work with us and to keep pursuing us.

And Father, we ask that by your Spirit we would begin to respond rightly to your work in our lives. We know that it's only by your Spirit that we can truly submit and grieve for our sin and begin to take steps of obedience.

And we thank you that in Jesus we have a great hope and that we can know that your steadfast love is always upon us.

[39 : 29] Lord, if you have given us your Son, how will you not with Him graciously give us all things? Thank you for that promise, God. Amen.