

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle writes that his Words bring you comfort and hope in the face of affliction. He writes to encourage you, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. He reminds you that while the temporary difficulties that confront you seem hard, you have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

He reminds you that God deals with you as sons. In love, our heavenly Father chastens you. He does not delight in this chastening. But He does delight in those whom He chastens. He delights in you, dear Christian.

So, as a loving Father, He corrects and rebukes. He does it to protect you. He does it to keep you from harm. He does it to warn you of things that will hurt you. God deals with you as sons.

St. Paul, writing to the congregation in Rome, reminds the Christians that sin brings with it suffering. In fact, the Apostle calls suffering the due penalty for sin. If you break natural law there are consequences.

Taking a corner too fast will result in your car leaving the road. But that is avoidable by simply obeying natural law, and slowing down a little.

While original sin is imputed to every man born of human father, actual sin is not. Actual sin is that which we do, either by commission, or by omission. And there are consequences to sin, just as there are consequences for speeding. There are

temporal consequences to sin. And there are eternal consequences to sin.

Temporally, if you disregard your parents' directives, you will be punished. If you harm others, you won't be trusted, and you might spend your life in prison. If you yield to lust, you will ruin relationships and wreck marriages. If you lie, others won't trust you. If you gossip, you will lose friends. If you covet what others have, you will be miserable, and lonely.

These, and many more, are the temporal consequences of breaking God's Law. But the spiritual and eternal consequences are far more serious. There is due penalty for sin, as the Apostle writes.

Sin has consequences. But God doesn't punish sin in this lifetime. There is a difference between discipline and punishment. The punishment for sin comes with the final judgment. But that due penalty is not to be confused for God's chastening. God chastens those He loves.

Chastening is never enjoyable. That's the point. The discomfort caused by God's loving correction is meant to drive you away from temptation and transgression. God's chastening is meant to turn your heart back to God.

Discipline is designed to hurt a little – to foster true sorrow and contrition, which leads to faithful repentance. Repentance and faith lead you back to God, and away from eternal punishment.

Repentance is turning away from that which will hurt you. For there is a sin that leads to death, a sin that will not be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come.

So discipline and punishment are different. Discipline results in correction. Punishment results in death. While God disciplines you to protect you, your punishment, the just punishment for your sins, death, was visited upon Jesus.

God gave His own Son over to death, Jesus was punished, that by faith in Him you be called sons of God. In Christ there is no punishment left for you, only grace, forgiveness, and love.

So to protect you, O Redeemed of Christ, to train you, to guide you in this life, to keep you from harm, in love, your heavenly Father chastens you. In love, God deals with you as sons.

He calls you who were not His people His people. He adopts you, grafting you into forgiveness and life, adding you to His Holy Church through the washing of regeneration.

He fills you with His Spirit, the Spirit that cries “Abba”, Father. He fills you with His Spirit that His kingdom come among you, that His will be done among you, that you receive what true sons receive – the inheritance of the Father. He makes the riches of His Kingdom yours, as a free gift, for His Son’s sake.

God deals with you as sons. So your Father bids you dine this day at the Lord’s Table, that you who partake of His chastening partake of His salvation. He bids you eat and drink heavenly Food.

He forgives, strengthens, and preserves you by His Holy Meal. He places Good Things into you, that from that Good Treasure He bring forth in you good things.

The Day of Judgment approaches. Our Gesima preparation will soon give way to the great 40 day fast, that time of heightened repentance and preparation. But in Christ, you need not fear the Day of Judgment. Your Day of Judgment, dear Christian, was Good Friday. Jesus was judged in your stead. In Him you are declared innocent.

Your eternal vindication was declared on Easter morning. For in Christ, the same Christ you soon will eat and drink, you are declared holy, pure, without stain or sin, and righteous. Thanks be to God, the Father of all Mercies deals with you as sons.

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