

Hebrews Chapter 12 v 4 - 15

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[0 : 00] Starting in verse 4. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, Not true sons and daughters at all.

Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of spirits and live?

They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

[1 : 41] Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Well, good evening.

Nice to see everybody again. And we've had a lovely day here in Whitby, as we always do. We're fed sumptuously in the language of the authorised version.

And can you turn, please, to Hebrews chapter 12 again? Let's pray briefly, shall we?

Father, thank you again for your word. It is indeed a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. It is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we pray that you would help us to understand this passage, and not just to understand it with our minds, but to receive it into our hearts, and to be changed through it as it is preached this evening, as we go away and meditate on what we hear.

[3 : 09] May the Holy Spirit use this passage of Scripture to bless us and to change us, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Okay.

I wonder if you ever find yourself asking the question, why doesn't God make the Christian life easier? Why is it so hard to be a Christian?

Especially in the light of the fact that God is our Father, according to the Lord Jesus, we're able to address God as our Father in heaven. And you might think, if that's true, well, why doesn't our Father make the Christian life easier for us?

Why is it so hard? I think the recipients of this letter had thoughts like that in their minds. They were Jewish Christians, and they'd ceased to worship as Jews normally worship.

They'd ceased to offer sacrifices, go to the temple, and celebrate the Passover, and so on. And instead, they were meeting together as Christians around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4 : 24] And therefore, they'd been rejected by the Jewish community. And of course, Jews weren't very popular with Gentiles anyway. So one of the worst things to be, I should imagine, was a Jewish Christian.

And it had got harder since they became Christians. They probably thought that when they became Christians, life would be easier. But in fact, it had got harder.

And if you turn back to chapter 10, you'll find just how hard it was. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 32. Remember those earlier days after you'd received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insults and persecution. At other times, you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison, and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So because they were Christians, some of them had been in prison, some of them had had their property confiscated, and generally speaking, they were insulted and persecuted.

[5 : 40] It had become much harder since they became Christians. And God was supposed to be their Father. So why was it so hard?

Surely God could make it easier. If you wanted to. Why doesn't he? And some of the Christians who were receiving this letter had stopped meeting together, we learned from chapter 10.

They stopped coming together on the Lord's Day. That's always a bad sign. When people stop coming to church, it's always a bad sign. It doesn't matter what excuses they give.

If they're not going anywhere else, it's always a bad sign if you stop coming to church. It's the first step towards what we call apostasy.

And you should never just accept it and not worry about it. Some of them had stopped going to church. And they were just getting tired of it all.

[6 : 48] Look at verse 12. Strengthen your feeble arms and your weak knees. In verses 1 to 3, he pictures the Christian life as a race. And he's not thinking of a sprint.

He's thinking of a marathon, probably. I've never actually run a marathon. I've never run a half marathon. In fact, to be absolutely honest with you, I've never even run a tenth of a marathon. I reckon if I ran a marathon, I would have weak knees and flagging arms. And that's how the Christians to whom this letter was written felt.

They were flagging. They were thinking of giving up. Was it worth it in view of the difficulty of his own? And this letter was written to encourage them to keep going.

That's the point of the letter to the Hebrews. It was written to encourage them to keep going. And he does it in two ways. There's a sort of stick and a carrot. And the carrot, the gospel, is so much better than anything you've ever experienced in your life before.

[8 : 01] It's far better than anything in your previous life in Judaism. The New Testament is far better than the Old Testament. Don't give up on the gospel.

Because it's better. In fact, one of the words that the writer uses again and again and again in Hebrews, it's just this word better. He uses it all the time. The gospel is better than anything that went before.

Yeah, the temple, the Passover, the sacrifices, the priests, etc., etc. In the Old Testament, they all were given by God. But they were always meant to be temporary.

They were pointing to something else, something beyond themselves, something better that was to come. John Calvin uses what I think is a great illustration. He says, An artist who is working on a great picture, a masterpiece, will, before he completes the masterpiece, produce sketches.

He'll produce sketches that he will eventually incorporate those ideas into the masterpiece. And those sketches give you some idea of what the masterpiece is going to be like.

[9 : 15] But it's not the masterpiece. And once the masterpiece is painted, you don't need the sketches anymore. They were just preparing you for what was to come.

And all the great institutions of the Old Testament preparing us for Jesus, preparing us for the gospel. Now that the gospel's here, the last thing you want to do, says the writer, is go back to those shadows, he calls them, those shadows of the coming reality.

So that's the carrot. And then he uses the stick. And throughout the letter, there are what they call warning passages, where he warns them, very, very solemnly actually, time and again in the letter to the Hebrews, that if they do give up on the gospel, if they've understood the gospel, if they profess to believe the gospel, and they give it all up, then there's no other way of salvation.

And they'll be lost. That's what he teaches. I'm not going on into the debate about whether you can lose your salvation. Personally, I don't think people who give up on the gospel like that are truly saved, were ever truly saved, because I think the mark of faith, true faith, is that it perseveres.

If you've believed on Jesus in the past, you'll still believe on him today. And if you don't, you need to ask the question, did I ever really in the past? So you can see the argument of the letter to the Hebrews, the stick and the carrot, the carrot and the stick, the gospel is so much better, don't give up on it, there's nothing to save you if you give up on Christ.

[10 : 55] If you've got a terminal illness, and there's only one man in the whole world who can do the operation you need, and you go into hospital, and while you're in hospital, you decide, no, I'm not going to do this.

Don't trust him. I don't think you can do it. Don't trust him anymore. And you sign yourself out of the hospital. What's going to happen? You're going to die. It's as simple as that.

So don't give up on the gospel. In order to encourage them to keep going, in chapter 12, you see two pictures.

The first is in the first three verses, and it's the picture of the athlete, the runner, the marathon runner, looking unto the finishing tape, looking unto Jesus. But then in verses 4 onwards, he uses another picture, and that's what I want to look at with you this evening.

He uses the picture of childhood and fatherhood. And he says, why is it so hard, even though God is your father?

[12:10] It's hard because your father disciplines his children. Your father disciplines his children. And he quotes Proverbs chapter 3, where the writer of Proverbs says, the Lord disciplines those he loves.

He punishes everyone he accepts as a son. And you've forgotten that. You shouldn't forget a proverb. The whole point of Proverbs is that you should be able to remember them. That's why they're so short and memorable.

You've forgotten the proverb. What's the proverb you've forgotten? The Lord disciplines those he loves. And he punishes everyone, everyone he accepts as a son.

So I want to bring you a few thoughts this evening on the father's discipline. Each of them is important, but they, I think, sort of get more and more important as they go on.

I've got six points, but don't worry, they're only short. Number one, discipline is essential and necessary. Discipline is essential and necessary.

[13:29] Look at verse 7. Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

If you are not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true son. So the writer is saying there that every decent father disciplines his children.

Every child that really belongs to his father, is really in the family, must expect to be disciplined.

Discipline is essential and necessary. The word discipline I need to explain doesn't just refer to punishment.

It includes punishment, but it's wider than punishment. It covers all kinds of correction, all kinds of training. Everything we do for our children to develop their character, to challenge them, to develop their talents, to encourage them to be good, beneficial, well-rounded people.

We're doing it if we're parents all the time. And God does it all the time. there isn't a child anywhere, and there are no exceptions to this.

[14:51] I know you think yours is the exception, or certainly some of you will think that your grandchild is the exception, but there isn't an exception anywhere. Every child that is not disciplined will grow up lazy, greedy, self-centered, demanding, cruel, and delinquent.

No exception. He also grew up to be very, very unhappy. And therefore, without discipline, it's impossible for a child to grow up to be a decent, normal person.

And it's the same in the Christian life, without discipline, it is impossible to grow as a Christian. And I mean impossible. Do you know, it says earlier in Hebrews that the Lord Jesus Christ, even though he was a son, learned obedience through the things that he suffered.

Jesus learned obedience through the things that he suffered. That doesn't mean that he learned to stop being disobedient and become more obedient, because he was never disobedient.

But he did learn to become more and more obedient. His obedience was challenged at more and more points through suffering.

[16:24] And if that was essential for the sinless son of God, how much more essential is it for us sinners?

we need the father's discipline. We've got to be disciplined. Got to be. That's the first point. The second point, which I've already alluded to, is that God's discipline is motivated by love.

It's actually sometimes quite hard to get your head around this, especially if you're going through the mill. But the Bible teaches, that proverb teaches, which is quoted in this passage, and the writer says it, that God's discipline is motivated by love.

In fact, God's discipline is the sign that he cares. It's not the sign that he doesn't care. It's the sign that he cares. You might, I sometimes wonder whether the Hebrew Christians sometimes thought that they displeased God by stopping their adherence to Judaism, to the Old Testament covenant,

the temple, and so on.

After all, God instituted the Passover, God instituted the Sabbath, God instituted the priests, and the sacrifice in the temple, and they'd given up. And maybe they thought, well, maybe we've offended God.

[17 : 55] Maybe that's why it's so hard to be a Christian. Maybe he's angry with us. So the writer says, no, it's not because he's angry with you, it's not because you've offended him, it is because he loves you that he disciplines you.

It's the pampered child who is unloved. It's the pampered child you should feel sorry for, the child who gets everything he wants immediately, straight away.

Feel sorry for that child. discipline is not a sign that you don't love your child, it is a sign that you love your child.

In fact, some of the closest moments I can remember with my children are the moments when I disciplined them. before I came out, I spent half an hour looking over my sermon in Richard's house, and I found myself sitting next to a bookcase, and in the bookcase there was a book about the poet John Dunn, not somebody I quote very often, but I took, I must confess, Richard, I took the book off the shelf and had a glance at it, I put it back on the shelf, if it's not there, it's not me, okay, I had a glance at this book, and what did I see?

I found sentences like this, I had rather God frowned upon me than not look upon me, and I had rather God pursued me than left me to myself, I had rather God pursued me than left me to myself, whom He felt I heard it long ago when thou stened me, and when thou strikest me » Shiva Tiasia ship K John Dunn, I thought they were good quotes.

[20 : 14] So God's discipline is motivated by love. If you're a parent, or if you've ever been a parent, you will know that discipline is a hassle. It's much easier not to bother.

If there are any children here, and there are, you need to remember that. It does hurt your parents more than it hurts you. It does. It's a hassle. No decent parent enjoys disciplining their children.

It's much easier not to bother. It's much easier to look the other way. It's much easier to ignore bad behaviour. And parents who choose that are just demonstrating that they're not bothered how their child turns out in the long term.

Parents who love their children lovingly, kindly, but firmly discipline, correct them, and punish them. God disciplines the children that he loves.

God is our father. He is not our grandfather. Grandparents are soft touches. We have three granddaughters.

[21 : 24] We visit them fairly regularly. And when we visit them, my wife usually takes something with her. It's usually something edible.

It's usually something sweet. It's usually something that their parents would probably not want their children to eat. Grandparents are soft touches.

God is not our heavenly grandfather. He is our heavenly father. And he cares how you turn out.

Which brings me to the third point, which is that God's discipline is perfect. God's discipline is perfect. Look at verses 9 and 10. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it.

How much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live? Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

[22 : 30] The writer says there that we only have our children for a short time and we discipline them according to what we think is best. And there are different theories. There are different ideas.

There are even different books. Handbooks. On how to bring up children. I don't think my parents ever read any, but they're there. There are handbooks on how to bring up children.

So, fathers discipline their children as they think best for a short time. You've got them from about 0 to 18. And if they're 17, it's probably too late.

So, just do what you can while you can. And you won't always get it 100% right. Even the best earthly fathers are flawed sinners.

And that colours our parenting. It colours our fatherhood. Sometimes we're unfair. Sometimes we're unreasonable. Sometimes we're irritable. Sometimes we're inconsistent. Sometimes we discipline our children from mixed motives.

[23 : 36] We're actually thinking of ourselves rather than our children. I always feel sorry for these child prodigies on television. You know, going for these quizzes about who is the brainiest child in Britain.

And you can see that parents desperate for their children to win. It's all about the parents, really. It's not about the children. God isn't a father like that.

He disciplines us for our good. And he does it best. No one knows how to discipline us like our father does. Which brings me to the fourth point.

Which is that discipline is never pleasant at the time. Look at verse 11. No discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful. No discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful.

Discipline is never pleasant at the time. It's for our good. It's for our benefit. But it doesn't seem so at the time. Even if it's not actual punishment.

[24 : 50] Even if it's just the things we do to keep our children healthy or to develop their character or to introduce them to things that hopefully they're going to enjoy in later life. Sometimes it's hard work because they don't want to do it.

They resist it. I remember a particular point of resistance when I was a child. My mother used to give me a spoonful every day without fail of an awful substance called cod liver oil.

Every day she used to put a spoonful of cod liver oil in my mouth and I used to resist it strongly but she insisted on me having it every day because she thought it was keeping me alive.

I thought it was killing me. Maybe she was right because I'm here so maybe it's due to cod liver oil I don't know. But anyway I had to take this cod liver oil because my mother thought it was good for me.

And all kinds of things. Children resist at the time. They don't like going to school sometimes. They much prefer the school holidays to last forever.

[26 : 05] They don't like washing up. They don't like getting up. They don't like saving up. They want to have things straight away.

They don't like boring country walks like their parents enjoy. They don't like eating their green. But we make them do these things because we know that ultimately it's going to be for their benefit.

I remember taking my son on his first fell walk. It was Dale Head. And we started it from Honest to Pass which is about halfway up Dale Head.

So you drive halfway up. So it's not much of a fell walk. But he was pouring with rain. And he did resist at times.

But we got him to the top of Dale Head. And my son now loves fell walking. In fact not only does he love fell walking he actually does fell running which I regard as a fairly serious form of insanity.

[27 : 13] But it was me who introduced him to it. And he's glad I did. He still talks about that first fell walk up Dale Head.

But discipline is never pleasant at the time. So that means that if you're undergoing God's discipline if you're going through a difficult time if you're going through the mill you don't have to pretend you're enjoying it.

You don't have to put your Sunday smile on and pretend that it's great. Because it isn't. It's painful at the time.

Not pleasant. Suffering is suffering. But the writer says one day you'll be glad God cares enough to do it. Which brings us to the fifth point which is God's purpose in discipline.

God's purpose in discipline. Look at verse 10. God disciplines us for our good halfway through verse 10. God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

[28 : 26] And look at verse 14. Without holiness no one will see the Lord. Discipline is essential for holiness.

And holiness is what it's all about. God is determined to make every one of his people holy. holy. It's going to happen. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4. God shows us before the foundation of the world that we might be holy.

That's what he had in mind. He didn't just have your forgiveness in mind. He didn't just have having you in heaven in mind. He had your holiness in mind.

that's what that's why Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that God predestined those he called. Those he had foreknown.

[29 : 29] He predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. That is what you are predestined to if you're a Christian.

you're going to be like Jesus. That's why you're a Christian. Forgiveness massively important is the first step to know that God loves you as he loves his son.

And therefore you love him and you want to please him. But it's all about making you like his son. It's all about making you holy.

He wants to fill the universe with little replicas of the Lord Jesus Christ who he loved so much. And if you're a Christian one of them is you. God is determined to make you holy.

And discipline is essential for your holiness. That's what Paul means in Romans 8 incidentally when he says that in all things God is working for the good of those who love him.

[30 : 35] That doesn't mean as some Christians seem to think it means that ultimately everything that happens to us is somehow nice. It doesn't mean that at all. Because lots of things happen to us that aren't nice.

Why do they happen to us? To make us good. God is working in everything to make us like his son. He says that. That's what he says in Romans 8 29.

That's what he means in Romans 8 28. God is at work in everything that happens to us for good. and the good is to conform us to the image of his son.

That's what's good. Nothing is more important to God than your holiness. If you can sin and not be concerned about it, you need to ask yourself some serious questions.

I don't want to upset anybody's assurance of salvation here because we sin all the time. Even the good things we do are tainted by sin. but the thing is what's your attitude to it?

[31 : 37] What do you think of it? If you're blasé about your sin, you need to ask yourself some serious questions. Do you want to be holy?

Do you want to be like Jesus Christ? Do you search your heart daily about those areas where you're not like Christ? Where you could have been more Christ-like? And do you confess that and ask God to forgive you?

and make you like his son? Discipline here is just one of the illustrations that the New Testament uses to demonstrate this to us.

Another fairly common one is the idea of refining a precious metal. Gold, silver, precious metal is passed through the fire, the refining fire.

and it's the fire that purifies it, that brings the impurities to the surface which are blown off, they were blown away. And then if you wanted it to be really precious, he'd do it again, and then again, and again, until it was pure gold.

[32 : 55] fruit. That's another picture that's used in the New Testament and another picture is pruning. A gardener prunes a shrub and it looks destructive, it seems destructive, what are you doing to that shrub?

But the idea in the gardener's mind is to make that shrub more fruitful, the maximum fruit, and that requires the pruning nine.

And this is why the psalmist in Psalm 119 says, it was good for me that I was afflicted. It was good for me that I was afflicted.

And James chapter 1 verse 2, consider it pure joy, my brothers. This is incredible, isn't it? Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. God wants you to be a mature, complete Christian, not lacking anything.

[34 : 05] And for that you need trials and tests. That's the fifth point. Which brings me to my final point.

Let us therefore cooperate with our father's discipline. Let us cooperate with our father's discipline. Let us grasp every opportunity to learn from what happens to us.

Let us grasp every opportunity to grow in grace. Let us at all times ask ourselves and ask God, what is the lesson you want me to learn?

What are you wanting to teach me through this? How can I grow? How can I develop? How can I mature through this? It may be a big, shattering, life-changing event.

Devastating. actually, sometimes we can get through those events with the prayers and the support of God's people. It can also be just constant, small, irritating, frustrating things.

[35 : 26] Those are the areas sometimes where we could be growing and we're not growing. the small, irritating frustrations and we fail to learn from them. When my family were here over I don't

know if it was half term or Easter, I can't remember.

They were staying with us, the grandchildren, the granddaughters and my son and his wife and all the ladies in the house wanted to watch Anne of Green Gable.

We have a set of videos, Anne of Green Gables and they wanted to watch all those Anne of Green Gable stories. Me and my son, we wanted to watch something more serious than that.

So we had to forego, being the head of the home as you know, we had to forego what we wanted to watch and let the girls watch the Anne of Green Gable.

Could have been irritating, could have been frustrating, was frustrating actually, but it was an opportunity to learn how to be patient, how to be kind, how to remember that there are ladies who like watching Green Gables even if you don't.

[36 : 42] It's the little things like that sometimes that we fail to grow through. that's just a simple illustration that happens to have popped into my mind.

You know, there's nothing you can't learn from if you're a Christian, nothing at all. Maybe your problem is lack of material wealth.

Maybe you've lost what you once had, or maybe you never had anything to learn. that's your opportunity to learn that Christ is your treasure.

He's your real treasure. Lay up, says Jesus, treasure in heaven, where moth and rust can't corrupt and where thieves can't break in and steal.

Never mind about treasure on earth. It doesn't matter. how can you learn that if you're loaded with earthly treasure?

[37 : 48] Maybe you've lost your status, maybe you've lost your importance, your significance, maybe you have been made redundant or retired or in some ways they're not as important as you used to be.

A lot of people find that difficult to cope with. What an opportunity to learn that God thought you were so important that he sent his son to die for you. That's how important you are.

It doesn't matter what other people think about you. God loves you. God chose you. God sent Jesus to be your saviour.

God to be God maybe you're in a situation of conflict. It may be family conflict. It may be church conflict. I hope it isn't. What an opportunity.

It's wearing. Church conflicts and family conflicts as you imagine are extremely wearing. What opportunity they are to grow in forgiveness, in patience, in gentleness, in peacemaking, in just becoming more mature, just learning that there are people who are different from you.

[39 : 06] Some of them have different ideas, different emphases. Learning that you don't have to be number one. You can learn an enormous amount through church life and even through church conflict.

You can grow. as a Christian. If you think of the fruit of the Spirit, every one of them requires a church life.

It requires at least a church community. Other Christians love. You can't love by yourself. You've got to have other Christians to love. If they all think you're marvellous, if you like them all, it's not hard to love them, is it?

You won't grow in love. Churches are where we have to learn how to love people who are not like us at all. If we weren't in a church, we probably would never come across in life.

But we're in the same church, so we have to learn to love them. We have to learn to love one another. That's one of the reasons that we have church. Fruit of the Spirit is long suffering.

[40 : 13] The word means long temperedness. It's the opposite of short temperedness. How can you grow in long suffering without suffering?

Are you praying for the fruit of the Spirit? Be very, very careful because you're praying for long suffering and if you're praying for long suffering, you're praying for suffering because you can't be long suffering without suffering. Do you follow me?

So be very, very careful. And you can go through all the fruits of the Spirit and show how each one of them requires other Christians peacemaking.

The best of the peacemakers, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, which probably means peaceableness rather than your own inner peace. It probably means peaceableness in the church.

Churches where we learn these things. What about sickness and frailty and old age? Well, you have to learn through that that Christ is our strength.

[41 : 20] Christ gives us strength day by day as we need it. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

we learn to be humble, we learn to be patient, we learn to depend on other people, we learn to depend on other Christians even. The Apostle Paul had a thorn in the flesh, he calls it. We don't know what it was, but it was something painful. A thorn in the flesh sounds painful. A thorn in the flesh was painful, it was humiliating, it was something that showed how weak he was. People saw Paul and saw this thorn in the flesh and they wrote him off. And he actually asked God to take it away, he asked Jesus it says actually to take it away.

Jesus said no, my strength is made perfect in weakness, you're going to have to learn to depend on me. And Paul says okay, if it brings me to God in prayer then it will make me stronger, my weakness will make me stronger, therefore I will boast in my weaknesses, if they're making me stronger in Christ, if they're making me lean harder on Christ, then I'll boast in my weaknesses.

[42 : 37] When he was in prison, he said I have learned in whatever state I am to be content. I've learned, in other words it didn't come easily, it didn't just come like that overnight, something I learned how to do.

And one of the ways in which I learned how to be content was by being put in this prison. I've learned to be content here, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. What about death?

What about the knowledge that you will shortly die? Can you learn from that? Well Paul did in that letter to the Philippians, that amazing letter, he says for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I desire to depart and be with Christ which is better by far. he learned to look death in the face through Jesus and even to look forward to being with Christ which is far better.

There is nothing in life that happens to you that you can't learn from, that you can't use to become a better Christian. I remember my parents had a radiogram, you probably if you were a young person you don't know what a radiogram was and they had 78, you probably don't know what a 78 is do you?

[44 : 06] It was a big record and my dad used to play George Beverly singing a song called I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold, I'd rather have Jesus than riches untold, I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands, I'd rather be led by his nail pierced hands than to be the king of a vast domain and be held in sin's dread sway, I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today, I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause, I'd rather be faithful to his dear cause, etc, etc, you get the message, you'd rather have Jesus than anything in this world, good, but how do you know?

If you've got Jesus and silver and gold and you never have to choose between the two, how do you know? If you've got Jesus and houses and lands, how do you know?

Oh, the people of Syria know, because thousands of those Christians in Syria have had to leave their villages and their town and flee to find refuge wherever they can because they're Christian. Oh, yes, they do love Jesus more than houses or land. All they had to do was deny Christ. All they had to do was say the Muslim creed and that he'd been able to stay at home. they loved Jesus more than houses or lands but if you've got houses and lands and Jesus how do you know? I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause.

[45 : 49] If you've got both how do you know? It's only when you lose the applause of your fellow men and women for Jesus sake that you know whether you love him more than those things or not.

it was a nice song but very easily sung by rich western Christian. Somebody said it might have been John Piper but I'm not sure we will never know that Christ is all we need until Christ is all we've got.

we will never know that Christ is all we need until Christ is all we've got. Therefore let us expect God's discipline let's not be surprised by it let's accept it let us trust him through it let us learn from it and grow through it and let us thank God that he cares enough to take us through it Amen