

The Good, The Bad, and the Best Son

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[0 : 0 0] great so yeah Hebrews chapter 12 we're going to start at verse 4 it's on page 1211 of a church bible if you're using that in your struggle against sin you've 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 my son do not make light of the lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son endure hardship as discipline God is treating you as his children for what children are not disciplined by their father if you're not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline then you're not legitimate not true sons and daughters at all moreover we've 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 that's me great surprisingly off center tonight don't know what's going on there maybe i'll move that that's a bit better we're going from 3 to 17 so uh if you could just follow the sheet that would be great maybe i'll just read that last paragraph for us if that's all right so we're all up to speed and then i'll pray for us so make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy without holiness and no one will see the lord see to it that no one falls short of the grace of god and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many see that no one is sexually immoral or is godless like esau who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the eldest son afterwards as you know when he wanted to inherit this blessing he was rejected even though he sought the blessing with tears he could not change what he had done so loving heavenly father as we come to you tonight as your dearly and beloved children please may we not shun the opportunity that hardships and sufferings in this life presents us to grow in holiness to be more like you to be assured that we are your sons and daughters that we are dearly loved by you in jesus name amen well i wonder what your feel good moment of the year has been maybe you've had some i think my feel good moment of the year feel good article was the

story of freddie figures has anyone heard about freddie figures here any figures fans know and read it cracking story there should be a slide come up freddie figures was a child who was dropped in a dumpster as a baby and his parents nathan and betty may they were so poor that what they used to do on sunday saturday afternoons is they'd go to dumpsters and they'd try to find stuff that they could recycle and lo and behold that one day they found this kid this tiny baby freddie figures and there's he's there and they took him home and because they're quite elderly they were in their 70s when they found him they said we're going to adopt you and they couldn't do much with him and so he had a very boring upbringing he was known as the dumpster kid his friends at school mocked him and he his dad didn't play sport he was so old and he was in this house full of old tech and so what he used to do was he'd simply start repairing it and he got quite good at this and then the thing that he really wanted was a computer but they could never afford it and so his dad went down to the thrift shop and bought an old broken macintosh one can some of the oldies might remember those and freddie being a very entrepreneurial nine-year-old took 50 attempts to fix this thing and eventually he got it fixed but why am i telling you about freddie figures because 12 years later at the age of 21 after 394 attempts freddie figures became the youngest person in america to own a telecoms license basically a mobile broad a mobile network now he started very humbly in great suffering great hardships he persevered and eventually he came to this great and glorious future i think he's a christian as well and there's a picture of him you'll you can look him up on the internet

there's a great interview with him that you can look at and the story the theme of the story in freddie figures is sonship and adoption perseverance and hardship and sufferings and those are the themes in our passage tonight we're in the second in a three-part series in hebrews 12 and the context of hebrews is that the letter of hebrews is a word of exhortation it's a sermon given to a congregation very much like this probably not a sunday night maybe a saturday morning or something and it's given to a congregation who've gone through great suffering great hardship and they've started to look at christianity and jesus and thought well maybe it would be better if i gave into my culture if i gave into the pressures that i'm facing and that was to go back and be more jewish and go back to the temple which was a lot more impressive and walk away from jesus and given to that pressure and drift away and i wonder as you're sitting here tonight what do you make of your sufferings and hardships and life how do you think about them and i think for myself this has been a particular a struggle thinking through hardship see when i go through an area of hardship or area of suffering my gut instinct is to think god is shoving down nasties on me because i've done something wrong somewhere else and he's correcting me or he's punishing me and i need to find out that sin and then i will be right but another attitude towards suffering is maybe god is trying to not punish me or correct me he's trying to train me or discipline me like an athlete trying to grow my muscles big for a great future day where something bigger and better and glorious is promised and the answer to that question

maybe that's a very real question for you certainly was for myself and the answer that hebrews 12 is gives is that when we go through suffering and hardship we need to know and remember that we are simply being disciplined trained as dearly loved children for something greater and so i've picked up that theme of sonship i think this is a thing or daughtership uh if you could give me a bit of kindness there when you hear son think son or daughter uh think in your situation uh just give me a bit of grace as the speaker i'd be grateful uh rather than saying everything twice uh so i picked up that theme there and i've considered the good son and then the bad son and then finally we're going to look at the best son and so the good son uh and we're going to look at five to 14 there uh and think of yourself here whether a son or daughter and i'm going to make some first four observations and the first observation uh from we look at verse five and six here is that the good son hears the father's word and the issue for for the hebrews in this letter is that they have stopped listening to jesus so chapter two verse one uh you must pay more careful attention to what you have heard they've stopped listening and they started to drift into doubt and perhaps as they encountered suffering and hardships because they'd stopped listening they started to think uh perhaps god doesn't love me he doesn't care he's abandoned me and the author uh what the answer that the author of the hebrews gives comes up in verse five there i wonder if you spotted it it's a real a big exclamation have you completely forgotten have you forgotten all those nursery lessons that you should have learned far long ago and he takes him back to he uh proverbs chapter three verse 11 and 12 and proverbs three that's the kind of book that everyone would have known at that time that's the kind of thing where if you if martin has a conversation with you and he references the lord prayer or ten commandments or or something like that you're not in agreement because you're pretending to know it because you know it's the right thing to know and he takes them to that and he says um what what is the issue look at verse six that the lord disciplines the one that he loves i wonder if that struck you he disciplines so when they faced hardships it's not that god was shoving down nasties on them or being vegetable vegetable vengeful but that it was a carefully considered discipline out of love for them i wonder if you thought about your hardships like that when you've had a really awkward breakup with someone when a family member has announced they've got a great sickness or when things have gone absolutely horrendously at work you see that as a sign of god's great love for you that he loves you and every every child knows this don't they why do kids act up well what's the opposite of love it's not hate it's apathy or indifference so they act up because they want to see what you're going to do do you love them enough to discipline them or you're just going to be do what you want crack on i don't care god loves us the next thing that we see is they see the father's care in their hardship the good son or daughter and we're looking at verse seven or ten here and so in verse six we see the father's love and then he shows them that they are children of god so just look at verse seven uh pick up your white sheet or your bible there and do your hardship as a discipline god is treating you as children i wonder if you are here tonight and you approach

god very much like a slot machine you put your chips in and you expect to get your goodies out and you have a transactional or a religion view of god you think i need to give god good things so that i

can give get good things back from god and god's response is you already have everything there's nothing more that i could give you you are already my son or my daughter everything i have is yours i have so much more in store for you than you could ever ask or dream or imagine you are a dearly loved child and so freddy figures he figured out that he wasn't a biological son and so he went to his father nathan and he asked him well what how did i end up in this family and nathan said to him look i'm going to shoot it to you straight he grew up in north florida in the in the countryside and he's straight fred your biological mother she threw you away and me and betty may we didn't want to send you through foster care and we adopted you and you are my son and that was the difference that was the point where freddy figures his life changed utterly when he became adopted well the good son or daughter the next thing they do is they welcome the father's purpose just look down at verse 10 and 11 so they see that they're loved they see that they are god's child and next they see god's purpose and they welcome him and the purpose there is that they might be holy and we see end of verse 11 that that's the thing they are being trained for those who have been trained by it see the promise of the gospel is that one day after this life when all these momentary sufferings are gone we will be with god forever in heaven but if we're going to be there with god we are going to need to be like god and that is we're going to need to be holy and so god is preparing you before that time when you'll be with him and in the meantime he disciplines you the end of verse 10 so that we may share in his holiness we might be holy see a nine-year-old freddy figures i don't know how he did this as a nine-year-old as a nine-year-old i have the attention span of a gnat there is no ways i would have soldered and welded a computer 50 times over i would have given up but freddy figures he stuck through it stuck through that hardship he endured through it and sure enough way down the line 12 years later something greater and better came he did something that no one else his age had done against great adversity and soon one day that suffering that hardship that you're going through now it will be over and something as god has got something greater and better and then the final thing that we see the son or daughter the good son or daughter doing is in when they face the hardship is that they win they run to win the prize verses 12 to 15 and he picks up the marathon theme the running theme that we looked at last sunday night and i think what he's doing here is he's giving a sandwich of verse 12 and then verse 15 12 and 13 and then verse 15 and in the middle in verse 14 he's giving you his point that he wants you to take home so verse 12 and 15 he's saying keep away from idols make level powers that language from us that language from us i have first uh top 15 that don't let a root of idolatry of bitterness that language from deuteronomy come up keep away from idols and instead uh then he makes his point in verse 14 that as you try to keep away from idols as you live in a world that is idolatrous where you face pressure to conform where you face suffering and adversities run to win the prize aim to live at peace with your sufferings aim to live at peace with those who are pushing down sufferings on you and instead what cling to holiness so he says they make every effort to live at peace verse 13 with erin and to be holy without holiness no one will see the lord cling to holiness cling to that prize that god has given you through jesus's death on the cross don't give up on that don't follow idols don't follow fake gods but stick with jesus stick with the real god don't move on so the good son or daughter when they faced with hardships and suffering they remember the father's word that they are loved they see the father's care that they have been adopted as sons and daughter and that's the difference they welcome the father's purpose to be holy they want to be holy that they might be with god in the future and they run to win the prize they say no to idols no to that pressure no to all the little temptations and sweeties that our world around us presents do this and then you'll get that raise do this and you'll get that promotion whatever cling to holiness but the hard reality is that lots of us won't get this right and in contrast he gives an example as a warning to us of the bad son to someone who neglects to do this and the first thing that we notice is that they are someone who is stubbornly deaf and he takes them to in verse 15 and he takes them to deuteronomy 29 and the bitter root that he reads in verse 15 is not a root of division or something like that but it's a heart that is divided that says no to god and instead runs after idols so i'll just read 28 verse deuteronomy 29 verse 18 make sure there is no man or woman clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the lord our god to go and worship the gods of those nations make sure there is no root among them that produces such a bitter poison and here's the the humdinger here is that these were people who were listening to the word verse 19 when such a person hears the words of this earth they invoke a blessing on themselves thinking i'll be safe even though i persist in going my own way they look the parts they go to church on sunday they do all the right things but in their heart they've paid no regard to god they said no to god utterly they are

stubbornly deaf and it's not just they're sincerely listening and get a couple of things wrong it's that they refuse to listen to god whatsoever they have want nothing to do with him and the example that he gives here the example part excellence of a son who was immensely privileged who had all the privileges but utterly refused to pay any attention to god whatsoever who would you pick from the old testament it's got to be esau doesn't it verse 16 uh the bad son rejects the father's purpose verse 16 esau i'll just remind you he was the eldest son of isaac we remember the story of isaac and abraham on the mountain uh and isaac was the only son of abraham and we remember the great and awesome promises that were given to abraham abraham that were passed down to isaac and that were esau's by right of being first born a promise of a land be with a promise [20 : 16] of a people a promise of an enormous great wonderful blessing and what was esau's response to that well he rejected it utterly he was godless he didn't believe in god he sold it to his brother jacob for a bowl of red stuff the immediate thing a bowl of stew he ran after that he paid no attention to god and it's bitterly tragic and we get that incredibly sad warning in verse 17 that's a warning for us to not go that way to not be like the bad son but i wonder if i can ask you so what is the reason for our hope that we hold for that great future that we have in the future what is the reason for our hope that the hardships and sufferings that we go through now aren't a punishment but instead are a discipline and a correction and a training they're not a punishment or correction what's the reason for the hope of the promise of holiness that we'll share in god's holiness that we will be holy and that we will be with god because of that holiness and we'll see god well our hope rests on the best son verse 3 and verse 4 jesus and so notice it was the verse we skipped at the start verse 3 he endured suffering without losing heart so consider him who endured such opposition from sinners verse 3 so that you'll not grow weary and lose heart when he was faced with opposition when people came to murder him to take him away crucify him he didn't lose heart when he was in the garden of gethsemane he could have run away he could have fled instantly into the desert and been gone but he persevered he did not grow weary he did not lose heart and rather for the joy set before him for being with god in heaven that we looked at in verse 2 last week he kept on going he endured suffering and then notice finally verse 4 he was not overcome by but rather he conquered sin verse 4 so in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted resisted to the point of shedding your blood so as the hebrews have gone through their suffering and hardship and and resisting against that temptation to give into that they haven't shed their blood but we remember how jesus when he was faced with opposition and suffering he did shed his blood and i think that's what the author of the hebrews is talking about there that he endured all punishments all the punishment that would ever be laid on our sins it went on him that's how i can know that i won't be punished by god and that when i face a hardship and a suffering it's merely a discipline and a training there is no punishment left to give it's gone on jesus nothing remains that he endured suffering because in the future he'll bring around about an age where there'll be no suffering and opposition for us that he lived the perfect life that we could never live and he died to death we could never die for our sins that we might be perfectly holy all our sins wiped away never to be seen again and all our that perfect life lived utterly that we are holy that we might see god and that he brought a perfect peace a peace with god freed us from our idols and through him god demonstrated his amazing love for us that he sent his only son to die for us and he demonstrated it that it was effective by raising jesus to life again and he made us

through jesus on the cross sons and daughters amen hallelujah so father we thank you that we are so dearly loved by you we thank you that we have been called your children in jesus please help us not to spurn those opportunities for suffering and hardship that we're faced in this life but help us to embrace them that as we trust in the lord jesus we are being trained for that day when we'll be with you in heaven and that we'll be holy like you in jesus name amen