

PARADOX:

Finding Clarity in Life's Contradictions

Our lives are filled with apparent contradictions. We often say illogical things like, "Less is more," and "The only constant is change." Literally speaking, such statements can't be true, but deep down, we know they are right. And so it is with God sometimes.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah found God in life's paradoxes. He saw God as a garden flourishing in the desert, as a slave who is more powerful than his masters, and as a healer who is mortally wounded. Through his prophecies, Isaiah revealed a deeper reality about God that cuts through our apparent contradictions and points directly to our crucified savior, Jesus Christ. At The Story, we'll explore these deeper truths beginning Sunday, March 2, through Easter Sunday.

March 16, 2025 - Part 3 - Disciplining Father (Isaiah 43)

Par-a-dox (*noun*)

A seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which, when investigated, may prove to be well founded or true.

Have you heard more sermons about God's forgiveness or discipline? Why do you think you have heard about one more than the other?

In today's reading from Isaiah 43, we're going to see two seemingly contradictory visions of how God treats His children: Does God Forgive or Discipline?

Isaiah 43:25-28

I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and remembers your sins no more.
Review the past for me,
let us argue the matter together;
state the case for your innocence.
Your first father sinned;
those I sent to teach you rebelled against me.
So I disgraced the dignitaries of your temple;
I consigned Jacob to destruction
and Israel to scorn.

Let's look at the life of Moses as an example of God's forgiveness and discipline.

- Why were the first generation of Israelites denied from entering the promised land?
- Why was Moses not allowed to enter the promised land as well?
- Moses witnessed and took part in many miracles during his life, but this act of rebellion led to consequences. How does Moses' story reveal to us the insufficiency of works righteousness, and the hopeless human attempt to earn our salvation?

What if God gave leaders, or His favorites, a pass and didn't hold them to the same standard as everyone else? What kind of god would that make him?

There are three ways we can react when we face the Lord's discipline. We can resent Him, become apathetic, or praise Him. Moses had all three options, but he chose praise

- What does it look like when someone resents God for his discipline?
- What does it look like when someone becomes apathetic due to God's discipline?
- What does it look like to praise even when we are being disciplined or suffering?

Here is what Hebrews has to say about the Lord's Discipline

Hebrews 12:5-11- "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." (Prov. 3:11,12) Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, 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.

How is the discipline of a parent actually a display of their love?

How is God's discipline in this life proof of our identity as children of God?

How does discipline form us beyond our current circumstances, and lead to character formation that prepares us for the future?



Lenten Midweek Prayer

Join us on Wednesdays at 7pm (through April 16) in the Sanctuary to spend some time dwelling on Scripture and in prayer both individually and as a group. Come as you are and as you are able!



NEW! Hoops & Prayers (For 2nd-6th Grade)

Hoops & Prayers is a new sports outreach for children to learn basketball skills and drills while also learning how to pray! Meets every Sunday (starting March 23rd) from 12:30-2pm. Visit our website to learn more and register: [thestory.church/events](https://www.thestory.church/events)



Donation Drive for Houston Welcomes Refugees

This month we're supporting our Strategic Partner organization by putting together necessary kits for their homes here in Houston! Visit our website to learn more about the drive details and items needed: [thestory.church/events](https://www.thestory.church/events)