

Thought for the Day – Sweet Child of Mine

Good morning everyone, thank you Mark for the introduction.

Last week I went to visit my cousins, whom I hadn't seen for a long time. And my eldest cousin has got two children, the youngest of whom was only born a few months ago, so I got to meet her for the first time, and have some cuddles with my newborn cousin, which was just so lovely.

And it was great to see her older brother too – he's now three, but because of the pandemic, I hadn't actually seen him, since he was one! When I saw him last, he only really communicated through noises, but now he can not only hold a conversation, but can pick up one of his toy dinosaurs and say "That's an ankylosaurus!"

But something struck me about how my cousin and her husband related to their son. There were a couple of times that he did something naughty, like throw a tantrum and kick a chair when he wasn't allowed more ice cream, and his parents got very firm with him and said "No, we don't do that. That's not ok!" It can't have been pleasant hearing his Mum, who loves him so much, raising her voice at him. In fact, I can remember finding that unpleasant when I was a child. But the fact is, they were telling him off, not despite their love for him, but because of their love for him.

It's a sad thing in this world that lots of parents don't care about what their children do, and never discipline them, and that's really a kind of neglect. My cousin loves her son, and so she disciplines him.

And we read in the Bible that God is a good Father, because He disciplines His children – let me read Hebrews 12v7 "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?" You see, sometimes when we struggle in this world, it's because this world is broken. But sometimes, it's because God is disciplining us. Becoming a Christian sometimes makes life harder, because we become God's sons, and He disciplines us. But He does it because He loves us, and wants us to live good and right lives. Now, not every dropped cup of tea or traffic jam is God's discipline, but sometimes he may be using it to teach us kindness, and patience.

So thank your human parents for disciplining you, hope that your children may one day thank you, and if you're a Christian listening today - in every trial, we can feel our loving Father's discipline, and remember that we are His children. Think of that today when the coffee machine won't work, or when you come down with a splitting headache. Let your heavenly Father shape you through His discipline.

And to play us out, here's one of the most well-known songs about children.