

Unfinished Business – Understanding the Fear of the Lord (Part 2)

Last week we dove into this tenet of the Christian faith, too little understood even by Christians. We examined the word *fear* from the Old and New Testaments and when and how they were first used. Let us review briefly for those who were not with us.

Old Testament Uses and Lessons

- Adam and Eve: Genesis 3: 12 (Adam from fear of the Lord to afraid of God)
- Abraham (with Sarah): Genesis 20: 11 (Used it as an excuse for deceiving.)
- Abraham with Isaac: Genesis 22: 12 (Unconditional surrender and obedience to God.)

In these verses, *fear of the Lord* ranged from Adam's fear because he disobeyed God and knew the punishment to Abraham's awe and respect for His God Whom he held in such high esteem—he was willing to sacrifice the son (heir) he waited on for 25 years.

New Testament Uses and Lessons

Many uses and similar applications—by Jesus, Stephen, Apostles Paul and Peter, and Jude.

- (Mary) *“His mercy is upon generation after generation, toward those who fear Him.”* Luke 1:50 (see Psalm 103: 17)

It should also be noted Joseph, her betrothed, did also.

- Jesus used the lack of this essential tenet as a negative trait of the “unrighteous” judge. (Luke 18: 2,4)
- Successful growth of the early church “going on in the fear of the Lord..” Acts 9: 31
- Paul’s motivation: *knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...*” 2 Corinthians 5: 11a

We concluded:

the fear of the Lord was a known aspect of the relationship between God and man.

This morning we are going to take care of some unfinished business to help us better understand the fear of the Lord in terms of application and benefits that fall to those who choose to live within it—perhaps better said—choose to let Him live within us. As I mentioned last week, *there are dozens of verses in the Bible that speak of the fear of the Lord (or fearing God)*. Today I chose a handful to **reinforce its meaning** and **encourage our hearts** with the good that comes from a life so lived.

- *So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for **our good** always and for **our survival**, as it is today.”* Deuteronomy 6:24 **(Note what happened to the nation when they stopped!)**
- *“Who is the man who fears the Lord?He will instruct him in the way he should choose.”* Psalm 25:12
- *“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, **To deliver their soul from death...**”* Psalm 33:18-19
- *“You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be **displayed** because of the truth. Selah.”* Psalm

60:4

- *“How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways (obedience)... You will be happy and it will be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine Within your house, Your children like olive plants around your table.” Psalm 128:1-4*
- *“The Lord favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.” Psalm 147:11*
- *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge (learning) ...” Proverbs 1: 7a*
- *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (right application of knowledge)” Proverbs 9: 10*
- *“The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied...” Proverbs 19:23*
- *“Better is a **little** with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it.” Proverbs 15:16*
- *In the fear of the Lord there is **strong confidence**, and His children will have refuge. Proverbs 14:26-27*
- *“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. “They will be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.” Malachi 3:16-17*
- *“And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and **those who fear Your name**, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” Revelation 11:18*

We conclude that the *“fear of the Lord”*...

- *Shapes the way we think*
- *Shapes the way we live*
- *Shapes the way we love.*

Here is my testimony regarding the Fear of the Lord from the moment I truly understood the differences between the fear of the Lord and afraid of the Lord.

- *The Fear of the Lord brought me to the Cross of Christ where I received my Savior.*
- *The Fear of the Lord draws me into His Word that I may know more intimately the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Who are together the Living God.*
- *The Fear of the Lord keeps me faithful to my wife and children, loving and leading, because I am accountable to Him for their spiritual health and well-being.*
- *The Fear of the Lord keeps me obedient to His call on my life that, should He return before He calls me Home, He will find me following where the Spirit leads.*

I want to leave you with my definition and its application for **those who fear the Lord** and **those who do not**. It is expressed as two sides of the same coin.

Those who know the Lord fear Him because He is Who He says He is—*holy, righteous, loving, longsuffering, full of grace and mercy, demanding justice along with His other attributes*—written in His inerrant Word. We bow down and worship Him. We lift our arms and hearts and praise Him. With our voices, we bless His holy name. Finally, we enjoy the grace of many benefits—among them wisdom, knowledge, favor, life, shelter, security, well-being, instruction, direction, and even sleep! Greatest of all, at the expense of Jesus' life, we will enjoy eternal life in Heaven in a place He

prepares just for us.

But sadly,

Those who reject the Lord will, after it is too late, fall down before Him in fear, even terror. For the holiness of God demands perfection no man can bring. His righteousness requires complete obedience none have attained. His offer of reconciliation, through the blood of Christ alone, spurned, metes out His justice demanding payment even rich men cannot afford. So they will reap what they have sown—the wrath of God poured out for all eternity in Hell as Jesus warned many times. So true are the words of the writer to the Hebrews,

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10: 31

*My dear brothers and sisters, I hope these two weeks invested in the **fear of the Lord** have been useful and drawn you closer in your relationship with Him. To show you the benefits of a life so lived and warn, once more, those who do not was the intention of the Holy Spirit. As I often say, and you will do well to remember,*

It is God's intention to get our attention...no matter what it takes!

For Christ's sake,

Walter