

Title: The Fear of God
Text: Psalm 34: 7-11
Date: September 12, 2013
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Psalm 34: 7: The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8: O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. 9: O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. 10: The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. 11: Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Last Sunday, we saw how that God destroyed Nadab and Abihu because they did not fear God, did not bow to Christ, did not give God the reverence due his holy name in the worship of God.

Repeatedly, during that message I mentioned the “fear of God”—how that God’s people have a fear and a reverence for our holy God.

Tonight, I want to speak on that subject in particular: **The Fear of God**

Without the fear of God a sinner cannot worship God from the heart. The fear of God in the heart is so important in God wrought worship, that throughout the Old Testament, instead of saying “the worship of God”, the scriptures call worship itself, “the fear of God” and those who worship “those that feared God.”

Psalm 5:7: But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

Proposition: It is the duty of all men to fear God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

The LORD said, “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” (Lev 10: 3)

I. NATURAL MAN HAS NO FEAR OF GOD—Psalm 36:1: The transgression of the wicked saith, within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

No Fear

The wicked man, by not even saying a word, has his transgression speak for him. It says, “There is no fear of God before his eyes.”

Application: Those of you who love sin, who have no desire to be here, to hear Christ exalted, who refuse rebuke from the Lord, do you realize that all your thoughts are against God. The way you regard this time when the gospel is preached, screams, “there is no fear of God before my eyes.”

Do you not understand all your sin is against God who holds your life in his hands; against God who will judge you in righteousness by Christ Jesus. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Only Enmity

The natural man has no reverential affection for God, only enmity against God. This enmity is manifest in rebellion against those God has placed in authority: preachers, parents, civil authority—police officers, judges, governors and so on.

Since the natural man's enmity is aggravated by the preaching of Christ, they often vent their enmity most at having to attend a church-service, or during the preaching of the gospel or just at the mention of God's word.

Application: Has anyone here ever wished you didn't have to come here? Have you ever tried to be late? Have you ever tried to stop up your ears from hearing? Let that be evidence to you that your natural heart is enmity against God. Most do not even think of dying, much less fear meeting God in judgment. If you DO fear: it is only a fear of getting caught, of being exposed, of being punished, of being cast into hell. I want you to see that depravity is more than a doctrine; you are the depravity. Natural man has no holy, humble, obedient, loving fear of God, only enmity against God

II. GOD GIVES TRUE FEAR IN THE HEART WHICH GOD HAS MADE NEW AND NONE BUT GOD CAN GIVE IT.

By Covenant Grace

God gives true fear because God promised to do so in the everlasting covenant of grace—and true loving reverence for God as our Father is what keeps his people.

Jeremiah 32: 39: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: 40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Application: Children, you may hate that God has given your fathers this fear, but God has done it for your good. Heed your father's, don't fight against them, they are instructing you in the gospel of Christ for your good. To become angry at one God has put in authority is to become angry at God.

By Regeneration

God implants his fear in the heart in regeneration by the Spirit of God. When God converts his child, God unites us with him that we might fear his name.

Psalm 86: 11: Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

One of the first things God gives is a tender conscience: to fear our sin, to fear condemnation, to fear departing from God, to fear offending God. Then there is a hatred of sin.

Proverbs 8: 14: The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,...

There is no wisdom in a sinner until he fears God.

Proverbs 9:10: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

But as soon as he fears God he begins to be wise.

Psalm 51:6: Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Job 28:28: And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Through the Gospel

It is through the gospel that God gives this wisdom. Our text says,

Psalm 34: 11: Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Application: Some may think I am being mean or even legalistic by demanding you learn to show reverence while the gospel is being preached—at least outwardly.

But it is so that you can hear this gospel. The reason for every practical word in the New Testament is to keep each of us, individually, from being a distraction from the gospel of Christ. It is because through the word, God makes his elect wise giving us fear in the new heart. “Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord”—

But if we are distracted because:

- We woke up late
- We fought against coming here
- We argued our whole way here
- We do not have time to get the clutter out of our minds so we can hear.
- Then we can't hear.

Or if the way a girl is dressed has your attention, you can't hear. Let us teach our daughters to dress like ladies when they come here. Teach them by word and deed.

Or if the services are not conducted in order, you can't hear. This is why your mean ole' pastor insists you get here early, get in your seats before the services begin with enough time (about 15 minutes at least) to read your bible or a bulletin—to get settled and get your ears attentive. It is why I insist you go the restroom beforehand and not get up during the service—so you can hear. If you are sick or know you might need to go to the restroom then sit in the back. But do not make a habit of it.

I insist on these things because you need to hear to the gospel, because you need life that only God can give. Disorder and distraction makes it so you cannot hear. I insist on these things because I pray God will teach you the fear of God and I have worked hard preparing a message by which God teaches the fear of God.

III. LET'S FOCUS MORE ON THIS: GOD GIVES THIS FEAR THROUGH THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Through the Law

Through the law God gives this fear, this wisdom, making us see that we are sin and every transgression is against God. The day the LORD gave the law at Mt. Sinai, at Horeb, this is the reason God says he gave the law:

Deuteronomy 4:10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. [to fear me.]

Application: One of the first things that encouraged me about you fathers and mothers is that after the services, you talk about what was preached with your children.

If God blesses us to hear the law, as the apostle Paul said in Romans 3, the law will declare us guilty and shut our mouths in sin.

Romans 3:19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

That is when we begin to fear God aright. It is good to fear the wrath and condemnation of God when God has given you that fear. This fear comes when God shows us our sin and God's holy justice.

Illustration: The apostle Paul was given this fear—"I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died."

Illustration: The thief on the cross was given this fear of God. One minute he was railing on Christ with the other thief, the next minute he turned to the thief and said, Luke 23: 40:...Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41: And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Through the Gospel

After God reveals our sin then he reveals to his child the gospel. This fear of condemnation is given when God gives us a sight of Christ bearing condemnation on the cross in place of his people. God shows us that God will not clear the guilty, even when the sin-bearer is his own Son.

God gives this fear by showing us that by Christ putting away the sin of his people, perfecting them forever, Christ is the very Way there is forgiveness with God.

Psalm 130: 1: Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. 2: Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. 3: If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4: But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Application: You who are born of God, you fear God because God has sanctified himself in your hearts, teaching you something of how holy God is—how high and set apart, God really is.

God is so holy that God provided his own Son who took your place, took your sin, took your punishment and owned it all to be his own. God is so holy that God spared not his only Son.

Now, you see that by Christ alone you are made the righteousness of God in him, perfect, accepted, and Christ is able to present you to himself without spot and without blemish.

Therefore you fear God—not in terror—but as your holy, just and righteous loving Father. Therefore, from the heart you desire to honor, to exalt and glorify God as he says he must be.

Illustration: Brighter the light in a room the more imperfections you see in the room.

Likewise, the more light God gives his child, the more we see our own sin and imperfections—the more we reverence God. True holiness—true growth in grace—is being made to bow down in humility and reverence for God. It is to grow more sympathetic to the imperfections and weaknesses in our brethren because we are so aware of our own.

IV. THE OBJECT OF OUR FEAR IS GOD: GOD OUR FATHER, HIS SON CHRIST JESUS OUR SAVIOR, AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT BY WHOM WE BELIEVE.

Nothing about what I am saying to you is to cause you to fear men. But there is a fear due to men, by which we learn much about how we are to fear and reverence God.

Romans 13: 1: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God...7: Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Application: This thing of fear and reverence for a believer toward God extends way beyond the walls in which we worship. The reverence shown in all our relationships conveys the reverence in our hearts for God.

Parents and Children

There is a fear and reverence due to parents from their children.

Hebrews 12: 9:...we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Application: A child reverences their father and mother by giving them honor and respect that is due. You do so by yielding in obedience to them—the first time they tell you—not the 2nd or 3rd or 4th. It is not reverence but rebellion if you have to be told 2 or 3 times.

God's Son walked this earth before God his Father doing whatsoever the Father commanded from a heart set on doing his Father's will—he finished the work! Now believer, Christ's perfect obedience and his perfect heart has been made our obedience and we have been given a new heart by Christ dwelling in us—Christ is made unto us Righteousness and Sanctification.

Application: So believer, as children of God, much more, ought we to be in subjection unto God our Father who says, "Believe on my Son and love one another." How so?

1 Peter 1: 14: As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:
15: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy [full of fear and reverence] in all manner of conversation;

Husbands and Wives

Husbands and wives are to fear and reverence one another.

Ephesians 5: 33: Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

1 Peter 3: 5: For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, [by] being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7: Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

This relationship of husband and wife illustrates what Christ Jesus our Husband did (and does) for us and what we as his bride are to do toward him. Look at these texts and consider Christ toward us—his elect—his bride.

- Christ dwelt with us (and continues to dwell with us) **according to knowledge**—Christ is Wisdom and he gives us exactly what we need in word and in providence to keep us where we need to be—at his feet.
- **Christ loved his bride as himself giving himself for us**, even to the death of the cross by which we are righteous, justified; by which our sins are purged.
- Christ **gave honor unto us**: gifting us with his righteousness and holiness of heart, with the precious jewels of the gospel and with faith, love, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness and so on...

- Christ continues to deal with us **“as the weaker vessel”**—he knows we are but dust, he knows the feelings of our infirmities.
- Christ ministers to us **“as being heirs together of the grace of life.”**
- So that by him—**our prayers are not hindered**—but by him we have liberty to pray and he everlives to make intercession for us.

Application: So by his spirit dwelling in our hearts, we are constrained by his love to reverence Christ because he is our Husband. We adorn ourselves by being in subjection to him, calling him Lord for so he is. All our beauty comes from him.

Psalm 45: 11: So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

Employers and Employees

There is a fear and reverence which servants should show to their masters—for us this can be said of employees to employers.

Ephesians 6: 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6: Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7: With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Now consider Christ the Servant of God:

Philippians 2: 7: Christ made himself of no reputation but took on him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

By his grace, believer, we are seated together with him at the right hand of the Father, never to be lost—as free from the curse of the law, sin, death and hell as he is.

Application: Now he says to you his child, "If I be a Master, where is my fear?" (Mal 1:6.) His voice melts our hearts.

President and Kings

There is a fear and reverence to be given to offices like the president and kings.

Proverbs 24: 21: My son, fear thou the LORD and the king:...

Christ came into this earth as Lord, as King over his spiritual, holy nation.

Jeremiah 23:5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Luke 2:11: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

God has now set his King on his holy hill of Zion and Christ rules in the midst of his people—even over the heathen for his glory and our good.

Daniel 4:35: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Application: So we are to reverence magistrates as unto Christ our King.

Ministers and Believers

Lastly, there is a fear and reverence due to ministers of the gospel.

1 Samuel 12: 18: So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

Hebrews 13: 7: Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 8: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever....

Christ is the true Prophet, the true minister of the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man. When he speaks into the heart his Voice comes in effectual power—"My people shall know in that day it is I that doth speak." His preaching in the heart through his earthen vessels is the Power which makes us fear God and heed him.

Application: Brethren, as his minister, the end of my faith and conversation—my end purpose in all these things I am beseeching you to do in this house and beyond—is to focus you on Jesus Christ who changes not.

Hebrews 13: 17: Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Application: Do any of you find joy in correcting your children? You'd much rather be spending your time speaking to them about Christ. So would the apostle Paul. He told the Corinthians, "I was determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." But he had to stop to write 1 Corinthians, to deal with things that were distracting and disrupting them from the gospel. In order to restore order so they could focus their attention on the gospel of Christ and him crucified. That was not joyful for him and was unprofitable for them—in the sense—that they could have been spending that time hearing about Christ and him crucified.

The same is true of us. We have a need for speaking on some practical things, so I have to deal with them so we can get back to focusing our attention on Christ and him crucified. The things Paul taught in 1 Corinthians were not the focus of his ministry. And rest assured, these things won't become the focus of this ministry. But they are needful for now—less these things become worse and cause division.

Go home thinking on this: I have pointed out these earthly relationships to show you that God is to be feared, hearkened to, served, and obeyed. In all of these offices ordained of God—it is not only men—but God who is rebelled against. I pray God give you fear for him in the heart.

What a fearful thing to meet God without an Advocate! We saw it Sunday. Believers have forgiveness with God because the fire of God consumed Christ our burnt offering. But proud, arrogant rebels came without reverence, without God's offering and the fire of God consumed them rather than a Substitute.

In that day you meet God, without an Advocate, the unbeliever will fear God.

Isaiah 33:14: The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

God says, Psalm 50:22: Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.

Christ said, Luke 12:5: But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

There is much peace and joy in fearing the Lord—listen to our text:

Psalm 34: 7: The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them....9: O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

Hebrews 12: 25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:...28: Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29: For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Amen!