

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Psalm 147:11

Psalm 34:9, “O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.” Fear is, “An agitated feeling aroused by awareness of actual or threatening danger or trouble. It is dread or terror. It is an uneasy feeling that something may happen contrary to one's desires. It is a feeling of deep, reverential awe and dread: the fear of God.”

Last week we looked at two questions: Why do men not fear the Lord? And what happens when men do not fear the Lord? The simple reason why is stated in **Proverbs 1:29-30**, “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.” They do not choose the fear of the LORD.

The result of that is a very ugly picture. **Romans 3:10-18**, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

They are headed for death and destruction, but God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. **Ezekiel 33:11**, “...As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live....” He loves all men and desires to save them. He is not willing that any should perish; even the vilest of sinners can be saved. He postpones judgment to give just a little longer for them to be saved. **2 Peter 3:9**, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

The wise thing is to choose the fear of the Lord. Solomon summed it up this way. **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.” Please consider some specific reasons why we must choose the fear of the Lord.

I. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS.

A. He is our creator.

Colossians 1:16-17, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” **Acts 17:28**, “...in him we live, and move, and have our being....”

B. He is our Saviour.

Because God is good, loving and kind, He has provided a way of salvation for us. He proved that He loves us when He allowed His only begotten Son to be nailed to a cross to die. **Romans 5:8**, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God punished all our sins in His Son. He offers salvation to us as a free gift to all.

C. He is our Judge.

Romans 14:11-12, “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Each and every individual will stand before Jesus Christ and be judged by Him. Nothing can be hid from Him. **Proverbs 15:3**, “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good.” **Hebrews 4:13**, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

D. He is absolutely holy.

Psalm 145:17, “The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” **Psalm 99:5**, “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; *for he is* holy.”

1. *No sin is allowed in His presence.*

2. *All sin must be punished.*

E. He has established boundaries that must not be crossed.

The poet wrote, "There is a line by men unseen, that crosses every path; it marks the boundary between God's mercy and His wrath."

1. *This is true for the unbeliever.*

2 Peter 2:5-6, 9, "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;" "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" There comes a time in the life of each unsaved individual when the day of salvation is irrevocably passed. Some cross it at death. Some when they receive a reprobate mind.

2. *This is also true for a rebellious believer.*

Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption..." **Hebrews 10:26-31**, "...if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." **1 John 5:16**, "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

Nadab and Abihu committed a sin unto death. **Leviticus 10:1-2**, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."

Uzzah, one of David's servants, committed a sin unto death. **2 Samuel 6:6-7**, "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his error*; and there he died by the ark of God."

1 Corinthians 10:11-12, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

God is good. He is Love. He is gentle. He is kind, and He is longsuffering. He is also a God of Wrath, and He is a Consuming Fire. Because of this we must fear Him.

II. BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE OF SAFETY.

Psalms 34:7, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Proverbs 10:27, "The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

Proverbs 14:26-27, "In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." **Proverbs 19:23**, "The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil."

Ecclesiastes 8:12-13, "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I

know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.” How do we get to this place of safety?

A. It begins with being afraid of God.

The fear of the Lord is a feeling of deep, reverential awe and dread. We know that He exists and that He is angry with our sin. This causes us to be afraid. **James 2:19**, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” John tells us, (this kind of fear) “. . . hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

B. It moves to a proper reverence - profound adoring and awed respect of God.

1 John 4:18-19, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.”

1. We realize that God loves us and does not desire to punish us.

2. We then choose the fear of the Lord and ask for His mercy.

Psalm 147:11, “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.”

3. He then teaches us the fear of the Lord.

Psalm 34:11-14, “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man *is he that* desireth life, *and loveth many* days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”

Have you chosen the fear of the Lord? **Psalm 34:4, 6, 8-9**, “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.” “O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.”