

The FEAR of God

Int.

1. Aim: To show what it means to have the fear of God.
2. Fear as used in the O.T.
 - a. Ps. 112:1 "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who delights greatly in His commandments.."
 - i. In the verse before the writer had said: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:..." Ps. 111:10a
 - ii. Fear and Wisdom go together.
 - b. In Eccl. 12:13 Solomon Teaches us that the conclusion of the whole matter is to: "...fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."
3. In the N.T. the writers also express the same idea:
 - a. II Cor. 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - b. Eph. 5:21 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
 - c. I Pet. 2:17 "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God Honour the king."
4. A N.T. word for fear is Phobia - We use that to describe a fear of something
 - a. Claustrophobia- Fear of confined spaces.
 - b. Acrophobia- Fear of heights.
 - c. Astraphobia - Fear of thunder and lightning
 - d. Decidophobia- Fear of making decisions.
 - e. Musophobia - Fear of mice.
 - f. Pyrophobia- Fear of fire.
 - g. A Woman in Sydney Australia obsessed by a fear of food poisoning starved herself to death.
 - h. Ill. Fear of Spiders
5. We will discuss what it means to fear God.

Discussion

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN to "FEAR GOD"

A. O.T. WORD "FEAR"... Hebrew, the word is "YARE" and is used to describe:

1. Fear, terror
2. Awesome or terrifying thing (object causing fear)
3. Fear (of God), respect, reverence, piety - Eccl. 12:13

B. N.T. word - PHOBOS is the main word used in the N.T.

1. PHOBOS

- a. First had the meaning of flight, that which is caused by being scared
- b. Being Startled and running away — fear, dread, terror
- c. Our word Phobia is from this word - Excessive fear of an object or thing

2. Phobos +Theos = fear God

- a. Then when the word is joined to the word for God -it means reverential fear of God - considering His characteristics
- b. "...not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a fear which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence." [EDNT p.84]
- c. "To hold in respect" [TDNT Vol.IX p. 189]

C. Fear as mentioned in the Bible can be either bad or good.

1. The bad meaning of fear.

- a. Fear is debilitating. The one talent man failed to multiply because "And I was afraid" - Matt. 25: 25 Quote by FDR - Fear
- b. Fear when not correctly channeled often produces the very thing that is feared Matt. 25: 24-30

- c. Fear can cause people not to confess Christ and fail to do other acts that are to be characteristic of the Christian - Jn. 12: 42, 43
 - d. John wrote as follows regarding fear: "...because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" - I Jn. 4: 18
 - e. Paul told Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" - 2 Tim. 1: 7
2. The good use of fear.
- a. The wise man wrote of fear positively, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" - Prov. 1: 7
 - b. The essential purpose of man is, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man" Eccl. 12: 13
 - c. The writer of Hebrews penned, "Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" - Heb. 12: 28, 29

D. Fearing God does not mean:

1. We fear him as we would a monster.
2. We do not fear God in the sense we fear hydrogen bombs
3. It is not the fear like we have of wild animals, or disease, or storms.
4. FEAR OF GOD IS NOT LIKE A SLAVE MASTER
 - a. Some perform duties as a slave
 - b. They do what they must do in the principle that a slave performed with drudgery.

- c. A slave works because he fears the whip or other forms of punishment.
 - d. He does his work with reluctance and secretly murmurs against his master.
 - e. He secretly wishes that the command was recalled and that the one who gave the command was not in existence.
5. I Jn. 4:18 "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."
- a. This fear is lacking in genuine love - but has the dread of the whip in the hands of the master
 - b. This kind of fear hath torment - expecting punishment. This is a foretaste of it before it actually begins!
 - c. Perfect love casts out such a fear.
 - d. Godly fear is not terror but respect and love for God with a desire to please Him.
- E. This verse helps to explain the truth of fearing God. Eccl.12:13-14 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
- 1. To fear God is to reverence his holy name and respect his authority.
 - 2. Keep his commandments
 - a. In Solomon's day they kept the law of Moses
 - b. Today we obey the gospel of Christ recorded in the N.T.
 - c. Acts 10:34-35 "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."

- d. We work God's righteousness when we keep his commandments.
3. Whole duty of man
 - a. Fear of God is piety - proper disposition - attitude
 - b. Keeping his commandments is righteousness - the proper course of action.
 - c. Fear - is a matter of the heart — righteousness is a matter of life or practice.
 - d. This involves both the inward and outward man.
 4. Bring every work into judgment
 - a. This is the reason we should fear God and keep his commandments
 - b. The man who fears and obeys will have nothing to fear in judgment.
 - c. This man will not have to face the evil of his life because the blood of Christ will cover those mistakes - and they will not be remembered against him
 - d. Heb. 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

II. SOME WHO FEARED GOD

A. NOAH

1. Heb- 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, [asv - Godly fear] prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 - a. "moved with fear"
 - b. God told him that there would be a world wide flood and all flesh would be destroyed

- c. Noah prepared an ark as instructed [keep his commandments]- therefore he and his family were spared
 - 2. Fear - a desire to please God - because of his faith in what God told him.
- B. JOB 1:1 "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

C. Early Church

- 1. Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judae and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."
- 2. Rest - lack of persecution
- 3. Edified - built up
- 4. "walking in the fear of the Lord"
- 5. WERE MULTIPLIED - fear of God was before growth

III. SEVEN REASONS WHY WE SHOULD FEAR GOD

- A. Natural - God has created men with the instinct to respect those who are greater than them. We, as Christians, know God's glorious greatness.
- B. Duty - God has created in us a conscience that teaches us to honor and repay those who have helped us . We, as Christians, know what God has done for us at Calvary and does for us every day.

C. Gateway -

1. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" - Prov. 1:7
2. We have no idea of what is really worth learning until we fear God. Similarly, we do not know how to apply the knowledge that we have acquired until we put God into the "picture."
3. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" - Prov. 9:10, Psalms 111: 10

D. Protection - The fear of God keeps us from committing many hurtful and destructive sins (eg. adultery) - especially, when we are alone.

E. Commandment - In today's scripture verse, we are commanded to fear God. When a commandment is given, a choice must be made - to obey or disobey it. Eccl.12:13-14

F. Preparation. - Those who are surrounded by people that fear God, are more prepared to receive God's offer of salvation because they have been made aware of His presence, person and punishment - Ps. 85:9

G. Punishment - If the previous six reasons do not move us to fear God, then the realization of God's holiness and hatred of sin, and His punishment against disobedience should motivate us.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "FEAR OF THE LORD"

A. FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, WE LEARN...

1. The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge - Pr 1:7
2. The "fear of the Lord" will cause one to hate evil - Pr 8:13
3. The "fear of the Lord" will prolong life - Pr 10:27
4. The "fear of the Lord" provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life - Pr 14:26-27
5. The "fear of the Lord" prompts one to depart from evil - Pr 16:6
6. The "fear of the Lord" leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil - Pr 19:23
7. The "fear of the Lord" is the way to riches, honor, and life! - Pr 22:4

B. WITHOUT THE "FEAR OF THE LORD"...

1. We close ourselves to the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge!
2. We will flirt with evil and be corrupted by it
3. Our lives are likely to be shortened by our refusal to heed God's word (e.g., suffering sexually transmitted diseases because we did not heed His Word on sexual relationships)
4. We will not come to know the love of God that gives us assurance and confidence of our salvation
5. When fallen into sin, we will not be motivated to repent and turn to God!
6. We will not be motivated to truly "work out our own salvation"

CONCLUSION

1. Remember "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" Psalm 111:10
2. The success or failure of our "whole" life depends on whether we fear God or not. And our fear of God is evidenced by our obedience to His commandments.
 - a. With the proper "fear of the Lord", we will "work out our salvation", we will "labour...to enter into that [heavenly] rest"!
 - b. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2Cor. 7:1
3. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. - Heb.10:26-31
 - a. In 1 John 4:18 we read: "Perfect love casts out fear." "What is this "perfect love"?"
 - b. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" - John 14:15
 - c. We seldom fear the policeman if we abide by the law. But if we violate the law, we dread to see him.
 - d. Thus, when by faith we "keep" His commandments, we no longer need to be troubled with the fear of the judgment of God.
4. If you are not a Christian then you are not fearing God nor are you keeping His commandments.
 - a. God has commanded that all be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - b. When we obey the gospel God has promised eternal salvation. But we must fear Him