

Fear the Lord

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[0:00] Please be seated. And if you've got your Bibles, Psalm 86. Psalm 86. Fear the Lord. Fear the Lord. I know I've preached on similar aspects before, but the Bible talks about the fear of the Lord multiple times.

! So it's something we would do well to be reminded of, I put to you. Fear the Lord. Psalm 86.

And we'll have these scriptures shown also, so you can follow that way too. Psalm 86.

And verse 11. A prayer of David. And verse 11.

Teach me thy way, O Lord. I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name. We're going to unpack these words a little tonight.

[1:15] David cried, Teach me thy way, O Lord. I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name. Fear the Lord.

Fear the Lord. Now, by and large, people these days do not fear God. They scarcely give a thought to God and the things of God. It's missing. Very much missing in society today.

And we see a world full of chaos and sin, hatred and violence. By and large, a rejection of God. A world at war with God. What's missing?

The fear of the Lord. People don't seem to care that they are in peril of God's wrath.

Have you ever got burnt? I have. And now I have a healthy fear of fire.

[2:19] I don't play with it. The memory of that pain. Ouch! That hurt. The memory of that pain has stayed with me.

I don't mess with fire. I have a respect for fire and hot stoves. It's good to take heed of warning. Fear the Lord.

These are strong words. To be aware of danger. To fear being burnt. It's a good fear to have, isn't it?

To fear being burnt rather than to play with that hot stove. To play with matches. To be having a healthy fear of what danger there is.

To teach our children to avoid strangers. To be careful in busy streets. There's a healthy fear. To keep clear.

[3:21] To keep safe. People, we need a fear of God. A fear of God. To heed the warning. Hebrews 10.31.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. A fearful thing. It's hard to say that with one of your teeth out.

A fearful thing, isn't it? To fall into the hands of the living God. It says that our God is a consuming fire. It's fearful.

There's a healthy fear. His judgments are holy and righteous and true. He is all powerful and sovereign. The mighty God. The King of kings.

The King everlasting. The King of glory. And when a man or a woman shakes their fist in the face of God and mocks him, they will one day face him.

[4:18] And answer for it. Having a fear of God is the right thing for us to have. It's a right and healthy and a smart thing for you to fear God.

To not take it lightly. To not take it flippantly and carelessly. Unheeding. Just going your merry way without a thought.

For what does God want of me? The fear of God. I put to you as the psalmist cried that it is a thing we should seek after.

To make your prayer. Teach me thy way, O Lord. Wisdom. The fear of God is a wise thing.

It's the smart thing. It's the right thing. Ask God to give it to you. Teach me thy way, O Lord. May it be our prayer. Teach me, O Lord, to fear you, to honour you, to revere you, to uphold you, to regard you.

[5:21] Teach me, O Lord, thy way. Teach me. Proverbs 9 verse 10, it says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It's the starting point.

And the knowledge of the holy is understanding. The fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom. You haven't begun to know anything yet without this basic building block of wisdom and knowledge. God is awesome. Awesome. He is almighty. Aren't we living in a crazy world? People going mad without the fear of God.

You know, they make sacrilegious movies such as, for example, Evan Almighty, which is a mockery of Noah and God's judgment on planet Earth.

The world laughs at that. They think it's funny to make fun of God, to make fun of Noah, to make fun of God's judgment of the flood. But we all have to answer to him.

[6:23] There was a Lutheran college in Minnesota associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They have hired a Hindu to head up their religion department.

This is a Lutheran college, part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A Hindu is in charge of their religious department, their religion department.

Madness. Madness. The world's gone mad. Our world is trying now, as we know, as the media seems constant, a barrage of information now, even on general secular media, that our world is trying to stop people using the term, you know, dare you say it, mother.

Mother. The word mother. Or the word father. They're words that, oh, that might be construed as homophobic. That might be, oh, that's not politically correct.

You know, we've got to call them parent one and parent two now. And such madness. In a world gone mad, a world without the fear of God. And then we have churches specifically being built to look like nightclubs.

[7:38] They are made to look like nightclubs, painted like nightclubs, with smoke lights and disco lights like nightclubs.

And all that goes along with that, the fear of the Lord. Where's that gone? Out the window. Out the window. And yet the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, as well as the beginning of wisdom.

But fools despise wisdom and instruction. The world hates that. Oh, I don't want to hear that. This is how many people act, isn't it?

I know there's some in our number that are active witnesses. Sometimes you get people that just don't want to hear it. But thank God there's some that do. It was a blessing this morning. We had someone that one of our door knockers invited and ministered to.

A seeker after God who did come to fellowship with us this morning. And so that's a blessing. I know I visited a budding politician who came with his wife and a couple of kids this morning too.

[8:45] Sometimes people are, there is an openness for some, but a closeness for many, isn't there? They're close to that.

And people of God, we need to get back to the Bible, the authority of the Bible to take its message to heart, to return to Bible standards concerning how we live.

How are we to live a God-honouring life? How can we honour him in terms of all aspects, all dimensions, morality, modesty, music? How can I honour God with my life?

How can I show that I am a God-fearing man, a God-fearing woman? And if you fear God, you're going to take him seriously. You won't toy with Christianity. You will take him at his word.

You will want to follow his word and his will in your life. You will want to obey him. I was talking with someone recently who was quite moved as the word of God had challenged him.

[9:48] Some aspect had convicted him and it moved him such that he wanted to get answers. And that's how we should be, isn't it, with the things of God?

We want to obey God. We want to follow him. We want to be responsive to his conviction. The fear of God means that you're going to want to live for the Lord and for his glory.

That is the ultimate object of our being, of our existence. If you truly fear the Lord, you're going to regard his authority. This is the final authority, God's word.

We can take it as read. You're going to want to please your Lord and you're going to fear his displeasure such that you want to have that front and centre in your thinking.

Wisdom. When you fear the Lord, when you fear God in your life, you're wanting to keep your heart right. It's the wise thing to do. When we talk about fearing God, it means loving him, honouring him, respecting him.

[10:56] You'll have that earnest desire to do his will, to not displease him. Abraham showed the fear of God when he placed obedience to God above the life of his promised son.

This son that he had in his old age, that was the fulfilment of God's promise. And he went with Isaac up the mount.

And the angel cried out to Abraham, just as he was about to slay his son, as the dagger was held. Genesis 22, verse 12.

And he, the angel of the Lord, said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

There was a test God made of Abraham, and he showed his obedience to the Lord. And the angel of the Lord, a Christophany, like an appearance of Christ, you could say, or God.

[12:03] In the theophany, like an appearance of the Lord, the angel of the Lord. I know that thou fearest God.

It was evident that he feared God. And everything gets wrapped up in this truth. Ecclesiastes 12, 13. It's life.

The whole duty of man. The wise man of Ecclesiastes, he says, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

It just wraps it all up in that. You know, obey God and fear him. Fear God. It's the wise thing to do. I'll put to you tonight.

Fear God because of his judgment. Judgment is coming. It says that we will all stand and give account of ourselves. Fear God because of his judgment.

[13:07] John saw an angel at the end of the world, and the angel cried, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters.

Fear God and give glory to him. Now, someone has said you can tell a person's level of maturity by observing the things they fear.

At four, at the age of four, we fear the barber. Now, I don't have much left to cut anymore, so that's not really, I don't really, I'm not afraid of the barber anymore.

But at four years old, as a little boy, it might be a fearful thing. And then at eight, we fear the dentist. Well, I'm a lot older than eight, and I still fear the dentist. But at eight, we fear the dentist.

Then at 16, the driving examiner, when you're going for your driving test. At 16, whatever it is now. And then at 30, the loan officer, you know, when you try to get, to borrow some money for whatever purpose.

[14:12] But when is it that we do come to fear God? You know, when do we really come to that place where God stops us in our tracks and we come to fear God?

Our Lord Jesus used the fear of God to rouse men. He says in Matthew 10, 28, He's saying there, the Lord Jesus is saying, don't be afraid of men, but rather fear God.

Fear God. May that be our prime motivator. And it tells us that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. Proverbs 14, 27, it's a good thing. A fountain of life.

So the fear of God I put to you is about wisdom. Teach me thy way, Lord. It's wisdom. Ask God for that wisdom. It's also about our walk.

David said, I will walk in thy truth. If we fear God, our walk changes. If we fear God, it'll show in our life, in our daily walk and living.

[15:18] There's going to be a radical difference in our walking, how we conduct ourselves. Of course, we know the word repent means do a 180. It's like we're going our own way and then we go God's way.

The walk changes. In Acts 9, 31, it says that the churches had rest throughout all Judea 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.

The churches were edified, built up, and they were walking in the fear of the Lord. That's what God's plan is for his church. That we'd be built up. That we'd be strengthened. That we'd be encouraged and encouraging one another. And that we walk in the fear of the Lord. That there's something that sets us apart from the everyday.

There's something divine. Something sanctified. Something holy. Something worshipful. And glorifying of our God and King. That we're a separated God-glorifying, God-fearing people.

[16:19] And if we really fear the Lord, it means there's going to be a radical turnaround in our soul. But we're going to want to walk in God's ways and delight in his commandments.

We'll find that real relationship with God. And salvation. Do we really believe? Do we really believe in hell? For example, hell is real. Hell is eternal.

That there'll be that prompting in us. Well, we've got a message that should be burning in our bosom. To tell the nations. To rescue the perishing. It says in Proverbs 16.6.

The fear of the Lord will cause people to depart from evil. There's a change of direction. The fear of the Lord. We want to depart from evil. We know it's wrong. We'll steer clear.

The fear of God will move us to reach others. And we see in Noah's day that he was warned of God of things to come, not seen as yet.

[17:18] And he was moved with fear. He prepared an ark for the saving of his house. Fear will move you. Fear moved Noah to action. Fear will mobilise you, motivate you.

If we had more of the fear of our God in our churches, we'd see more souls saved. We'd see more Christians built up and strengthened. We'd have more people living the life of a real Christian. And they'll be walking like it. They're going to walk in his truth. They're going to walk when it's hard. They're going to walk when it's unpopular. They're going to walk when it's uphill. It's a new walk. A new way of living. A new way of walking. And we're going to walk and keep on walking. Because they fear the Lord. Such a people will know God will give them victory and assure them of protection.

In Psalm 34 7, it says, The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them, that fear him and delivereth them. So the fear of God means we're going to mean it.

[18:18] The fear of God. It should be something that should grip us. It's something that should shake us. Something that should quicken us and enlighten us.

The fear of God. That it's something very precious and beautiful and godly to seek and to yearn after.

In Proverbs 8 13, it says, The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate.

Froward meaning perverse. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and perversity. God says to hate such a thing.

So I put to you, brother, sister, it's a walk. The fear of God is a new way of walking. A new way of walking. Walking in truth. Walking in the light. Walking in the spirit.

[19:14] Walking in the new way of life. And veering off the old way of death and darkness. The fear of God is to start walking with God. Trusting in God's wisdom.

It's wisdom. And it's a walk. And Proverbs 3 verse 7, it says, Be not wise in thine own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. The fear of God moves us to take a different track.

The fear of God brings us wisdom and it will show in our walk. And thirdly, it will be evident in our will. David cried, I will walk in thy truth.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. He had an enlightenment of wisdom. He got that fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.

He said, teach me, Lord. Wisdom is to know him, to fear God. He found a new way of walking. That he could walk in God's truth.

[20:14] And then he had a change in his heart, in his will, in his mindset. Unite my heart to fear thy name. You know, when we become a Christian, there's a new dimension that happens.

We don't think like the world thinks. We don't have the loves that the world has. We don't have the affection that the world has for trivia and vanity and emptiness.

When we become a Christian, there's a new realm of thinking, of behaving, of acting, of relating. And we start making choices in terms of eternal values.

In terms of that which is foundational and fundamental, there's an attitude adjustment. There's a mind shift, as I say, to regard what we know to be right and wrong.

And God instructs us to judge that. What is right and what is wrong. By his perfect standard, by his plumb line, we can tell whether it's straight up and down or it's skew-wiffed.

[21:33] And we know the world that we live in is warped and twisted. It's a world that is contrary to God. And so, brothers and sisters, I put to you tonight that as God's own people, our prayer should be, unite my heart to fear thy name.

May I have a heart to follow you. May I have a conscious decision to make choices that are pleasing to God. For our conscience to be awakened, to walk life's journey wisely.

And when we fear God, we'll be mindful of being in God's will. That our will is in accord with God's will.

Many years ago, there was a father and his daughter. They were walking out on some pastures in Canada. And there was a prairie fire that was sweeping towards them.

And they realized they were going to be engulfed in flames. And the father knew there was only one way to escape. He quickly began a fire right where they were and burnt a circle of grass near them.

[22:55] When the fire approached, the young girl was terrified by the raging flames that were just coming towards them. But her father then carried her into the section of grass that had been burnt.

And he assured her, the flames can't get to us. We're standing where the fire has already been.

And it's a picture for us of the safety that we have from God's wrath and judgment.

That Jesus has taken that penalty and he's put us in his safekeeping. And so for us, whilst we fear God, we're not fearful of his judgment because he's saved us from that.

He's saved us from his wrath. And our response is praise to him for that. But for the lost, they do not believe in God.

And the fire sweeps towards them. They will not be in a place of safety. And the Bible tells us of them, there is no fear of God before their eyes. It should grieve our hearts, shouldn't it, of the lost and unsaved that we know.

[24:03] Those who do not believe the Lord. And we know it's so true of them. There's no fear of God before their eyes. There's no kind of safety valve.

There's no kind of, nothing that's kind of, no warning lights are coming on the dash, as it were.

There's no fear of God. There's no sense of, hey, this is, I'm at eternal danger here.

That my soul is in peril of hellfire here. There is no fear of God before their eyes. They're in darkness. And my heart grieves for such. And so, but for us that are saved, we know that our priorities have been readjusted.

That our will, that our heart has been changed. And that our Lord is not some passing interest that we just give some token attention to.

But he is that prime motivator of our lives. And it moves us to action. In 2 Corinthians 7.1 it says, 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.

[25:20] So the fear of God will make us flee from sin. It will help us to perfect holiness in the fear of God. And I believe that I could put to you that the decision is yours.

It's an act of your will. An act of your, of volition, of choice. To make that decision. God helping you, of course.

And God prompting you and moving you and drawing you to that. That you will be prompted to have that heart after God.

To say, unite my heart to fear thy name. That we can have a heart that cries out. And we want to serve the Lord with fear. And rejoice with trembling. That the fear of God will prompt us to works of service.

Such that we can't just sit idle. We have to be active. He wants to activate us. And in whatever capacity we can be activated.

[26:25] If we fear the Lord, he will want us. And he will move us to serve the Lord with fear. And if we fear the Lord, we'll want to honour him.

And making pleasing him our first and foremost consideration. And also, this fear of God, this change of our will, to shape it according to his will, will help us to love and want the things that God wants.

And one of those is that we will want to reach others with the message. He will move us to be a witness. It says, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

There's a sense where, because we know this is such a solemn and needful and essential truth, an eternal critical message that must be given that because we fear God, we'll want to persuade men. We'll want to tell others. We'll be moved to be a witness. The fear of God is also going to promote purity in our life. It says, The fear of the Lord is clean and enduring forever.

[27:38] The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. The fear of the Lord is clean. It will help us to have that clean mind, that clean thinking. Such that that which is not clean is something that is distasteful to us, that we will reject.

The fear of God is going to lead you to praise. You're going to want to magnify him and thank him for his mercy that he's had upon you. Fearing the Lord means you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength.

The fear of the Lord will prompt you to that relationship with him. So we want to strengthen that. The fear of the Lord will motivate us to do his will and to refrain from evil.

When people do not fear the Lord, they're in a fog. They're in a state of strife and discord because they're out of accord with their maker.

It says in Isaiah 57 verse 21 in part, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. You know, it's a common saying, there's no peace for the wicked.

[28:55] It's a kind of colloquial common saying people just routinely at times say these days. But it's actually the words of scripture. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

And the fear of the Lord tendeth to life, and he that hath it shall abide satisfied, and he shall not be visited with evil. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life.

You know, how better a life can we live than to fear God? To have ourselves in right accord with him. And as we said before, to fear him rather than those who could kill the body.

I know there's a brother here tonight wearing a shirt with a sign, a signal, of Christians who are marked to be slaughtered.

And that's the reality. Some people's houses, they're Christians. The houses get marked for the house and the occupants to be destroyed.

[29:57] And friends tonight, fear not them. If we were living in such a culture, such a world, and many of our brothers and sisters are, our Lord says to us, fear not them.

Those who are going to attack you for being a Christian, for being a witness, don't fear them, but rather fear him. Fear God. And so it's about getting things in perspective, isn't it?

God is awesome. So may we truly be in awe of him. And stop and consider his holiness, his justice, his worthy. Are we afraid to offend a holy God?

You displease him at your peril. You disobey him at your peril. You disregard him at your peril. You dishonour him at your peril. And your soul is in great danger to neglect so great salvation.

Treat each day as if it were your last, because one day it will be. We should have that sense. And of course, as a believer, we know our security is assured.

[31:03] It's written in blood that we are saved if we have our trust in Christ as Lord and Saviour. And I know there's some that teach a very shaky kind of salvation, as if it's all dependent on what we do or don't do.

And if we do something, then we lose it and we've got to regain it. No, it's nothing of what we do.

And that's the good news, isn't it? So if it was about what we do or that which we do not do, we'd be constantly questioning, have I got it?

Am I saved? So it's not about what we do, but it's about knowing him. And if we know him, truly we will fear him.

If we know him truly, we will honour him and we'll want to have that sense of his righteousness.

We'll want to ask him of these things to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

That salvation that he has given to us, that gift of his salvation, that we know it is a present tense possession.

[32:16] We have that salvation. But there's a sense where it's worked out within us. And we can have that heart's cry of David, teach me thy way, O Lord.

You know, we're all learning. I put it this morning. I'm still wearing my L plates. I'm still a learner. A learner, disciple means learner.

And we should all be disciples, shouldn't we? We should want to learn of him. Teach me thy way.

He is the one, our ultimate teacher. Teach me thy way, O Lord. I will walk in thy truth.

I'm going to consciously determine to walk in his truth, to walk in that fear of the Lord and unite my heart to fear thy name. May it be such that my heart, my will, my life, my choice, every decision of life that I make will have that regard of the fearing of God.

It will be what will honour my Lord and Saviour, what will be to his praise and to bring him glory. So I beseech you here tonight to have that heart's cry, even just the simple prayer of this one verse, to make that your heart's cry, to seek after God, to have a healthy fear of the Lord.

[33:35] And to know him is to know that we don't need to fear his wrath or anger, his judgment against our sin, because that was paid in full at Calvary's cross.

And to know him as Saviour and Lord is to want to have a heart to bless, to please him, to follow him, to walk in his truth.

Now, I urge you tonight to consider these things and place your heart's trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Make that your decision here today and that we, every believer, might have a yearning for his wisdom, for that walk with God and for that gracious, to have that finding his will, his will.

And his will is that we do fear him and that our will accords with his will. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you are able to keep that which we have committed unto you against that day.

And Lord, we can put our trust in you. We know, Lord, that your majesty and your mighty, awesome power is just so all-consuming.

[35:02] Lord, you're an all-consuming fire. Help us, Lord, to have a healthy heart that yearns after you, that we can ask you, Lord, to teach us your way.

Lord, that we can ask you to help us to walk in your truth. And Lord, that we can have a heart that cries out, unite my heart to fear thy name.

Lord, may we have such a decision here tonight for each one that we'll want to draw closer to you so that you can draw closer to us.

In Jesus' wonderful name, amen.