

# The Fear of God

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[0:00] Well, we're talking about the fear of God today. The Bible often calls us to fear not, to fear not. And as God's people, we don't need to be afraid. We don't need to be fearful as we've got faith, which is kind of the opposite of fear, isn't it?

As in fear of things not to fear. Faith is our trust that our Lord is watching over us. We need not fear tomorrow because the Lord is already there. Amen?

And we can often think of fear in a negative way. People think of fear as something that's useless or even harmful. And our culture views fear negatively in that way.

Some people proudly put a slogan such as this on the back of their car, a bumper sticker, that's no fear. And having no fear can actually be a bad thing because we see that in our society, don't we? A society where there's a lack of the fear of God. And some people have no sense of accountability or of punishment. We see children growing up without fear of their parents.

[1:03] We see citizens that have no fear of authority, no respect of the law. They kind of mock it and scorn it and deliberately break the law.

And what's worse still is this idea of no fear is to have no fear of God. That's a big problem. It's a big problem, people. It says of the lost in Romans 3, verse 16 through 18, it tells us of the lost, it says, 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. We see that, don't we, in society today. No fear of God before their eyes that they could routinely mock and scorn and blaspheme his name as some kind of joke word, as a curse word, a scorn word.

There is a fear that is good for us. And I'll put to you today the fear of God is such a fear. The right kind of fear is a good thing for us. It'll set us on the right track. It is the fear of God.

That's what we must have. That's what we ought to aspire to, to seek after, to want that. In Proverbs 9, verse 10, it tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the beginning of it.

[2:21] And the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Here is where we can find true wisdom and meaningful life. It's the fear of God. It's to truly know him.

Fear can be a positive thing, a productive thing, a helpful thing. For example, it's good to have a healthy fear of fire. Who knows that? As a young tacker growing up, you play around with fire, you get burned.

And you learn to fear that fire, don't you? And the Bible says we should fear God. It tells of him that let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

There's that word again. This is Hebrews 12, 28, and why it says, for our God is a consuming fire. We should be afraid of that fire, shouldn't we?

That consuming fire. The fear of God is actually a blessing for our life. It can strengthen our faith and a hope in God. The fear of God, it's a healthy thing.

[3:21] It's a healthy fear that we should have, the fear of God. Why do I say that? To fear God means to reverence him, to honour him, to be in awe of him, to have that attitude of deep respect and honour of him.

Why should we fear God? The fear of God is based on who God is. Think of his holiness, his power, of his majesty, of his might, of his justice, of his mercy.

God is greater than us. And this is why we can trust him. Think of who God is. Why fear God? I'll put to you some things why we should fear God. Number one, we should fear God because of his might.

Because of his might and his power, his authority. Fear God. We can trust God because he's bigger than us. He's mighty, he's almighty. He's powerful, all-powerful.

Think of his power, the power of God. In Luke 12, verse 5, our Lord says this, I will forewarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.

[4:26] Yea, I say unto you, fear him. Oughtn't we to fear the one who can cast us into hell? Surely we ought to. Surely we must. Friends, when you see a speed camera, hopefully you see them before too long.

You see them in time. When you see a speed camera, you see a policeman there. There's a certain sense of fear that goes through you. If you're edging a bit too high with your speed.

Sometimes it may be too late. But there's a sense of fear that evokes, isn't there? As you see such a thing, you see a policeman, a speed camera. When your safety is at risk, you react with fear.

Think of potentially dangerous equipment like power tools. And it's good and healthy to fear such a thing, isn't it? I know I've got like a bench saw with this rotating, huge rotating blade.

And I know to keep my fingers clear of that blade. Because it's good to have a fear of such a thing, isn't it? To have a fear that I'm not going to get too close to that blade. Or a power tool, some power equipment.

[5:34] I know people have had experiences with angle grinders. They got a bit too close with an angle grinder. It's not a funny thing. It's a horrible thing. It's a destructive thing. We should be rightfully fearful of that, which can harm us.

We should fear God because he can cast us into hell. So we should not be careless with God. Do not be careless with God. We cannot toy with God. He's more dangerous than anything we could imagine if we're on the wrong side of him.

Fear is a response to danger. People fear when they sense danger. When you hear that rustle in the leaves of the jungle. And you don't know what that animal is that's coming towards you.

We can sense danger. And it's a healthy response that protects us when we're in such a situation. But how much more healthy and rightful is that we fear God? We fear him who's got the power to not only kill but to cast us into hell.

Now someone kind of skirts around such a truth, but it's a reality. And it's a fundamental reality in the word of God. Our Lord says, To this man will I look, in Isaiah 66 verse 2, To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

[6:49] There ought to be a rightful sense of trembling, of trepidation, about the things that are holy, the things that are righteous, the things of God. It's a no light thing to be speaking to you, lest I preach something that is false or doubtful.

God won't be tired if I fail. We ought to be approaching the word of God with trembling, with that sense of awe that we want to be rightfully speaking it, and understanding it.

To tremble at the word of God is a very important characteristic. Our Lord praises humility that we come humbly before him. We don't come bragging and braggadocio and smart.

We come humbly. We come weakly as a poor and a contrite spirit, that we realise how small we are in the presence of our awesome and mighty God.

Friends, this book is dangerous. It's dangerous, isn't it? This is very dangerous, this book. It will unsettle you, but it will also protect you. If you heed it's true.

[7:59] It's like the law. The law protects us. Police protect us. It doesn't mean we walk around nervous and cowering. And thank God for the policemen on our streets and people in the police force that keep us safe.

They're doing a good job, by and large. When they're on the right side of things, they're a blessing, aren't they? It doesn't mean that we should be afraid and cowering in front of a policeman.

If we're not doing anything wrong, we've got no need for that fear. But when we grasp how mighty and awesome our God is, how we recognise how weak we are in his sight. We realise his strength, his true strength and the wonder of it.

And we can rely upon his power within us. So why fear God? Because of his might. He's mighty, isn't he? Almighty. We fear God because of his might.

Secondly, we fear God because of his majesty. Because of his majesty. When we have that sense of how majestic he is. When we consider that sense of awe when we meet.

[9:01] For example, as you might meet a VIP, even humanly, a very important person, there's that sense of, wow, it's kind of a daunting thing, isn't it? To meet someone who is important, as the world would reckon.

But how much more? Our mighty God. Think of his majesty. This is royalty. He is the king of kings. And it tells of him that we should serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 2, verse 11. A prophetic psalm, speaking of the Son of God, it says, Kiss the Son. Kiss here means worship. It signifies worship.

I suppose the idol worshippers would kiss their idols. But we kiss the Son. We don't kiss some idol. We worship the Son of God. It says, So his position is due honour.

His due praise is the king of kings. Think of his majesty. We think of worldly places, of palaces, of worldly kings and queens, of parliaments, of authority.

[10:12] See, he is far, far and above all of that. And he is due that awesome and mighty honour. He has the right to rule over us.

This king of kings, he demands our allegiance, our service. And it's because of his holiness, people today, he is the high and holy king. He's not like human kings. He is the mighty lord.

The majestic king. The merciful judge. So there's a sense of majesty as in a courtroom setting when there's a judge there.

You know, the judge walks in. All rise. You know, everyone stands up because the judge represents authority. Represents that power.

So why fear God? We've seen, as we've touched on, because of his might. He's mighty. Because of his majesty is the king of kings. And think, thirdly, because of his mercy.

[11:12] This one that we should fear. Friends, we ought to fear God because of his mercy. And in the light of judgment, it says that his mercy is on those that fear him. Luke 1 verse 50.

Thank God. If you're one who fears him, his mercy is on you. Isn't that a good thing? Don't you want to be one of those that fear him? That his mercy be upon you. That you have that trust in him.

That he is the saviour. That he is the one who grants mercy. He grants pardon because of his grace. It says in Hebrews 10, 30 through 31, it says, The Lord shall judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We read about the Holy Spirit that he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.

John 16, 8. Men should fear the wrath to come. Friends, we know surely it will come. The Bible speaks of the wrath to come. And if we're outside of his grace, we're under his wrath.

[12:10] We will face his wrath. Thankfully, we're saved. We that are saved can know his mercy, his merciful pardon. We know him as powerful, as mighty, as the almighty, as the king, as the coming judge.

And we know his pardon. And the privilege, what's more, of being in relationship, as a father-son relationship. So thank God he's merciful in his judgment.

Amen. Even this can mean a healthy fear. As well as we think of that, contemplate who he is. That he gives necessary discipline.

Even to us, his children, as we might walk waywardly, we come under his discipline. And our disobedience brings his discipline. It's a constant thing, isn't it?

I knew that my father would chastise me on those very rare occasions. And then I'd need it. He would punish me when I needed it. And it was not a harsh punishment, but it taught me a lesson.

[13:10] And it's the same with our God, isn't it? That he teaches us lessons. You know, Peter lets some lessons through his wanderings. You know, we all can have those wavering wanderings through life.

And he draws us back, doesn't he? He draws us back because he loves us. And he's got mercy towards us. And sometimes he's got to steer us with a bit of punishment, a bit of chastisement, so that we can get right as God's children.

We've got an awesome responsibility, don't we? Think of his mercy today. To think that we are recipients of his mercy, that should make us tremble, shouldn't it? Shouldn't it, honestly?

That we, undeserving, well, I say for myself, aren't we? Undeserving, undeserving of his mercy, why don't we? To fear God in that love response.

And so we've got a great responsibility before him because there's a judgment coming. And it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It's also easy for even for believers.

[14:15] We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Of course, we know our sins are forgiven. Our home is in heaven. We're saved. Glory, I'm saved. But there is a judgment seat of Christ.

We must all appear before. So let's not take it lightly or flippantly. Let's not be careless or unheeding. With our walk. He wants our walk to please him. It's not our works that save, but our works should please him.

There should be a sense that we want to honour our great God and Saviour. And it says the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. So as God's children, God helping us, we want to naturally want to please our Heavenly Father, don't we?

Thankfully, as the judge, he grants forgiveness and pardon. So we see another thing. Fear leads us to some things. Just three things fear leads us to.

So again, just to put to you why the fear of God is something that we should want. The fear of God leads us to wisdom. It's the starting point.

[15:23] It's the beginning of wisdom, isn't it? The Bible speaks of some that they're searching, ever searching, studying, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

That's 2 Timothy 3 verse 7. To think you could spend a lifetime and miss the whole point of life. It's a grievous thing, isn't it? I think of loved ones of my own and I wonder where they're at spiritually. That they're learning, learning, learning. You know, they might be highly qualified. You know, more qualified than me. But they never come to the knowledge of the truth.

Says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To miss that is to miss the essential, isn't it? We could go to uni and get all kind of qualifications and have multiple letters behind our name and the reverend doctor in front of our name and miss heaven.

Because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Without that, to know, without knowing the saviour whom to know is life eternal, we miss heaven. It tells us, be not wise in thine own eyes.

[16:27] Fear the Lord. That's the point. And depart from evil. So true wisdom and knowledge, this is where it begins. This is where it starts. It's the very starting point. That we'll suddenly know him.

That we don't suddenly arrive, but the knowledge of him is the beginning of that wisdom. It leads us to that wisdom. Also the fear of God, it not only leads us to wisdom, but it leads us to work.

We want to serve our master as a willing servant. There's such a thing as a healthy fear in the workplace. You know, I learnt that when I left school and I had pretty good grades.

And then I got to the workplace and I got my first supervisor's report. It was very deflating because they were very honest with me. I had a lot of improvement to make.

And there's a sense of a healthy fear in the workplace of your supervisor, isn't there? Of those that are above you. There's a healthy fear because they're the ones who hire and fire. So there's a healthy fear in the sense that we have work to do and it's unto the Lord.

[17:32] He is the ultimate one we serve in the workplace and wherever we live and go about life. So it's interesting, we see the fear of the Lord, it goes hand in hand with serving Him.

It says we fear Him and it changes the way we walk, it changes our love and it changes our service. So when you're saved, you've got a Lord, which means you're the servant, right?

It follows, doesn't it? He's Lord, we're the servant. He's given us service to render, He's given us work to do. If He is our Lord, it follows on that we are His servants.

And Joshua 24 has got the same theme, verse 14. Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him, hand in hand again. Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth.

Put away the gods which your father served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt and serve ye the Lord. Now I was encouraged this morning when I put a bit of a call out for some work to do and I got some immediate.

[18:48] Oh, I'll put my hand up. That's a good thing. It's good to have a ready willingness to serve. Have a ready willingness to serve. Friends, order it to be a priority that you serve the Lord.

That is the priority. That's the best thing you can do. And it says in Philippians 2, verse 12, Wherefore, my beloved, as you've always obeyed, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. So the fear of the Lord leads us to some things. It leads us to wisdom.

It leads us to work. Because we know Him. We know His power. His lordship. We know His mercy as the forgiving judge. And it leads us to a third one. So we see here, summary so far, the word of the fear of the Lord leads us to wisdom.

It leads us to work. And thirdly, it leads us to worship. It says, Psalm 96, verse 9, When you fear the Lord, you realise He's due your worship.

[19:58] Fear the Lord. Fear before Him. It motivates us. The fear of the Lord motivates God's people to turn from sin, to live right, to seek to worship and honour Him with your life.

It tells us in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 1, Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting the holiness in the fear of God. Now, of course, you've got to get saved first. I don't want to miss that point. You can't clean up your own act. You can't clean yourself.

You've got to be saved. And then there's the cleansing. There's the sanctifying. There's the washing. The washing of the water. By the word, there's a washing. It's a continual washing. Get the promise of salvation, then get the washing. Cleanse yourself. Perfecting holiness. In other words, growing it. Maturing it. Increasing it in the fear of God.

[21:00] A natural response is to think of God, of His wonder, of His majesty, of His holiness, of His judgment. Our rightful response is to fear Him. At the cross, we see the holiness of God.

We see His hatred of our sin. We see the terrifying judgment that we're under outside of His mercy. And we see His grace delivered. What a great reason to thank Him.

To worship Him. Worship Him. Worship the Lord. Worship the Lord. Part of our expression of worship is how we live. Nehemiah 5 verse 9.

It says, walk in the fear of our God. Fear God. It means to worship Him. To revere Him. Why? Because He's God. We've got so much to worship Him and thank Him for.

To bless Him for. He's the Creator. He controls all. He's worthy of all praise and honour. So the fear of God leads us to these things.

[21:58] To wisdom. To work. To worship. And there's wonderful blessings found in the fear of God. It's a healthy thing. It's a wholesome thing. It brings blessing for your life.

It's our duty to fear God. And it's also our delight. This is no irksome thing. This is no burdensome thing. We fear Him because it's our responsive love, isn't it?

We fear Him because He's worthy of worship. It's our delight. And it says that our Lord will bless them that fear Him. It says, O fear the Lord, ye His saints.

For there is no one to them that fear Him. And another one, Psalm 115, 13, says He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. Our Lord promises to bless those that fear Him.

And there's many blessings that come. Think of the fear of God as we see the blessing that flows from it. We see that in Acts 9. It says the churches, as they were walking in the fear of the Lord, it says there was a comfort, there was an encouragement of the Holy Ghost and they were multiplied.

[23:05] Church growth happens when we fear God. And we're talking real church growth, not numbers on seats, but a spiritual growth. In every soul, every one of you, every one of us can grow as we fear God.

Wouldn't it be good if they said of this church, that's a God-fearing church? A God-fearing church. I don't think you could criticise a church for being called that, could you?

That would be a good thing to be called, wouldn't it? You know, they used to call, I suppose, the Puritans of old and, you know, those ones that were the remnant church in the faithful times of persecution, they were God-fearing people.

They didn't bow the knee to Caesar, but they bowed the knee to the Lord. They're God-fearing. When we fear God, it pleases God. It pleases our Lord.

The Lord takes pleasure, it says. Psalm 147, 11. The Lord is pleased. The Lord takes pleasure, it says, in them that fear Him, those that hope in His mercy. Do you want to please God?

[24:13] Don't you want to? Yes. Then fear Him. Fear Him. It's a rightful response to Him. Give Him the honour that He's due. God delights in your fear of Him.

And He wants His people to do that, to truly fear Him. You that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. He is their help and shield. If you want a help and a shield, fear the Lord.

Fear the Lord. He'll be that help. He'll be that shield for you. He'll be that sure confidence, it says. The fear of the Lord, in the fear of the Lord, is strong confidence.

And His children shall have a place of refuge. Don't you want that? A refuge? A refuge for your soul? You know, I don't know if you're building a bomb shelter in your backyard or a bunker, or maybe that's not a bad idea.

But more so, more so, is to have a refuge. A refuge in the Lord. A place of refuge. He is that, isn't He?

[25:14] Praise Him. Fear God. Another blessing for you that fear the Lord is life is there. His life. It's a fountain of life.

The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life. It's a depart from the snares of death. And also the Bible shows us riches and honour and life.

True riches and honour and life. It's Proverbs 22.4. It says, And really the true, the ultimate treasure, the absolute awesome, absolute treasure to aspire to is the fear of the Lord.

It says, Some people might have all kinds of treasures of worldly esteem, but it's better to have little with the fear of the Lord than all of that.

You know, make that your aspiration. Make that your goal. That better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

[26:22] And so in conclusion, here's a good one that actually talks about a conclusion. So as we get closer to the conclusion, it says, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments.

For this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes 12.13. The conclusion of it all. This is putting the full stop and that's the end of it.

Fear God. Fear God. And keep His commandments. Fear God. It's not something optional. It's something essential. It's vital. It's a fundamental part of our lives. And it makes a change.

We see of the Hebrews that God saved them out of Egypt with a great power. His great power and a stretched out arm. It says, Him shall you fear. Him shall you worship.

It goes on. The Lord your God, you shall fear. He shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken. What a shame.

[27:18] They had it all. They had the very tangible presence of God. They had His deliverance in stunning, miraculous ways.

Yet they did not hearken. We can be like that, can't we? God says, fear me. We say, I don't want to hear that. I just want to do things my way, my own way.

And to miss the fear of God is to miss His best, is to miss His blessing. Friends, let's not miss that. There's a healthy fear. It's needful.

That's why we have a sergeant on the parade grounds barking orders. You know, we don't like that. I know I was in the Army Reserves and I had some aspirations of going up the ranks, but I just couldn't get to that barking orders like a sergeant does.

It just wasn't in me. Maybe that's my failing. I'm not good at barking orders. But, you know, it's the barking of commands of the sergeant that keeps the soldiers in their positions.

[28:27] It helps the soldiers respect the position of the authority so that on the battlefield there's an instant obedience. They say, yes, sir. And they head into the thick of it.

They follow the orders without question. They've got an instant obedience because the fear that they learn in their training has steeled them to resolve, to determination, to obey.

And we could do with some of that fear, couldn't we? A healthy fear to help us be good soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy 10, 12, it says, Friends, it starts in the heart.

Notice that. It starts in the heart. As we go to the next one. Ask the Lord for that holy fear of him in your heart.

It starts in the heart. And we believe in the heart. And we have that trust. We believe that Jesus died on the cross, that he rose again from the dead.

[29:45] We believe in our heart. And there's a confession of faith. There's a trust. There's a saving faith. Friends, the word of God is strong words. We do well to take them seriously.

So we might like to, you know, we look at some things. We don't always catch on. There's a grievous truth to miss heaven. It says, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned. Notice that. He that believeth not shall be damned. Those that are going door knocking and witnessing. And someone says, I'm good. Or not interested. Or not today. Or, Nah, not for me. I'm not religious. You feel like quoting this. He that believeth not shall be damned. Not that we're holier than thou, but we were in that number before we believed. Friends, He that believeth not shall be damned.

[30:45] That should evoke a fear of God in all of us, shouldn't it? He that believeth not shall be damned. This is not games. This is not playing church.

This is not playing games with God. This is eternity. Eternal souls. This is an eternal destiny. That is at risk for you. That are not believing. You're going to be damned.

Damned. Friends, this ought to evoke a fear in us. And a fear that prompts us to tell those that we know that are damned. And it's almost when they say, when they refuse, look, it almost makes you want to say, look, if you don't believe, you're going to be damned.

You are damned. It's a grievous thing, people, isn't it? To fall into the hands of the living God, it's a fearful thing. It's a fearful thing. But thank God, we that are saved, we don't fear damnation.

We know, we stand in awe of him. We acknowledge who he is. We see, just to recap real quick, we see, why fear God? Because he's mighty.

[31:52] He's so mighty and powerful. Because of his majesty, he's the king of kings, the lord of lords. Because of his mercy, that he's rendered to you, that are saved, that he's taken us out of darkness, and translated us into his glorious light.

The fear of God, what should it lead us to? Wisdom. It's the beginning of it. It should lead us to work, to serve, to serve our great master. Gladly. To worship, to render our honour and praise unto him, and to consider the wonderful blessings, salvation, an eternal home, a fellowship, here below, in the meantime, and ministries, and opportunities to be in his service.

Friends, what a glad privilege we have. Let's be such a God-fearing church. Amen. Firstly, to know him, and that's the ultimate, to know Jesus as your saviour, to trust him, to believe, to be saved, and then to walk on, to walk on, in that holiness, to walk on, in those blessings, to walk in that fear of God, to walk in that trust of him, to walk in that willingness, to do his will.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you are mighty, awesome, so good to us. Lord, Lord, we know it's a fearful thing, to fall into the hands, of the living God.

Pray that each one, might know that trust today, that you took all the punishment, and wrath. You took our very, suffering, and sin, that, it was all paid for there.

[33:21] Our penalty of hell, and death, was taken upon yourself. Lord, we pray, each one might trust you, and know you. And Lord, each one, as we do, let us grow, Lord, in that walk, that work, work of faith, that will work out, our own salvation, with fear and trembling, knowing, that our salvation, isn't by our work, but we are called, to work it out.

We are called, to put it into our shoe leather, and walk it out. Lord, help us to be such a people, that will walk, in the fear of God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Jude 21, 20, it says, But ye beloved, building up yourselves, on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves, in the love of God, looking for the mercy, of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life, and if some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with, fear, pulling them, out of the fire, hating even the garment, spotted by the flesh, now unto him, that is able, to keep you, from falling, and to present you, faultless, before the presence, of his glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now, and ever.

Amen.