

Fear of Man—Rejection

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[0 : 0 0] Alright, so we are continuing our Fear of Man series. It's based on a book, When People Are Big and God is Small.

! So that's a big problem. So we've gone over the fear of harm, the fear of humiliation and failure. Today we're going to be looking at the fear of rejection.

I felt a little targeted by Walt. Every time he asked me to teach something I feel like it's this major area of struggle. Hey, that might be the Holy Spirit.

My wife and I were seeing a marriage counselor a little more recent than I'd like to admit. But very early on, he kind of sat back, put his hands together, and he's like, you struggle with the fear of man.

It's like, okay, that's a good word. I need to hear that. Go on. Next time we go in there, every time I saw him, he'd be like, ah, fear of man. And he got really annoying.

[1 : 0 6] Ah, fear of man. No, okay, I get it. Then I probably am still fearful. But I don't think I'm the only one. A college professor once told me about this poll. I think it was Gallup, but I'm not sure.

They were polling people to see what people were afraid of. Number two on the list was the fear of death. The only thing that ranked higher than the fear of death was the fear of public speaking.

So I'm facing a fate worse than death right now. And I think that speaks directly to our fear of man. Our fear of failure, our fear of humiliation.

You're exposed when you're up front. Everybody's looking at you. I might have hair sticking out the back of my head. You might be saying something stupid, not prepared, not a good communicator, something like that.

Whatever it is, whatever the flaws are, everybody sees it. And you know that and it's terrifying. And so that's what we're going to be taking a look at today.

[2 : 1 4] Before we get too far, I want to explain the handout. It is not your traditional outline. I'll be honest, I hate it when there's like an outline that I see as someone's teaching.

I feel like it's someone giving me like the plot outline of the movie. Like I want it to be more of a surprise. I like it that way. But what this is, is there's enough material I could cover this in six weeks and be fine.

So if you want to dig deeper into some of the topics, there's a QR code there that leads to some Bible project videos. And the website that those videos are on are just great resources to dig deeper into it.

So we're going to be looking at the temple, prophets, stuff like that. If you want to dig deeper into it, those explainer videos are like five to eight minute videos. Very entertaining. My kids love them.

But they're great resource and you can dig as deep as you want to. They've got podcasts. I mean, they'll spend hours talking through this. It's Tim Mackey is the Old Testament scholar.

[3 : 1 9] Really learned a lot from him. He's not a sovereign grace guy. So mileage may vary on how much you agree with them theologically on everything. But one of the things he is excellent at is just the Hebrew language and being able to draw connections across scripture that you don't see unless you know the original language.

And he's able, they're able to bring it down to our level. So great resource. So dig in deeper if you need to. But, uh, and this book is a great resource too.

It's, it's a really, uh, come up and look at it afterwards if you, if you want to learn more about the fear of man and how to deal with that to really fear God instead of man. Uh, so on page 35, he says, Now turn your attention to the universal experience of rejection and the fear of possible rejection.

This is certainly a feature of shame, though it does not necessarily include the disgraceful violations of other people. Instead other people ignore, they ridicule, or they turn away from you.

They exclude you. They withhold acceptance and love that you want from them. And you are left feeling alone and less than those around you. Um, how have you guys seen that play out in your own life?

[4 : 44] Where you fear that rejection, you fear people turning away from you. Where do you feel that pinch for you? Like have this unhealthy, sinful experience with that fear?

I got to interact. Come on. I almost, I was tempted to come in early and like rearrange the seats.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So we're in a circle. You've been last time.

Anybody? When I walk into a room of late. Like we just did. Got to sit up front when that happened.

My first thought was like, flashback to high school and like, senior prom. You gotta go ask a girl.

And it's like, over evaluating or, you know, like, does she even, is she interested at all?

Like, is she gonna be weirded out by it? Is she gonna have fun? Like, does she like me? You know,

like, I don't want to like ruin someone's day. You know, that kind of thing. Anything else?

[5 : 57] I think about as a kid, you know, when you're young, feeling left out. And obviously you can describe it when you're like six, eight years old.

But even like much later in life, even at my age, you can, or older, you can, the feeling of being left out. And what is that saying?

You know, is that people saying stuff that they're afraid to say to you or, or, uh, and so drawing conclusions on that. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Has anybody read the Space Trilogy by C.S. Lewis? So that hideous strength has a little bit of that in like the adult version where there's like the inner group of this secret organization and everybody's like clamoring to get in there and they're gonna, you know, but you're worried about everybody.

You're backstabbing, you're conniving, you're, you know, setting, throwing somebody under the bus to get into the inner group. Um, yeah. And so that plays out in different ways. Like we mature and we just like mature in our sin.

[7 : 07] Yeah. Um, think of like Snow White, mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all. Mm-hmm.

And one day she is not the most beautiful and it just eats at her. And just that, that, uh, the jealousy of the younger, more beautiful woman, um, can poison your soul again.

That fear of rejection, like what's my husband gonna think of me? Um, yeah, fitting in and, uh, and just being respectable.

Um, and The Horse and His Boy by C.S. Lewis again. Uh, I love that book. Uh, the, the big old war horse Bree. He was kidnapped as a little foal and taken to color men and nobody knows he's a talking horse.

But because he's a talking horse, he's bigger, he's stronger, and he's smarter than all the other horses. So he ends up being this like awesome war horse. Um, but he finally escapes with this boy and they're heading back to Narnia.

[8 : 10] And they go through these adventures and they have to cut off his tail and try to make him sneak through the city. So he looks like a regular old pack horse. And as he gets to Narnia, it's time to go in.

And he's like, I don't, hold on. We need to slow down. And the other horse he's with is like, why? Like we've gone all this way to get into Narnia. What's going on? And he's like, you know, we just want, you know, want to take our time, make sure everything's good. And then she goes, it's your tail, isn't it?

It's like, no, no, no. We just want to be respectable, you know, honorable and stuff. And she's like, you don't even know how they wear their tails in Narnia. They might wear them short and you're all like, get over yourself.

Let's go. Um, yeah. Aslan gives them a talking to of like, you know, you're, you're more average horse than you think you are. And that's a good thing. Um, yeah.

Yeah. So what do we do with the fear of man? Um, a lot of times we've been looking at negative, uh, examples so far.

[9 : 08] So today I wanted to do the more, uh, positive approach of looking at, um, good examples of people who, uh, do not care what man thinks about them at all.

So thinking through Bible stories, what are some of those Bible stories where like, yeah, they did not fear man. David killing Goliath.

David killing Goliath. You realize how brave that is? Like you're like a teenager. All right. This guy was like grabbing lions by the face and killing them.

Grabbing by the beard. So, I mean, he's a different guy, but, but still, I mean, his heart had to be something. Any other ones? Daniel's a great one.

Daniel's a great one. Um, being willing to stick to the dietary laws of your God in a place where it might result in death.

[10:16] Like that is extreme obedience. Yeah. That was a good one. Any other ones? I'll go super obvious with Jesus. Jesus? Yeah.

I mean. You gotta say Jesus. You wanna say Jesus? You wanna say Jesus? You wanna say Jesus? Yeah.

You wanna say Jesus? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, rebuilding the wall.

Under extreme pressure not to. Right. And so they got a tool in one hand and a sword in the other and build the wall. you're building the wall yeah um notice a lot of these guys are prophets we're talking about even jesus yeah um a lot of them are prophets and it was uh oh there's something unique about them where they uh they were asked by god to do some crazy crazy things and uh they just had to build a callus of like i don't care what people think but i'm gonna be obedient to god um crazy things that prophets did do what jeremiah he went 40 years without a single convert well his scribe he had a scribe that followed him but i think he's like the only one that we know of every everything else was rejection pushback the king hated him the other prophets hated him like he came in with a wooden yoke to represent the um bondage they're going to be under and this false prophet comes and breaks his yoke so he comes in the next day with an iron yoke and he's like break this by the way you're going to die in a year um any other crazy thing the prophet did yeah he had okay so he had to build yeah he did all kinds of stuff he like tied himself up and like laid there for a year he built this model city it's like public theater like he built this model city of jerusalem is like smashing it like this is us like babylon is coming um he had to bake bread over human feces um but then he he debates with god he's like begging god please don't please don't make me do this and uh god's it's funny god gives in it's like fine you can do it over uh cow feces um isaiah had to go around naked for three years in his 70s i think might have been 60s i can't remember uh he's an old man going naked three years i mean talk about calluses you don't care what people think um and so i care way more than the prophets did about what's going on so how do we get to that point of uh just the lack of fear of man is that that far we are going to obey god that to that extreme and so we're going to take a look at ezekiel so go ahead turn to ezekiel chapter one yeah the rule of a prophet was pretty uh pretty interesting they they rose during the uh when the kings of israel came in and they're almost like this uh watchdog that god would send to keep the king and to keep the country accountable to the covenant that they made with god um when god's founded israel he is their king he is their god and israel's relationship with them means they need to follow certain rules and laws and uh israel was very i mean they're just like a fall away from god frequently and so these prophets are here to the primary role is to keep israel on track they foretell the future they tell of the messiah coming they point forward to him um but their number one job is keep israel on track and a part of that is they would all have this experience with god uh where the word of the lord comes to god or it comes to them and when the word of the lord comes to them it is uh every time that is described it's this incredibly

um intense experience it's not like oh i wonder like is that god like i wonder um they know it's god and so we'll see that in ezekiel uh in verse one of chapter one it says in the 30th year of the fourth month on the fifth day of the month as i was among the exiles of the chabar canal or by the chabar canal the heavens were opened and i saw visions of god on the fifth day of the month um the way of the word of the lord came to ezekiel the priest the son of buzi in the land of the chaldeans and the hand of the lord was upon him there and so ezekiel is a prophet who is of israel after babylon had taken over jerusalem already uh babylon came in three successive waves of taking over jerusalem every time they came they would set up a new king like a puppet king and that king would rebel so babylon would have to come back and smash him again set up a new king a couple years later he would rebel they come and smash him again and every time they did that they would take away slaves and um prisoners from jerusalem till the third time it was utter destruction i mean leveled the city leveled the temple and took every single person out of jerusalem except for the poorest of the poor who they there's a few farmers here and there to till the land jerusalem literally became like a

wilderness and uh so he is of that first wave of slaves taken back to egypt and it's the 30th year he's a priest and that that's the year that he would um start to serve in the temple so you got to imagine how depressing that is to your life goal you want to serve god ezekiel loves god he's this faithful follower of him and yet he's in this really hard situation where he's not only not able to serve god but he's like an exile uh in a strange land he cannot serve in the temple and it's with the ancient near eastern mindset it's it's tough too because if you lose the battle that often meant your god lost the battle so you can even imagine the doubt that's creeping in his head have i been serving the right god this whole time um when suddenly the word of god like god breaks in and uh we're not going to read this whole thing it's pretty long but it is it is a wild chapter uh he has this vision where suddenly this storm cloud just comes rolling in and there is lightning and there's darkness somebody starts to see these figures come out of the clouds and there's the these angelic beings called cherubim absolutely terrifying they have four faces uh there's this like amalgamation of all these different animals they've like eagle man lion um what's the other one ox they got four wings they're covering their bodies with two they're like reaching out and touching each other and it sounds like thunder it sounds like lightning and uh they're they're shining like like glinting metal um i mean you just gotta know he's sitting on the river depressed and suddenly this happens and and it's so wild there's these wheels there's wheels within wheels and they're covered in their covered in their eyes covered in eyeballs like all over and there's a platform on it and they're just like this throne is coming down it can go this way and that way without turning and the angels are carrying it and he sees uh this figure up on the throne so let's uh go to verse 26

[19:00] it says above the expanse over the heads was the likeness of a throne now pay attention to how many times it says like or appears or it's as if um what ezekiel is seeing he is not able to describe in human words and so it's kind of like this he's grasping for images that are the closest thing to what he's seeing um so it's a likeness of a throne and the appearance like sapphire and is seated above the likeness of the throne was the likeness of a human appearance so it's like something that appears like a man you know what he's saying like there's a man there but it's not a man it's something weird and upward from what had the appearance of his waist he saw it was like gleaming metal like the appearance of fire enclosed all around and downward from what had the appearance of his waist sorry and like the appearance of a bow that is in the cloud on a rainy day so was the appearance of the brightness all around so he's just seeing him from like the waist down it's like molten metal it's like a rainbow it's like a human um such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the lord so god shows up to him in babylon um and this is not a unique experience for people who go into the presence of god um you see it in isaiah 6 he has a very similar experience where he just sees the glory of god and it's just this overpowering overwhelming uh presence of god in the temple you see it even in a revelation uh when john sees jesus it's this other a very similar experience glowing like metal he has white hair he's got a sword coming out of his mouth uh just a wild experience and they all have the same exact response and when i saw it i fell on my face isaiah just starts screaming i am unclean like i have a i'm a unclean mouth amongst the people of unclean mouth um john in the new testament falls down as though dead i mean uh saul on the road to the mouth because he even goes like blind um when you experience the unfiltered glory of god it just like it undoes you and i fell on my face and i heard the voice of one speaking and he said to me son of man stand on your feet that i may speak with you you think you could do that ezekiel couldn't and as he spoke to me the spirit entered into me and set me on my feet and i heard him speak to me so it's like ezekiel stand up and he's just laying there like he's dead he can't do it and but the spirit comes down enters into him picks him up and sets him on his feet i love that imagery and god gives him some unique gifts to prepare him to send him out skipping down to verse six and he says you son of man do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of the words through briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions be not afraid of their words nor be dismayed at their looks for they are a rebellious

house and you shall speak my words to them whether they hear or refuse to hear for they are a rebellious house so he tells ezekiel i am sending you to the people of israel and uh they are rebellious they are a hard bunch they are not going to be fun to work with um but you are going to go to them and later on he actually tells them like if you don't warn them um whatever sin they commit is on your hand on your head you're guilty of their sin if you do not warn them um and look at verse eight he says but you son of man sorry some of what he does is uh so he gets god gives him this really weird command to eat a scroll now here take this scroll and he looks at it and written

on it is uh lamentation mourning and woe it does not look like fun and yet as he eats it it's sweet as honey in his mouth it's a strange passage uh but as he goes on in verse seven um he says and you shall speak my word to them where they hear they refuse oh sorry verse 10 in chapter 3 he says moreover he said to me son of man all my words that i shall speak to you receive in your heart and with your ears and go to the exiles to your people and speak to them saying thus says the lord god whether they refuse to hear all of their sudden but the house of israel will not be willing to listen to you they are not willing to listen to me because all the house of israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart and behold i have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their forehead like emery harder than flint i have made your forehead fear them not nor be dismayed at their looks they are a rebellious house and so i love it uh god gives them the spiritual gift of stubbornness or gives ezekiel the spiritual gift of stubbornness uh but that's only fun you're gonna be treading on scorpions you're gonna be sitting on thorns they are gonna be rebellious they are gonna hate you but you're gonna go to them you are gonna warn them um and making you as stubborn as they are stubborn um i have some i'm stubborn i have stubborn kids and i don't know that's a it's a heartwarming uh thought that god can really use that um specifically when things get tough when things get tough um there's a interesting paradox that happens every time this this takes place i don't know about you guys that makes me uncomfortable that god is that terrifying doesn't it um and walt has said many times um the fear of the lord is a awe and reverence for god um my favorite theologian rc sproul um says the same thing um it's not this complete terror of god but it's it's this awe and respect uh luther says the same thing in good company um but at the same time like i don't know what to do with passages like this where when he tells moses wants to see god's face and he says if you see my face unfiltered you're gonna die um for prophet after prophet person after person when they go before the lord they are completely undone and terrified at the presence of god um what do we do with that and what i love is so frequently um it's at that moment of complete terror that grace just comes in really powerfully turn to revelation one um when like i said when jesus comes to john it is almost exactly like the experience ezekiel just had very similar vision and and john falls down dead he can't get up he is he's there as though dead and uh verse 17 chapter 1 says when i saw him talking about jesus i fell at his feet as though dead listen to this part i love that he's laying on the ground as though dead and jesus comes up touches him on the shoulder and says don't be afraid fear not fear not um you know that is actually jesus's most common command he was here on earth fear not do not be afraid don't be scared um and i love it uh we are not fit to be in god's presence or just not um when when you see like uh going into the holy of holies the what the priest had to do to prepare to go in there offering the sacrifices dressing the right way confessing your sin uh they actually put bells on his robe so the other priest could hear him and they would often tie a rope around his ankle so that when he went into the holy of holies if he had sin and he dies they could drag him out without going in there or they'd have a pole with a long with a like a hook on the end they'd hook him drag him out arc of the covenant can't touch it it's uh you know you'll die uh just the presence and holiness of god is such a powerful thing when when we are messed up in evil um c.s lewis captures it really really well uh i think with aslan you kind of get a sense of that he's not safe but he is good and that's god he's not safe but he is so good um even in the space trilogy c.s lewis again i don't know he's able to capture what it's like to be in the presence of these angelic beings that are good and just the terror that comes over you as you realize like i am not good i'm like isaiah i have an unclean mouth and uh it's just at that moment though that god shows incredible grace with isaiah it's touching that coal to his lips and it's like your sin is atoned for with jesus touching you on the shoulder like i'm the first i'm the last i've risen from the dead like i have power over all that sin that's in your life and i don't know it's that temple imagery uh i don't know those prophets were taken taken up to god's throne room that's what the temple was um the the bible talks about the ark of the covenant as god's footstool so when you went into the holy of holies every layer of the temple got got more and more holy and there were more and more restrictions and it was harder and harder to get in there because in the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant which is the footstool of god they basically envisioned it as above the ark of the covenant was the throne of god and that's why you could not just waltz in there with sin and uh that is where that's where these prophets were taken before they were sent on their mission from god ezekiel finds himself in the throne room of god isaiah finds himself in the temple of god um and that is what the that life-changing experience for them where when they leave the presence of god on that mission they have absolutely zero fear of their fellow man they're not scared of rejection they're not scared of

harm because they have experienced the actual presence of god so powerfully that it overwhelms everything else and i just think of like uh with a peter and john in the temple and they take them they perform this miracle the crowd is going nuts so that the pharisees or sadducees they take them in there and they're like threatening them harshly they're like we really want to kill you we really want to beat you up but everybody saw this miracle and so we can't deny it they said do not go out there and tell anybody else about jesus they're like oh we're going out there and we're going to tell everyone about jesus they're like you better not and they're like oh we're doing it right now they go out there they just keep preaching um doesn't matter what happens to them and so i don't know about you guys but i haven't had that same experience of being taken into the presence of god where you see him the way ezekiel describes it or the way isaiah describes it or the way john describes that um i don't know what do we do with a situation like this um and what's interesting is like there is a truth to the fact that we have not been experienced god in that same way but there's also a lie embedded in that um because when jesus came died on the cross and rose from the dead uh that fundamentally changed our relationship with him and some incredible things happen um number one do you realize you are holy like you're no longer the sinful person of unclean lips before god um colossians 121 says and you who were once alienated and hostile in mind like you're not just separate from god but you actually hate him and are his enemy um you are doing evil deeds he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death he's reconciled you to him in spite of all that in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before god before him is that how you view yourself when you look in the mirror is that what you see it gets even wilder than that like wanting to be taken up into the presence of god in the temple um first corinthians 3 16 says do you not know that you are god's temple that god's spirit dwells inside of you if anyone destroys god's temple god will destroy him for god's temple is holy and you are that temple our word temple is a little more broad than the greek word used there it's actually the word naos which doesn't refer to like the whole temple court or even the whole temple building the word naos actually means the holy of holies no wild do you not know that you are the holy of holies the place where god's spirit dwells like that place where the priest could go in once a year you are that now it's wild and hebrews takes it further again um hebrews 4 15 through 16 says for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace um and help in time of need so that throne of grace is once again referring to the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies and he the priest going on like i said once a year hebrews says you can approach the throne of grace with boldness go go in there because you have been made holy you have been made righteous you have been changed um you are the holy of holies go into the holy of holies with boldness and so bringing that back to fear um my father was a speaker one of the things he always talked about with fear is uh the nature of fear needs two things uh for fear to be powerful it needs to be present it needs to be right here it actually hurt me and it needs to be powerful so if i went up to the cherokee national forest got a timber rattlesnake and threw it out here in the middle of the room um it is present and it is powerful you would see like the splitting of the red sea it would um it would be an intense experience um but if you kill one of those things the fear goes away so if you've got the snake in an aquarium back in the other room um it's powerful um it's powerful but it is not present or if you take the power away from it if i kill it and throw it out here i mean you're not going to like it it's gross but that same terror isn't going to overcome you and you kill one of those things the fear goes away and so what is more powerful than god and that's the that's the experience that ezekiel saw isaiah saw john saw nothing compares to the power of god not even close and a comfort for us what is more present than god you are the holy of holies you are the place where god's spirit actually dwells he is present with you and he is powerful and so whatever your fear of man is can be driven away completely if we remember the truth uh jesus says the truth shall set you free the truth shall set you free and the way the truth in the life um that is step number one to change in your life if you have the fear of man that is step number one tell yourself the truth every day i am god's child i am holy i am righteous he is with me the spirit himself is dwelling inside of me um don't fear man and uh remember that truth let's go before the lord dear holy father

[39 : 18] i just thank you lord that you are some mind-blowing huge god you are the creator of the universe everything else pales in comparison to you and so we are so grateful that i just pray that you would remind us of that lord um i just pray that we would experience uh your presence and your power in our just in a real way in our life lord i just pray that this truth would be so um evident in our

hearts that it would just now we would just reject the lies and turn to you and lord i just pray that you would bless the reading of your word and just pray this in jesus name amen amen all right thank you guys