

Something To Be Afraid Of

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[0 : 00] How many of you are afraid of heights? Anybody afraid of heights? Oh, decent number.! It's quite a few. It's quite interesting. We're talking about fear today. Fear is an interesting! A lot of times we associate fear with the command to fear not. That's not what we're talking about today. Today we're actually talking about things that we're supposed to fear.

The fear that Jesus endorses tells us that we should be fearful of. And so that's what we're doing today. But when it comes to the fear of heights, there will be one in 65,000 people who will actually get hurt from falling from some height. I imagine falling from an airplane might would qualify, but as maybe a little more than getting hurt. But I'm actually part of the 65, the one in the 65. I'm one of the ones, because I fell off a ladder over here and fell down on Mary. It's Christmas time, nativity scene, a metal Mary. She's got a...

You'll see... The dent is still in her head. When you see us decorate for Christmas, you'll see the dent in her head. So a couple weeks when we get that set up, you'll see that.

To have your identity stolen, though, is one in 200. So which one's more likely to happen to you? Which one ought to pay attention to? How about people have a fear of flying? Some people have a fear of flying. Actually, one in your chances of being in an airplane or a jet accident are one in 13 million. One in 13 million. Your chances of being struck by lightning, however, are one in 2 million. So I don't know if you say your odds are better. Do you say that? Your odds are better getting hit by lightning? Now, what's interesting is that if you are in an airplane accident, 98% of those accidents are not fatal, which kind of surprised me when I saw that.

I'm guessing that's just two airplanes bumping on the runway or something. No? They just land and they're fine. Like the other one the other day. I was going to bring that up. Yep. Over at the storage plant, pump storage plant. Yep. And then, but if you get hit by lightning, that typically is fatal. How about this one? A fear of getting bitten by a dog. A fear of getting bitten by a dog. Actually, your chances of being hurt while getting bit by a dog is one in 137,000. So I'm actually one of those one in 37,000. And then, and then your chances of getting hurt while mowing the lawn. One in 3,000.

[3 : 28] So, actually, I think the lesson there is stop mowing the lawn and get a cat. Actually, the odds of getting hurt by a cat are one in one.

Before we start talking about fear that Jesus endorses, I want to actually revisit one more thing about religion. We talked last week about religion and the dangers of religion, the dangers of legalism. And Jesus, here in chapter 12, the first couple of verses here, has one more thing to say about that. So we're going to address that first. And then we're just going to have some fun with fear. I don't know if that's the right way to say that, but here we go. Luke 12, 1.

In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another. So I want you to see how the ministry of Christ now has been building all of this time. And it is now at its peak. Okay? Here we are, Luke chapter 12. This is the last year of his ministry. He is on his way to Jerusalem. He knows that he's going to Jerusalem to be crucified. He knows that as he is going, he is offering the kingdom. He's saying the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is standing right here among you. And they will reject him. And yet here at this point, the crowds are massive. If Rome only knew, this is happening kind of out in Timbuktu and the small villages of Samaria and Galilee and so forth. And so they haven't been really paying attention to Jesus much. And so here is Jesus now. This huge crowd is gathered around him. And he's just had this conversation with the Pharisees and the religious leaders. He'd been invited to their home for dinner. And he's just had a pleasant, if you were here last week, just a pleasant dinner with them just actually pointing a finger at their face and calling them names. And so now he steps outside of that dinner. And he begins to talk to his disciples, but he's talking in a loud enough voice that the people around him can also hear. So he's addressing the disciples, but everyone can

hear this. And he says to them, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. What is leaven, by the way? Another word for leaven. Yeast. All right. Some of you like to use yeast, right? In baking. That's a good thing.

But when Jesus is using it in this context, he's talking about it in a very negative sense. That leaven is a sin that can rise up within us. And the sin that he is warning us against, and he is pointing out that the Pharisees very much dealt in this sin is hypocrisy. The hypocrisy of trying to be something that you're not pretending to be, portraying yourself as something that on the inside you are not. He goes on to say that nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. This is an interesting phrase that people who have skeletons in the closet might be a little bit worried about. People who have things that they are trying to hide.

[7 : 23] Secret sins. And Jesus says to them, nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light. And what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. We have even seen the growth of this, the exponential just blowing up of people getting exposed. Why? Because of these little things that we carry around in our pockets, right? And they all have little video recorders and cameras attached to them and all kinds of things that people never knew that they would get busted for all of a sudden now is brought right out in the open. I saw a headline just this morning for one of our wonderful congressmen in the United States Congress who was just on a phone on an airplane looking at stuff he ought not to be looking at. And now he's got to explain and it's all just been exposed and it's all just what in the world. And what is Jesus referring to here when we talk about this? So you have this on your notes. The true measure of our Christianity is we are when no one is watching.

Right? When it's just me, myself, and I. Sometimes we forget that when it's just me, myself, and I and I'm a believer that it's not just me, myself, and I. That I've got the Lord with me the whole time anyway. So who am I?

What kind of a person do I have to think that I'm going to be doing something alone? That I'm going to be this just me, nobody else, and sees me, and all of that kind of thinking. And yet how many Christians do get caught, do get exposed because of some secret sin that they have thinking that they're pulling the wool over someone's eyes. And it's just remarkable that this still kinds of happen, and this kind of happens. So as we get into these fear things now, and this is a part of it, these again are justifiable fears. Things that we ought to be afraid of. And on your notes, we have three that are listed there. And the first one that we're going to be talking about related to hypocrisy here is being afraid of living a lie. Being afraid of living a lie. And again, we see this in the text, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Jesus said, nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. He said, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light. Whatever you whispered in the private rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops.

The question that I have with this is, is what is Jesus referring to here? Is this expose? Is this coming out into the light? Is this being announced from the rooftops? Is this something that will happen in our lifetimes? Possibly. Do I think that there are people who die with secret sin that in this world never gets exposed? Yeah, I do think that happens. And so what is Jesus referring to? Is it something that's going to be exposed in the here and now? Or is it going to be exposed at the judgment day? And when we look at the context, that's kind of what we see in view here. As we continue reading, that's probably what's in view.

The judgment day when that time comes. Is this going to be something that happens to only unsaved people at the judgment day? Because the judgment that unsaved people face, they will be facing the great white throne judgment. That's the judgment that comes kind of at the end of all things, just before the eternal state. It's after the tribulation. It's after the millennial kingdom. And then there's one more rebellion. And then there is this great white throne judgment where all the unsaved from all of the ages will stand before the Lord and give account for their life to the Lord. And no one at that judgment is saved. Not one. Old Testament, New Testament, whatever age that they were in, if they did not place their faith in the Lord to save them, that's the judgment that they will face.

[12 : 14] Now for believers, our judgment is different. We will be facing what is known as the judgment seat of Christ for us as New Testament believers. We will be standing before the Lord. This will be after the church is raptured and taken out. The tribulation before the marriage supper of the Lamb, there will be this judgment seat of Christ where we will stand before the Lord to give an

account not for our sin, but for opportunities of ministry that we either served well and will be rewarded, or we served with improper motive, or we didn't serve when we had opportunities to serve, and we will give an account for our life and there be rewarded or not rewarded before we go into the millennial kingdom. So will we as believers have to face this kind of revealing, if you will? And I think it would be perhaps a little naive to think that in some respects we will escape giving an account for how we lived our lives in terms of our sin, but not in terms of our standing before God, but only in terms of how our involvement in secret sin kept us from serving the Lord kept us from serving the Lord in a complete way, in a way that honored Him.

And so that's what we need to be on guard for. Basically, the charge for all of us here is to not regard sin, to just kill sin in our lives at every opportunity, to not tolerate it in our lives at all. And especially, I mean, we think about this in terms of when people are around, of course, I'm not going to sin when people can see me sin, but especially we need to have the kind of integrity that says, I will not sin even when I'm by myself, because who am I to think that I can pull one over on God? Who am I to think that I can pull one over on my family, or on my co-workers, or anyone in terms of how we live in our relationship with the Lord? We need to understand that whatever we do, we do it to the glory of God, and we also can live our lives in a way that dishonors God if we choose to live hiding secret sin and holding on to that thinking and believing that somehow I'm going to pull this over on the Lord. Hypocrisy does to a person what yeast does to bread dough. It puffs us up. Makes us think some things that are pretty foolish. That's what it does. It gives us a pride, a sense of arrogance. We see this in Isaiah 29, 15. This is the Lord speaking to Israel, and he says, what are those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, who sees us? Who will know? I can, I can, I can, you know, fake God out. I can hide it from him. He won't know. But, but who thinks that way? What kind of arrogance, what, what kind of pride do you have to have that you think you can outsmart God, that you can hide things from him? Boy, that, that, that, that is a, a real sense of, of arrogance and, and pride there.

So we need to be wary of that, fearful even of that. Here's the second fear that, that Jesus is going to tell us about. We need to be afraid of forgetting the future.

And what I mean by that is in this next part of the, the text here, verse four. I tell you, my friends, again, Jesus talking, talking to his disciples, but the crowd can also hear. I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body. And after that, they have nothing more that they can do. And he, he's going to be talking to them about persecution. And in this persecution, when someone persecutes a believer in Jesus Christ, we've, we've seen this today. We've seen this in, even currently in parts of Africa. Actually, the, the video that Tom shared with you earlier is, those people in the Sarah Cabana tribe are located in Chad. Chad is, is, another section of Chad is part of that violence where Muslim peoples are coming in and murdering Christians just at will. And without, without regard to, to any kind of fear of, of, of law and order or accountability from the, the, the national leaders. And, but that's all they can do to a believer, right? They can harm your physical body. They can kill your physical body, but ultimately they cannot take your life, your real life, the, the life that matters, that's a part of you. He goes on in verse five and he says, but I will warn you, uh, I will warn you, uh, whom to fear, fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. I tell you, yes, I tell you fear him. Now, who is he talking about there? He's talking about the Lord, right? He's talking about himself that, that, you know,

[18:32] God has the authority not only to kill you. Yes, he can do that too, but also to cast you into hell. Hell. And sometimes when a subject like this comes up, this is like, oh, let's kind of skip over this now, shall we? Can we, can we do that? Because I don't like to talk about hell, so let's move on.

Sometimes people will ask me the question, Rich, do you believe in hell? Um, do you believe in a literal hell? Might be the, the better question. And, and the short answer is yes, I believe in hell.

And, and maybe the easiest reason why I would say that yes, I believe in a literal hell is because Jesus did. Jesus spoke very seriously about hell and often about hell.

And when the one who has conquered both death and hell tells you it's something real and it's something serious, I think we ought to take that seriously. I mean, is that, is that fair? I mean, he, he, he was nailed to a cross, was, was beaten, tortured, nailed to a cross, killed, buried, and three days later rose again from the dead. And when he comes back from the dead and he says, hell is very real. Okay, Jesus, I'm with you. Actually on whatever he says, I'm with you. Right?

That, that's kind of where I'm at when it comes to that kind of, uh, of a question is, is hell very real? But what I want to do is spend a little bit of time addressing some of the misconceptions that we

have about hell. And you have these, uh, listed on your, um, on your notes here. So here's the first one. Um, the one with the authority to cast someone into hell isn't the devil. I don't know where this comes from. I'm not sure if I've ever met anybody who believes this, but it's out there.

Uh, people believe that, well, Satan's going to send you to hell. No, Satan's not sending you to hell. He, he, he's not the one that does that. And the next one's kind of related to that as, as well.

[20 : 55] Satan is not the warden of hell. He is its chief inmate. Some people, and, and you see this often in comics, Farside and all kinds of other, uh, comedians or, or comics will, will kind of depict Satan as being the, the guy who's in charge of hell, who runs hell. He's there with the pitchfork and poor soul is kind of behind bars. And that's all nonsense. That is not biblical at all. I don't know where that, well, every lie that we get comes from the pit of hell comes from Satan himself. He is the father of lies. And so he wants to portray himself as being in charge of something, but he's not in charge of hell. He is simply an inmate. And, and we know this, uh, from the text, Revelation chapter 20, uh, beginning in verse seven and then ending in verse 10 here, when the thousand years are over, this is, this is, this is again at the, the end of all things. This is the, Jesus has come for his bride, the church, the tribulation, the millennial, the thousand year reign of Christ on earth. And when that is completed, the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

So we know that, that the devil and the false prophet and the beast will be tormented in hell temporarily until they dissipate.

And they can argue with me on that. It says again, very clearly, this is eternal. It's eternal. It's, they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. And so we need to be aware of that. And one more statement about this that we need to clear this up. Like all others who have rejected God, there will be no pardon nor any parole.

We're told in scripture that the, that, that this lake of fire was created for the devil and his angels, the devil and the demons. And that people can also choose to be sent to hell, be sent to the lake of fire.

And it is their choice. And I want to make this also very clear as well. Also from the same passage in Revelation chapter 20, death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

[24 : 17] This is the second death, the lake of fire. For those of us who are believers, we will die once. Praise the Lord.

Die once and live forever. For those who, who die without Christ, they will experience a second death, physical death. And then also this second death that is described here, the lake of fire.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire, where the torment will last forever and ever.

Understand, God is not gleefully, and again, sometimes there are depictions of this, that God is gladly, gleefully, happily throwing people into hell.

That is a false picture of who our God is. That is a false understanding completely of who our God is. Let me show you a few other passages here.

[25 : 27] I'll talk about this. This is from Ezekiel 33, verse 11. As I live, declares the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

Turn back. Turn back. You can, the pleading that you, that you read here when he says, turn back twice in a row. Turn back.

Turn back from your evil ways. For why will you die, O house of Israel? We forget, we forget, or sometimes we don't, we don't put into the equation here that, that God wants for all of his creation to be saved.

And he sent his, his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to this earth and to pay the ultimate penalty so that you could be redeemed, so that you could be forgiven, so that you could know that, that you have a relationship with the Lord through what Christ has done on the cross.

And when you trust him as savior, when you make that choice to say yes to him, he offers that, that forgiveness freely and openly.

[26 : 46] And yet, so many people choose to reject what revelation that they have been given, choose to reject the God of creation, choose to reject the Lord who has loved them, who has provided a way of escape, who has provided the way of salvation.

And yet, so many people don't want it. I don't, I don't get that. And yet, that's exactly what we read.

We read this, this is Revelation chapter 16. This is toward the end of the tribulation period when God is raining down his wrath on the earth, this well-deserved wrath on the earth.

And, and the way that unsaved people are responding to this wrath gives us a viewpoint of the unsaved mind. It says it this way, they were scorched by the fierce heat and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues.

They did not repent and give him glory. They knew it was from God. They knew that this wrath was being poured out on the earth from God Almighty.

[28 : 05] They knew it was him. And that if they simply repented, if they simply trusted, if they simply chose then in that moment to give him glory and honor, they would be rescued.

They would be saved. They did not. How can that be? How can that be?

Later on, chapter 16, people nod their tongues in anguish and curse the God of heaven for their pain and for their sores.

They did not repent. They know full well what they're experiencing and what's coming is from God himself and they still choose to curse him rather than bless him.

Why? We get this picture of people in hell thinking, oh, if I had only known, I would have trusted.

[29 : 40] No. These are people who are filled with torment and regret. Yes. but not because they want to repent of their ways and trust God.

They're filled with torment and regret because they hate God. They hate what he stands for.

And that's what they're upset with. That's what they're angry, rage, gnawing at their tongues in anguish. I can't imagine.

I can't imagine that kind of pain, that kind of torment. I have a quote here from John Walvard. John Walvard was the professor and president of Dallas Theological Seminary not long before I was a student there.

And his Bible knowledge commentary says this about their predicament. The question is sometimes raised why eternal punishment is eternal.

[30 : 52] The answer is that people in the hardness of their hearts will not change. They deserve eternal punishment because they are eternally unrepentant. They just refuse.

They refuse. And so God gives them over. The picture of Romans chapter 1. God gives them over to their sin, over to their debauchery, over to their wickedness, and lets them have their way.

When someone is sent to hell or ultimately the lake of fire, it is simply God letting them have their way.

Now, in the midst of this conversation that Jesus is having about fear and about hell and yay, aren't you glad you came to church today?

You should be because we need to hear this. But listen to what he says to those of us who are believers now. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?

[32 : 05] Five sparrows. Sparrows were like the cheapest kind of food that someone could buy.

You know, poor people could buy a few sparrows and, you know, have whatever little meat is on a sparrow.

We're saying, really? A little sparrow? You're going to kill a little sparrow and eat? If you're hungry, you'll do that. And this is what Jesus is saying. And not one of them is forgotten before God.

What's the implication here? Are you going to be forgotten before God? No. Not at all. No. Are you not worth more than the sparrows?

Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. And here's where I'm supposed to insert the joke about some poor bald guy in the room. I'm not going to do that to you.

But, literally, I don't think this is metaphor either. I mean, in my mind, this is silly.

[33 : 14] God has the number of hairs on my head numbered? Why would he bother? Well, for God, it's not a bother. He just knows. I don't understand that about God, but again, that's part of he's God and I'm not.

Fear not! So, in all of this message about the fears that we should have, there's this one, fear not. Don't have fear because you are of more value than many sparrows.

Yes, there is no reason to fear for those of us who are believers, who are followers of Christ. And now there's one more legitimate fear that he's telling us we should be concerned about, beginning in verse 8.

And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God. But the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels

of God.

Basically, I think what Jesus is saying to this group of people that are standing there and they've just come through this time, chapter 11, where Jesus is accused that he's casting out demons based on the power of Satan himself, on Beelzebub.

[34 : 49] and whose authority is Jesus doing this work? And you've seen Jesus perform all of these miracles.

You've heard all of this. You've seen it. And now it's decision time. It's time for you to decide. Who will you believe?

Is Jesus here in the name and under the authority of the Lord? Lord, is he God himself standing in front of you?

Or is he something else? Is he just a fine teacher? Is he just a good example for the community? Is he something perhaps even nefarious?

Something evil? What is it? Make up your mind. It's time to decide. Which will it be? And so here's this last fear.

[35 : 59] We need to be afraid of bowing to the culture. we see this in our day.

Every generation has seen it. Bowing to the culture. Will you be afraid to deny Christ?

Christ? Will you be afraid to admit that you know Christ? When the peer pressure hits, when the government comes calling, when whoever it is that's in charge, will you deny that you know him? or will you say it doesn't matter what you do to me, to my body, I'm not going to fear you, I'm going to instead fear the one who can do something beyond the grave.

I'm going to trust him. There's another passage of scripture that deals with this particular subject that I thought it would be good for us to discuss about this denial.

[37 : 22] Are you going to acknowledge me before men? Are you going to hide or not acknowledge me before men? This comes from 2 Timothy chapter 2.

Paul is quoting here perhaps a hymn from the day, something that he says is a trustworthy saying. There are four conditional statements here, four if statements. There's two and then two. The first two go together, the second two go together. The first two are positive, the second two are negative.

What is he saying here? This is this passage that we're looking at in Luke 12 and then here in 2 Timothy chapter 2. These are problematic passages in the sense that they're hard for us to understand what's being said here.

So let's take a look at this and see what he says. If we have died with him, this is not talking about physical death, this is talking about the death that's pictured in baptism.

[38 : 33] That when we're baptized, when we trust Christ as Savior, we are literally baptized in his death and then raised to newness of life. The water baptism that we practice is a picture of that new life in Christ, a dying of ourselves and a raising to new life in Christ.

That's what happens the moment that we trust Christ as Savior, that spirit baptism that happens when we place our faith in Christ to save us.

And he says if we have died with him, we will also live with him. And so that part is not what I would call controversial. It's not hard for us to understand.

We get that part. But if we endure, we will also reign with him. This is talking about enduring suffering in the context of the passage here in 2 Timothy.

He's talking about how he himself is having to endure suffering for the cause of Christ so that the gospel may go forth so that people can be saved. He was willing to endure suffering.

[39 : 46] Are we willing to endure suffering so that we might also reign with Christ, with him? And then the second two, if we deny him, he will also deny us.

If we deny him, he will also deny us. Now, what is that a reference to here? Possibly to someone who is what I would call apostate, someone who is not a believer, someone who is not a true believer in Christ at all, and they would deny Christ, they would deny knowing Christ, and so why would Christ say, well, I know him?

Of course he wouldn't. He has to be true to himself. And then he says, if we are faithless, you almost want to think that what Paul is going to say here is that he also will be faithless towards us, but that's not what he says.

He says that he will be faithful. Because there are times when we do falter. There are times when we do get weak.

There are times where we struggle with doubt. I think of Peter foremost. He denied Christ, denied knowing Christ three times, and yet he was a child of God.

[41 : 30] He belonged to the Lord. God, how does that work? That's a good question. I'm not sure I can explain it. And there may be different ways to understand this.

I'm not going to be real dogmatic about this other than to say that it's not talking about someone losing their salvation. salvation. Because a child of God is not someone that can become not a child of God.

A child of God is a child of God. It stays that way. That is the testimony of scripture. Because he cannot deny himself.

I think of this in the context of actually we're going to go back and look at Luke chapter 12 verse 10 and then we're going to come back to another passage in 1st Timothy that I think maybe helps to clarify some of this.

In Luke chapter 12 verse 10 he goes on and he says now everyone who speaks a word against the son of man will be forgiven but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

[42 : 46] Well Rich what is that a reference to? And I think it's a reference to the Holy Spirit's work and giving that credit if you will to Satan to saying that what Jesus was doing in the power of the Holy Spirit was Satan himself.

That's what he's referring to. But you might also say that anyone who denies the Holy Spirit in their life they're rejecting the Lord. This is what he's saying here.

But I want you to notice what's happening here. Okay? Notice the difference. Speaks a word against the son of man versus someone who speaks a word against the Holy Spirit or who blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Paul who's the author of 1st and 2nd Timothy was guilty of some things wasn't he? Let's go take a look at those. 1st Timothy chapter 1 verse 12 and following here.

I thank him who has given me strength Christ Jesus our Lord because he judged me faithful. The Lord judged Paul faithful appointing me to his service though formerly I was a what?

[44 : 04] Blasphemer. Interesting. And a persecutor. An insolent opponent. Paul was a persecutor of the church.

He was primarily responsible accountable for the death of Stephen. Stoned to death for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul was in charge of that. Of arresting Christians. Of blaspheming the Lord himself. He was guilty of that. Was Paul condemned to hell because of that?

Did Paul experience that he could no longer be forgiven for his sin because of what he had done? Of course not. Paul as we know is gloriously saved on the road to Damascus.

He goes on to say but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

[45 : 17] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost or the chief of all sinners he would say.

But I receive mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as to an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Don't you know that a part of the reason why God has saved you was so that you would be an example of his grace of his mercy so that the people in your world would look at your conversion would look at your relationship with Christ and say oh my the Lord has saved even rich.

The Lord has saved even you and brought you into a right relationship with the Lord if he can do that maybe he can do that with me. And Paul would testify and I would testify amen yes if he can do that in me he can do that in you absolutely and he wants to.

to the king of the ages of invisible the only God be honor and glory forever and ever amen. It is fitting for a doxology at that point because it is by his mercy and his grace that he has saved any of us.

[46 : 47] Because none of us are worthy to be saved. worthy to be brought into a right relationship with him.

So what's the difference? Well I think it can boil down to this and this statement on your notes. This is the way that I have it listed there. Speaking against Jesus can be forgiven because the guilty will come to him seeking it.

Someone who is expressing their faith in Christ the Lord is drawing that person and they will come seeking forgiveness.

They want his forgiveness. They want his mercy. They want his grace. That wasn't the description of the people that we read about in Revelation by the way.

Right? They weren't wanting anything from God other than to leave them alone. Curse God for what he has done and what he is doing.

[48 : 03] Whereas speaking against the spirit if we can talk about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit as if that's something that we can be guilty of today it would be in this way.

It carries with it the implication of lifelong rebellion that never turns to repentance.

They go to their grave with a heart that's turned against God. Not wanting him.

Not wanting his forgiveness. not seeking his forgiveness. Wanting nothing to do with him. Wanting to do their own thing.

Now in the context of all of this here is the one final promise maybe encouragement Jesus gives to us gives to his disciples gives to us verse 11 and when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities and they would do this we have the account of this in the book of Acts and in history when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say.

[49 : 36] this will happen there will be a time when you have to face persecution for your faith in Christ.

Do not be anxious for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. That's the promise.

there may be further persecution there may be even what they did to the original twelve apostles except for the two one committed suicide one died of old age.

The other were put to death because of their faith in Christ. And that's something that that we we haven't had to face much persecution in our nation.

But in the world there is more there are more martyrs for their faith in Christ in this last century than in the previous 1900 centuries combined.

[50 : 47] Understand that this world is not your friend. So we talked today about fear and there's two more statements that you have on your notes.

in terms of understanding what fear is and why it's appropriate for us at times to have some fear fear of God and really to understand it for us we have to understand it from the two perspectives from the perspective of the unsaved and from the perspective of those of us who are believers.

And we start with from the perspective of the unsaved. For the unbeliever to fear God means to run from him. I don't want to have anything to do with him to avoid him to dislike him that might be a kind word despise might be a more appropriate word but at least to dislike him and to be terrified at the thought of him.

But for the believer for the follower of Christ to fear God means to stand in awe of him to love him to reverence him to worship him.

Now some people might say well Rich when I think of fearing God love is not a word that I would associate with that.

[52 : 32] fear God but to fear God means that I understand his justice. I understand at least a measure of his holiness.

I understand what it meant for him to bring me into a right relationship with him.

He didn't just excuse and say well okay Rich blew it. Rich sinned and so I'm just going to overlook it. That's not what he did. What he did was he absolutely carried out his righteous judgment against the guilty.

It's just that Jesus took my place. And that is terrifying. It is you could even use the word terrible.

It's terrible to think that Jesus who did not deserve it was completely innocent of any kind of sin and yet was willing to go to the cross so that I could be saved.

[53 : 59] fear of God who would do that makes me love him all the more because he did that for me.

He did that for you. He went through all of that for you so that you could know him so that you too could love him to worship him.

That's what we're created for. We're created to live in relationship with the one who created us. With a God who loves us to love him and return to worship him is what we're made for.

it completes us. So I would implore you if you've never trusted Christ as your Savior today, today, make that decision to trust him, to say yes to the Lord.

Say yes, I will follow you. Yes, I will trust you. That if you have the Holy Spirit who is drawing you right now, that you have any sort of inkling in your mind that would say yes, I want to know the Lord.

[55 : 25] Yes, I know I need his forgiveness. Yes, I know I have sinned. Yes, I want to repent. I will.

I will trust him. Make that your plea. Make that your call to him today. Lord, thank you so much again for your word.

Thank you for what you've done for us through Christ. Help us to see that even through some of the difficult passages that we come across like these words that we've read today.

Help us to see your great plan coming together, your great love for us through your son Jesus who died for us so that we can place our faith, our trust in you, and we could be forgiven of our sin.

Lord, I pray today for those who have never trusted Christ as Savior, that today they would recognize their need and they would, in humility, repent of their sin and say, Lord, my only hope is in you.

[56 : 48] My only hope is in Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for my sin. Thank you that he rose again from the dead.

Thank you that we can be forgiven, that I can be forgiven. and today, Lord, I trust you, I trust you, as my only hope of eternal life.

My Savior, my Lord, I trust you today. Lord, thank you so much for this work that you're doing in our lives.

Pray, Lord, that you would continue to draw us closer, deeper into our relationship with you. Help us to know you, to love you, to worship you, with all that we have.

We ask it now in Jesus' name. Amen.