

Series: For such a time as this

## The Awe of God - part 2

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14

*"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind."*

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(Together)

*"Our Father which art in heaven,*

*Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:*

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*

- Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

Last week we started with this message called *the Awe of God*, which is code and a nice way to say the fear of the Lord. We don't hear a lot of teaching and preaching about the fear of the Lord any more. Our culture has become very ego-centric and self-centered. We tend to not want to talk about anything that even sounds negative or has a negative connotation - we're afraid to go there. But, we learn from Scripture that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and we *all* want more wisdom.

The awe of God - living in awe with eyes wide open, in *wonder* - as we continue to pray for revival and spiritual awakening and what God wants to do *now* in our time, and however he wants to show up, we want to be able to "host" him. We want to welcome and embrace with tenderness the presence of God, and with openness move back into the place of holiness - the place of reverencing him with awe and wonder. We continue to pray and seek the Lord for that.

As Jesus said, *"for those who have ears to hear..."* revival is *already here*. To those whose ears are open - who are *listening* - who've been praying to literally be the revival looking for a place to happen - the spiritual awakening that is looking for a place to show up - as we say, *"Yes, Lord. If it's to be, it begins with us, and we say, Yes to You."* He is inviting us into a new place of awe and respect for God and for his *kids* (each other!)

God is *holy* - he's awesome in the truest sense of the word - and he is to be honored, revered, and respected. *"To step up even more, and live up to the fullness of our relational potential with Jesus, we have to simultaneously hold reverence and fear at the same time we hold on to our sonship and confidence and our place in His lap."* - Bishop Dr. Bill Atwood. Reverence and fear - sonship and confidence - it's both, and usually what people do is either *nothing*, or else flip-flop back and forth from one extreme to the other. There is a proper balance - or *tension* - in the way that we view and relate to God.

### **What the Fear of the Lord brings into our lives**

Exodus 20:20-21 NIV

*"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning. The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was."*

*"To fear God is to be in awe of him - to honor, tremble, revere, esteem, respect, value, and venerate Him more than anything or anyone else."* - John Bevere

The fear and the awe of God is 1] to tremble in his presence - a healthy recognition of *He is holy*. In the tangible, manifest presence of God - the glory of God (Greek - *doxa*) 2] to tremble at his Word - understanding that God has given us this Book, not as a suggestion or an addendum to our life - but the Word of *God* - in the form that we have, because that's the way he *wanted* us to have it. It's not only to be read, ingested, studied and learned, but also to be revered as the Word of God - His words - the whole council of the Lord - Old testament and New testament. We tremble at that in the way we regard and honor it.

Isaiah 6:1-5 NKJV

*"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'"* - We need to remember who he is!

## Promised benefits of the awe of God:

**1] Friendship with God** - A friend is someone we *think* about - *pray* for - who we desire to be in their presence - to spend time with - to do life together, through the good *and* the hard stuff.

Psalm 25:14 NIV

*"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."*

When Moses went back to the camp, Joshua would stay behind to linger in the presence of God. That's why he was the one to receive the baton from Moses to cross over and take the children of God into the promised land. He valued the awe and the majesty of God. Neither should we be too quick to leave the presence of God whenever we're in that holy place where we sense his presence - and then our phone dings or our computer beeps and shakes us out of it.

**2] Joy** - the joy of the Lord is our strength. The Bible says of Jesus: *"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Hebrews 12:2) He went through all that pain for the *joy* - the second fruit of the Spirit. We *en-joy* him. Bill Loveless says that we should *"enjoy Him enjoying you!"*

Psalm 112:11 NLT

*"Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments."*

His commands are not burdensome - they are *joyful*. They're designed to create *life* - to *bring* life and to bring *others* into Life - by sharing the Gospel - by them seeing the Life that's in *us*. There should be something so compelling about our life that people want to know why we're so much at peace when the whole world's losing its mind right now. What is it? It's the joy of the Lord on us, in us, and through us. As the Psalm says, *"we look to him and our faces are radiant"* ...because of the joy of the Lord that's in us. (Psalm 34:5)

**3] Eliminates all other fears** - There's a lot in the world right now that we could be fearful of. It gets *dark* out there sometimes, and it's easy to get caught up in that and just feel fearful - afraid to venture outside of our normal routines.

Psalm 112:7-8 NLT

*"They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them. They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly."*

That's what the fear of the Lord brings - a confidence - *life* - the sense of security, knowing that our God has already *fought* the battle - and won it on our behalf. We're not fighting *for* victory - we're fighting from the place of victory! Oswald Chambers said, *"When you fear God, you fear nothing else. Whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else."*

4] Wisdom - *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* (Proverbs 9:10 NKJV) To navigate this world - life - our workplace - our home - where we hobby - all things that we need are caught up in the awe of God. He's got it to give us and to bring to us.

Psalm 14:27 NLT

*"Fear of the Lord is a life-giving fountain; it offers escape from the snares of death."*

Psalm 15:33 ESV

*"The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor."*

5] Perfect [complete] holiness - *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* (2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV). There aren't many churches talking about holiness these days because we fear *legalism* - the way we dress or the places we go or don't go - the things we eat and drink - all built on externals - the outward appearance of holiness without having life on the inside.

That's *not* the holiness of God. The word "*holy*" simply means to be set apart - to be consecrated - to be ceremonially cleansed and washed - to be *clean*. We need to talk about holiness in the Church again. There are things in our flesh - habits - besetting sins that set us back, and then we wonder why God's not showing up, and why we're not experiencing revival - why we have no joy - why we can't worship in an atmosphere where everyone else is worshipping, but we can't enter in or even sense the presence of God.

It's because there's sin in the way. Even though God has "*taken care*" of sin - Jesus died "once for all" - if we continue in sin, then we can't walk in the blessing of the Lord.

This is the reality of where we live, and it's easy to get caught up in a free-fall, where, *"Hey, it's all covered! God's got this! He died for my sins - once and for all - therefore I don't have to do anything - no expectations and no accountability."* But that's just not the truth according to the Bible. By walking in this place of holiness - the fear and awe of God - there is joy. There is Life.

It's easier to live and run free when you know where the fence is - where the boundaries are. A fence provides protection and safety. That's what the fear of the Lord is meant to do. Why? - to keep us from sinning. That's God's heart for us - not to keep us from having fun, but to give us freedom to enjoy the abundant life that Jesus talked about.

*"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10 NKJV)

## **Prayer**

*Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for giving us this Word and for creating boundaries for our safety, so we won't blow up our lives and run off the rails. You do it because You love us. Father forgive us for avoiding the awe of God, the fear of the Lord, and holiness - and what it looks like to live a holy life - set apart and not having to do everything the world does - afraid that we'll miss out.*

*Lord, thank You for Your grace and Your mercy. You invite us to come with confidence before Your throne of grace, where we'll find mercy, grace, and help in our time of need. Jesus, we invite You in now, to take over, and be the Lord of our lives. Thank You for Your goodness. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit ...we stand in awe of You!*