

Series: For such a time as this

The Awe of God

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.”*

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

*“After this manner therefore pray ye: 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.”*

A lot of times we ask and pray for the presence of God, but he will not come and dwell in a place where he is not welcome. He won't force his way into our environment, but he *will* come if we invite him. If a celebrity was to walk into the room, having the highest respect and reverence of the people there, they all would be so quiet, waiting to hear everything he had to say. They would give him their utmost attention.

With that in mind, we might wonder how it is that we treat God sometimes when he's trying to come into the room, when he wants to be part of what we're doing - when we're singing songs to him, but we're not really “all there”. Have we lost the awe of God? That's a nicer way of saying the *fear of the Lord*.

We've been talking lately about revival and spiritual awakening, and we've agreed to pray for that - we *want* and *desire* that. We agree that it's needed across our land, starting right here and right now. We want to see revival come to everyone *everywhere*, and yet, God will not come and allow himself to be hosted in a place in which he isn't welcome, so we're going to take a look at reclaiming the awe of God and what that means for us as a people.

What if God has something to say through an individual, and we, by our lack of respect for that person, then miss the very thing that God had us there for? God *honors honor*, and where there is honor, respect, and esteem - and understanding that we value not only the presence of God himself, but also his presence in each other. When we do that, we actually move into a place where God says, *“That's where I want to be.”* God is attracted to honor, whether in church, the workplace, or the marketplace - wherever we live, work, or play.

When we are people of honor, and we *give* honor and esteem to *other people* - to that clerk, waiter, or waitress - then God is attracted to that, and he blesses and touches that. But, where there's *dis*-honor - *no* fear of the Lord - no awe of God and no sense of wonder as to who he is - then there is *not* the blessing - he does *not* command the blessing there in that place.

There may have been times in the past where we've become *too casual* with God - too familiar with him - where we lost our *fear* of God - our sense of awe and wonder at his majesty - of who he is and what he carries - and the recognition of who *we* are before him. The other extreme of that would be our being so afraid of God that we're *paralyzed* with fear - afraid of making a move or decision - to do *anything* because it might displease God.

God *gave* us our emotions - to experience and encounter his *presence* - and also his *joy*. He wired us for all of that, but not for extreme or unhealthy fear where we find ourselves shut down. We are his sons and daughters. He is our *Abba* - but he's also the *King of Kings* and *the Lord of Lords* - *God Almighty* - *El Shaddai* - and we must not forget his majesty because we find ourselves being so familiar. How then do we find the proper balance - or *tension* - in the way we view and relate to God?

“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. That does *not* produce life - that produces *exhaustion*. We can do *both* - we don't have to live in a way where we're schizophrenic and all over the map.

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. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”

You can tell if someone is truly born again - filled with the Spirit of God - operating in their potential and capacity that God's called them to operate in - if they fear God and keep his commandments. They live in awe of who God is. They reverence him. They adore him and do what he says when he says to do it.

Where do we start in learning what God has told us to do? We start with the Bible. God is still speaking to us today - we have to listen.

Psalm 33:8,9 NIV

*"Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the people of the world revere him.
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm."*

Revere - to feel deep respect or admiration for something or someone.

What is *"the fear of the Lord"*? It's not to be scared of God! He said, *"Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you. Come close to Me."* (James 4:8). The same God who invites us to come with boldness before the throne of grace, where we find mercy and grace in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16). Fear of the Lord is *not* trembling because God will not beat us down, but understanding that *"I am in awe of Him. I'm in wonder of Who He is. I revere Him and have the utmost respect and honor for Him."*

Exodus 20:20,21 NIV

"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test [prove] 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."

God tests his work by putting pressure on it. Don't think that all pressure is demonic.

Fear of the Lord - *"I love Him so much that my love for Him is so real that I don't want to violate that."* There's nothing we can do to sever our relationship with God - we are securely in his hands - *but*, we can damage our fellowship and intimacy with him. We can cause there to be distance where there doesn't need to be. We always want to reclaim that by being quick to repent when it's called for.

"The fear of 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 Awe of God"

When we truly walk in the fear of the Lord:

1] We firmly embrace God's heart - When we know his heart, we're okay with the fear side of it because we *trust* him - we know his character. Why? - because we've read the Bible and we have a history in God - in his mercy and faithfulness. God has had his hand on us for such a time as this.

We might be struggling in a dark place now, but we can "*fear no evil*" that got us here or is trying to hold us here. We don't *stop* in the middle of the valley of the shadow of death, but we move through it with the grace of God on our life to come out on the other end. That's beautiful, because we *know* the heart of God - we "feared him" when it counted, and he honored that. He got us through the valley to the other side.

But, don't give up - stay the course - don't quit - don't stop on the one-yard line because you don't think you can take another step. ...you can by the grace of God!

2] We love what God loves - Whatever he values and loves, we want to participate in *that*. "Yes! - we love it too. We love who You love - what You love - Your mission - Your call on our lives - we get to do this. We love the Church." Why? - because he loves the *Bride of Christ* - bumps, bruises, and torn wedding dress - she is beautiful!

3] We hate what God hates - God doesn't hate a *single person* on this planet but he *hates sin*. When we hate what God hates, a boundary is set up in our lives so that we can't *miss* walking in the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 8:13 NIV

"To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech."

Romans 12:9 NIV

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

Today, make a decision and say, "*I want to embrace the fear of the Lord - to love what he loves and hate what he hates - to draw near to him so that he will draw near to me. By faith I will embrace the awe of God!*"

Prayer

Father, in Jesus' name, thank You for Your Word. We receive this sure and true Word today.

We want to walk in the fear of the Lord - in the awe of God - to love what You love because we know Your heart - and to hate what You hate also because we know Your heart.

Lord, as we go, open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our hearts to know the Truth that makes us free, and that we will embrace and walk in the awe of God. In Jesus' name.

Amen