

This message was delivered at "Sovereign Grace Fellowship," Sacramento, California. On 3-15-98 morning service.

## **The Fear of the Lord**

You may have heard the phrase, or seen it on cars and trucks that say, "No fear." That is simply not true. The Biblical paradox is yes fear, yes fear! The truth I purpose to you is this. The fear of God is a great benefit and once put into proper perspective generates great obedience to Him.

We cannot be obedient to Him in our own strength it must come from the knowledge of God and His real existence. To know Him is to fear Him, to fear Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to be obedient to Him. Sadly, the fear of the Lord God is missing in many Churches and lives in this day and age. From the President on down. On the way over we passed by the parking lot filled with cars at a retail store. Is that fearing God? Romans 3:18 says.

### **"There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

So let us first understand what is meant, Biblically, by the fear of the Lord. The Scriptures contain the word fear in 385 verses. Interestingly, that is roughly one hundred more times than the word love. The Scriptures speak of the word fear in three ways. First, in both Hebrew and Greek, it is defined as reverence, respect, honor, or awe. An example would be 1 Peter 2:17. Second, is afraid, terror, fearfulness, or dread. An example would be Matt.1:20. Lastly, it's timidity, cowardice, or fearfulness. An example of this would be found in 2 Tim.1:7.

What we want to focus on this morning is "the fear of the Lord" the reverence for the Lord. Our main text is Deuteronomy 5:29.

### **"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"**

God desires us to fear Him and keep His commandments. Why? Because in doing so it will be well with us. And extending to our Children! Great men of God admitted they feared God. Joseph while in Egypt said in Genesis 42:18

**"... This do, and live; [for] I fear God."** This worked out in his life as a great benefit! When confronted with evil he said in Genesis 39:9.

**" [There is] none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou [art] his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"**

Proverbs also speaks about this in chapter 3:7. Joshua spoke of the fear of the Lord in Joshua 24:14

**"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD."**

Abraham believed in the fear of the Lord Genesis 20:11.

**"And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God [is] not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake."**

Moses said at mount Sinai upon seeing the sight and power of God.

**" ...I exceedingly fear and quake."** (Hebrews 12:21a)

Hebrews 11:7 tells us Noah feared God.

**"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."**

Solomon at the end of his life said in Ecclesiastes 12:13.

**"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man."**

The angels know the fear of the Lord Revelation 14:6,7 says.

**"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud**

**voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."**

We are helped in our walk with God by the fear of Him Exodus 18:17-21; Proverbs 8:13,16:6. Understand, to fear the Lord is a command! Leviticus 19:14-32; Deuteronomy 4:10, 6:2, 10:12; Matthew 10:28; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 4:1. The scriptures are filled with commands like this.

There is the wrong kind of fear towards God.

**"They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence."** (2 Kings 17:33)

and

Jonah 1:9 **"And he said unto them, I [am] an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry [land]."**

He did not fear the Lord in obedience to His command. It was fear of the mission and command. The fear of God is produced by the knowledge of God, who He is, and what he expects of us. However, the fear of God is also taught. We read that the king of Assyria commanded one of the priests to teach the people the fear of the Lord in 2 Kings 17:28.

**"Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD."**

Also in Psalm 34:11.

**"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD."**

Now, it can be taught wrong as Isaiah says.

**"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"**

This is what Jesus was talking about in having the people "obey" the traditions and commandments of men. As found in Matthew 15:3-9. We teach the fear of God rightly by teaching God right. The fear of God is taught by the truths we have been given in the Scriptures and the events He decrees.

For the Child of God the fear of God is to be desired (Psalm 19:8-10) and be desired for all the earth (Psalm 33:8). It should be constant in our lives (Proverbs 23:17; Acts 9:31; Hebrews 12:28). The unbeliever, in the state of unbelief, does not fear God. This is clear from Proverbs 1:24; Romans 3:11-18; and Jude 1:12. Let's look at Acts 5:1-14 esp. v.5, 11, and 14.

**"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back [part] of the price, his wife also being privy [to it], and brought a certain part, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back [part] of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried [him] out, and buried [him]. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband [are] at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying [her] forth, buried [her] by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them."**

This whole narrative really starts in chapter four with Barnabas giving his proceeds to the work of the apostles. There are many interpretations flying around as to the reason this couple was struck down. Although, it's not

explicitly stated in the text, I am convinced they made some sort of vow, or promise to God, in order to bring the wrath of God upon them in this way.

The point being from what we read in verse five "and Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things..." God was not playing around and requires obedience from us.

Sapphira is questioned about the matter, and she continues her husbands lie. She is then struck down like unto her husband. We read in verse eleven "and great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." We notice great fear came upon two classes described here. One, all the church which would be all the believers. Two, and upon as many as heard these things. This is the godless, unbelievers. God's power and fear came upon, not just the Church, but upon the unbelievers also. What was the result? Verse fourteen.

**"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."**

I would like to leave you with a list of benefits to fearing the Lord. I have listed six, but this is by no means the only ones, there are many but I listed six for us.

\* Salvation is near to them that fear God Psalm 85:9

\* The Father pities them that fear Him Psalm 103:13

\* It is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of God Psalm 111:10;  
Proverbs 1:7

\* Jesus is given to them that fear Him Malachi 4:2

\* His mercy is on them that fear Him Luke 1:49,50

\* Rewards are given to them that fear Him Revelation 11:18

I consider Jesus' words valuable, and I hope you do too. Because He said in Matthew 10:28 and the parallel Luke 12:5 these words.

**"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:  
but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."**

Amen