

Introduction: Psalm 34, our text last week, is David’s reflection on the Lord’s special protection of him before he became king. It has a lot to say about fearing God. And so does Peter in the letter before us today!

I. Let’s Examine How Peter Taught and Applied the Fear of God

- A. Before we even look at verses regarding the fear of God...
 - 1. We should notice the use of Psalm 34:8 in 2:3. [Have you **tasted** that the Lord is good?]
 - 2. And also, in the background of our text – in 1 Peter 1:17 (read v.13-21) and in 2:17 – fear God (survey the structure of this section – 2:13, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, and 3:8).
- B. Let me suggest a definition of the fear of God, as Peter uses it, with Psalm 34 as the background. It is to stand in awe of God, to be utterly amazed at His goodness, love, holiness, wisdom, and power. (So it is not somehow in opposition to God’s love as Psalm 130:4 implies.)
- C. Now let’s look more closely at our text. In 3:10-12, Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16. (Here we should remember Psalm 34:11.) What is Peter teaching?
 - 1. In v.9-10, he says that a God-honoring life will be marked by its speech. Compare v.15b-16a.
 - 2. In v.11, he continues with reference to daily conduct. We are to seek and pursue peace, even if we suffer for righteousness sake – v.13-14a.
 - 3. In v.12, he writes of the reason for a determination to run from doing evil. God is not One to be trifled with; He sees and knows all; we don’t fool Him, even if we fool others or ourselves.
- D. Where does Peter’s picture of the Lord Jesus fit into his teaching about living the fear of God?
 - 1. Clearly, in word and deed, Jesus did what we’ve just surveyed – compare 2:21-25 and 3:17-18
 - 2. Look also at 3:15. This is actually a quote from Isaiah 8:13 (read v.11-13), but Peter did something that you and I **must not** do (but Apostles could!) – he added to (Old Testament) Scripture! Isaiah was told “Don’t fear people, fear God. Don’t fear others, honor the LORD (of hosts)”. Peter’s addition of “the Christ” identifies Jesus with the Lord of Hosts of Isaiah. Even more than Old Testament Israel, we should be in utter awe of the God who came to earth to display his infinite wisdom, power, grace, mercy, and holiness at the cross. We stand in awe of Him, and that’s what worship should be.

II. The Fear of the Lord Enables Us to Deal with Earthly Fears

- A. For Peter’s readers (then and now) – suffering and the threat of persecution can cause fear. We may tremble before earthly powers (v.14b). [Actually, fear of people can take two forms: trembling or becoming a “people pleaser”.] Either way, God is denied the fear He deserves. But the way to overcome fear of people is to fear God instead – v.14b-15a.
- B. Note that Peter wrote, not only with apostolic authority, but apostolic authority joined with deep personal experience. He was well acquainted with fear (Mark 14), and leading up to his 3-fold denial of Christ we see a man who was full of pride (Mark 14:29,31; cf. 3:8). Two things were needed by Peter (and by us) – deep repentance (and the restoration that flows from it) and a deeper work of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: Do you fear people...troubles...suffering? Do you live with near constant anxiety about what is happening to you or around you? Or do you think more about pleasing others than pleasing God? Be concerned and face these issues, but don't be discouraged! There is a Savior who is kind and loving, who says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden..." Turn and ask His forgiveness and His Spirit's help to make Him your fear.