

Fear This! Part 2

By Jess Arnds

sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Sunday, May 26, 2019

Providence Church

2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

When you consider the awful terrible reality of our sin, how pervasive it is, how destructive it is, what an offense it is to God and everything that's right and just and fair, and then to consider that his grace was greater than all of our sin and all of the sin of the world, it's a massive amount of grace that was purchased because that massive amount of wrath was poured out on his Son Jesus Christ, God himself willingly bearing the full fury of God's wrath, that's how big his grace was, right? The very one who was offended, the very one who was displeased, the very one who was dishonored, disobeyed, disregarded, robbed of his rightful glory by rebellious arrogant sinners, the very one who was wronged bore the punishment for that evil on our behalf and that's how big that grace is. It was not an easy thing. It wasn't a cheap thing. It was not a light or a flippant thing and it's because Jesus did that, the Lamb of God who purchased our pardon, he is now worthy, he is now the worthy Ruler of all of the universe, he has now the right, as Revelation says, to break the seals on the scroll which is basically kind of the closing act of the universe, so to break the seals, he is worthy to bring judgment, he is worthy to bring salvation, and he's worthy to bring an end to this corrupted order of things, and he's worthy to renew the universe so that he would be worshiped as he ought to be by his people, in his presence forever. What a glorious Gospel that we believe.

We have the privilege to open the word of God again this morning and we'll be covering again the topic of the fear of the Lord, and it is an overwhelming topic, it's an overwhelming theme through Scripture. As you read the word of God, it's like a telescope, this thing just keeps opening bigger and bigger and bigger and you realize everything in the world has to do with the fear of God whether we recognize it or not. I mean, everything, every moment is impacted by your concept of God and whether or not he is worthy of your fear and respect and admiration and reverence, and so as I open the word this morning to you, again I know I say this a lot but I'm woefully inadequate to communicate this to you. We have to pray and beg that the Lord would convince you in your heart, and me as well, of his infinite majesty that is so mind-blowing and so gigantic, and that it would impress upon our souls his, the presence with you all the time of this majestic Holy One who is always there with you for your good or for your judgment. But he is always there.

So let me pray and then we will open the word and I will do my very best and you need to do your very best to grasp this. Let's pray.

Lord, we come to You as the Holy One. You are majestic and mighty. You are everywhere. You are amazing and You are here. And so, Father, I pray that today this morning that You would work in our hearts to give us a glimpse, an awareness of Your majesty, of Your glory, of what You call us to, that we would love You, that we would find refuge in You, that we would devote ourselves to You and we would call others to worship You as well. So help us this morning, Lord, we need You. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

On December 26, 2004, an earthquake was registered in the Indian Ocean near the coast of the island of Sumatra. It was measured at a 9.0 on the Richter scale, which is the energy of about 23,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs, 23,000. That's how massive this earthquake was. Huge shock waves were sent in every direction and within hours those waves reached up to about 98 feet tall at the tallest, radiating from the epicenter and slamming into the coastlines of 11 different countries from Thailand all the way to East Africa, which was 3,000 miles away. In fact, it affected waves all around the world, but it killed people 3,000 miles away. At least 227,000 people were killed by the tsunami, making it the deadliest tsunami in human history that has been recorded.

One of the reasons it was so deadly is that even though there was a huge earthquake, the people on the coastlines were not aware that a tsunami was on the way. There was no warning system and so they went about their lives like normal. Just a normal day, going to work, many of them tourists, and then all of a sudden these waves show up out of nowhere wiping out entire cities. I think the damage was 14 billion, 1.7 million people were now homeless, thousands among the dead were foreign tourists, many of them on vacation, Christmas vacation. The power of that, the suddenness of that is just staggering and you think, I mean, imagine a building like this and a wall of water just running through it, wiping out everyone inside and then multiply that by 200,000. Huge.

If they had known that this was coming, how do you think it would have affected their life? How do you think it would have affected their decisions if they knew this was on its way? If they knew in advance, would they have built their homes there and their business and their lives there? Would they have vacationed there if they knew in advance that something like this was going to happen? On the day of, knowing that a shock wave was coming for them, how do you think it would have adjusted their plans for that day? Do you think they would have complained about the hotel food? Do you think they would have laid there on the beach depressed about not getting a promotion at work? Do you think they would have worried about whether the Falcons would have made it to the Super Bowl?

You see, fear has a way of gripping you. Danger, genuine danger that you know is on the way has a way of absorbing your thinking, doesn't it, and setting things into the right priority. What do you fear? What absorbs your attention? What gets you worried and anxious? It dominates your thoughts. It controls your decisions. What if there had been an early warning system? What if they could have known? What if there was clear instructions on how to survive such an event? Do you think they would have read it? Do

you think they would have picked it up and figured it out? Some of them maybe. Others probably not. What do you think would be the wise thing to do?

You see, the Scripture says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. As we discussed last week, we talked about the fact that we have an all-powerful, all-knowing, righteous Judge of the universe who you cannot escape, you cannot get away from. He is holy. He is morally pure. He desires that his people also be good and pure and because he is good, he is also just, a just Judge, a righteous Ruler, and the reason his goodness should cause us to fear is because we are not good and much of Scripture is given to convince us of that fact. In fact, the entire Sermon on the Mount was designed to convince you of that fact where Jesus says, "You've heard it said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' but I say unto you that if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you have committed adultery. You've heard it said to not commit murder, but if you are angry with your brother, you have committed murder in your heart and your liable to judgment before God."

You see, the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom starts with a genuine fear of him, like genuinely being afraid of his power, of his majesty, of his holiness. It starts there. You don't, people don't come to salvation because God offers them a nice fulfilling life. They come, you don't, no one confesses their sins as though it's a flippant thing. It's not a true confession if it's not, if it doesn't acknowledge that God is the righteous Judge of your sins. The fear of God starts with the fact that he is a righteous Judge, and as we talked about last week, it's not the fear that good people have of a tyrant, it's the fear that criminals have of an all-powerful righteous King who will not allow them to get away with their murder and their adultery and their theft and their wickedness. That is the type of fear that it starts with.

Man, there's just so much. Ah, just read the book of Deuteronomy. Read the book of Exodus. Read the Psalms. Read the prophets. Read Jesus. Read Revelation. Read the book of Jude and 2 Peter.

God is a righteous Judge and his wrath is a real thing that is coming on the sons of disobedience but he is also a good Savior and that was the amazing thing, you think about that, the intensity of the wrath, right, and it's real, the Scripture says that God is angry with the wicked every day, and he poured that anger out on his Son. The worst part of what Jesus went through was not the physical pain of the cross but it was bearing the wrath of God and it's not a benign sort of justice thing like we have in our court system. The judge is like, "Well, the statute says this so there's your sentence. Alright, next." No, there is a genuine fury in God directed at sin and that was placed onto Jesus. He bore it willingly. He is a good Savior and he is the only refuge from the wrath of God.

So as we talked about last week, the fear of God drives you to the one refuge, the one place of escape which is in his Son, and it's amazing, you read it over and over in the Scriptures how much the fear of God is combined, the people that fear God are also those who seek refuge in him because, again as we said, if God is all-powerful, he is everywhere and you can never get away from him, your only chance is to put your hands

up and cry out for mercy, because running from him is stupid. It is foolish. You cannot run from him. Shaking your fist at him is like shaking a fist at that tsunami. Complaining against him is like laying on that beach complaining about how your favorite toy got taken from you while that tsunami is on its way. It is ridiculous when you realize the reality of what you face.

He has provided one way of escape and run to that place. You must run to that place because if you don't, if you reject, okay, you've rejected God to begin with, his glory, right? He provided a Savior to rescue you, he provided a refuge, the one who absorbed the wrath on your behalf, and he said to come to him, you just must believe. You don't have to make up for it by good works. You can't make up for it with religious rituals, any of these things. All you must do is put your hope and faith completely in Christ for your righteousness. That is the offer of salvation, you must turn away from your wickedness to place your hope in him, and if you don't, Hebrews 10 and 12 make it very clear that if you don't, that there is only left a terrifying expectation of judgment if you reject his salvation, and it'll be worse for you than it was for those who rejected his salvation in the wilderness, who rejected Mount Sinai, who grumbled against Moses in the wilderness. It'll be worse.

It says that it's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God and that our God is a consuming fire, and so we ought to approach him with gratitude, reverence and awe, and so here's how I would define the fear of God from Scripture. It is a realization of the holy majesty of God that results in a sense of profound awe, admiration, reverence, honor and terror at the thought of displeasing him; a fear of his wrath that leads to repentance from sin and a fear of displeasing him because you love him. The fear of God leads to obedience, trust, love, confidence and courage. It leads one to love what God loves, to hate what he hates, and it leads to treating others in a way that pleases him. I'll repeat that first sentence. It is a realization of the holy majesty of God that results in a sense of profound awe, admiration, reverence, honor and terror at the thought of displeasing him or not being right with him.

The fear of his wrath leads us to repentance and faith. Now as a believer, it's the fear of his discipline that leads us to holiness. Hebrews 11 talks about this, don't despise the discipline of the Lord. Now that you are in the faith, he doesn't care less about what you do, he actually cares more what you do because now you represent him. He cares what you do and he controls everything. He controls your entire life and his love for you as his child is expressed in discipline. Discipline is not punishment, it's not payment for sin, it's not wrath, it is discipline, it is training you in righteousness and holiness, the things that please him. If you're left without discipline, Hebrews 12 says, if you're left without discipline, if God does not discipline you, that means that you are not his child and you're in a more fearful place actually, because he will leave you alone until the judgment day when he will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you, you workers of lawlessness."

If he does not discipline you for your sin, you don't belong to him which means you are in a more terrifying position, but if you are his child, he will not allow you to walk in sin and just leave you alone there. He loves you too much to do that and he's got other plans

for you than to live for yourself, and he will bring pain. The word is actually scourge like a whip. Often it's what it takes to motivate us, isn't it? No football coach motivates his team merely through encouragement. That would be the worst team ever, right? Seriously, no business owner only encourages his employees. The only people that you leave alone in those situations are the ones that you have no hope for improvement. If they don't improve, you get rid of them, right? You're harder on the ones that you expect more out of. The Lord expects us to be holy, to be righteous, to be set apart. He expects this of you and he has provided the means for you to do it. He's given you his word, his Spirit, his people, and all of your circumstances to conform you to that because he's got a purpose for you, to declare, as 1 Peter says, to declare his excellencies.

So we fear his discipline. There's a certain trepidation about that. There is a place for fear in the Christian life. We also, because we love him and we revere him and we respect him, we have come to acknowledge that he is truly good and he is everything that we want to be. He's what we want to be like. So then we have a fear of displeasing him. Not fear of his wrath but fear that what we say to him, what we do, how we live our life, is done in a way that grieves him, we would fear that. If you had a good father who you loved and respected, sometimes it was enough to see his disappointment to motivate you to work harder to be more faithful with what you were supposed to do. It causes us to watch our motives.

1 Corinthians 4 talks about this, verse 5. Paul has been talking about how basically it's required that a steward be found faithful and that we don't know each other's motive, you know, we don't know each other's hearts. So 1 Corinthians 4 says this, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." Do you usually think of it as a bad thing to desire praise? We usually do, right? "Aw, it's the wrong motivation. I shouldn't want to be praised." Well, here it's saying you should want God to praise you so it's not so much about whether you should want to be praised, it's by who. Do you want to be praised by men? By people? Or do you want to be praised by God?

God will disclose the motives of your hearts, the things hidden in darkness will be made manifest, and if you are a believer and if you genuinely belong to him, you won't be thrown into hell for your sin but in the previous chapter of 1 Corinthians 3, everything that you did will be burned up and shown to be worthless if your motives were not right, if the purposes of your heart were not right, and you may enter into the kingdom of God but without being rewarded for the work that you did here. That's a whole another study, a study of rewards in the new heavens and the new earth. You realize that we're not all going to be rewarded the exact same way.

What will those rewards look like? I don't know. There's the parable of the talents, each servant was given a different stewardship and then they were rewarded by the Lord based on the faithfulness with which they carried out their stewardship and one of the things he says there is, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You will rule over 5 cities or 10 cities." There's indication that in the new heavens and the new earth which will be a

physical place, that there will be nations and there will be stuff going on there and you and your place in that kingdom will be determined by the faithfulness with which you carry out what God has called you to here. That's why if you're called to a lowly position, don't worry about it. Be faithful there because God will reward you in the new heavens and the new earth. He will reward you and many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first, he says.

2 Corinthians 5:9 says this, "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences." So Paul is saying we will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that is a fearful thing even for the apostles. It's a different kind of fear than one who is outside the camp, right? It's a different level of fear but it is still a fearful thing to stand before him and have the Lord evaluate your work. He will do that.

Now before we move on, there are some common objections to this concept of the fear of God. You know, what about all the verses that say do not fear? There's like Isaiah 6 and Revelation and Daniel when they see a vision of the Lord and they're terrified. Mary when the angel came to her. Each time, they were like scared out of their mind and the Lord puts his hand on them and says, "Do not fear." Well, that illustrates that God's desire for you is good, right? He is still terrifying but his heart is to do you good and for those that fear him, you need not fear. That is the amazing thing, that those who genuinely fear the Lord and are humble before him need not fear, need not be terrified because God has good designs for you and for your life.

We just talked about some of the other places in the New Testament. It's not just an Old Testament concept, the fear of the Lord. It is woven all throughout. What about the passage in 1 John 4 where it says perfect love casts out fear? Let me read that to you because I think this is a misconception and we kind of almost, anyway, I'll just read it to you, okay? 1 John 4:7, it says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." Okay? So let's just establish that. If you love other people, you're from God, right? Of course, this is in line after, you know, if you've confessed your sins; if you've trusted in Christ as the propitiation; if you've acknowledged that he came in the flesh, that Jesus Christ is the Savior. Okay, the next proof that you're a believer is that you love other people. If you love others, you have been born of God. "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us."

Okay, so there is that word, his love being perfected, that is perfect love, meaning that it's like the lights in here, right? In order for the lights to turn on, you have to flip the switch

and connect the circuit, okay? You have to complete the circuit for the lights to turn on. When that circuit's broken, all that electricity in the world will do no good in here. It has to connect and then the light is shown. So the lights here show that there's electricity just as here when we love one another, it shows that God's love has been poured out in our hearts and so that is how God's love is perfected, or it's like completing that circuit. His love is completed in us. So when you love, when God loves you and you truly belong to him, that light switch goes on and it results in love for other people. Okay, that is what, that is perfect love, completed love, love that has found its destination, right? It's not supposed to just stay inside you.

Okay, so and that is how we make God known. Okay, verse 13, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment." So when you love, that is the fruit, that is the demonstration that your faith is real, that you belong to God, that you know God and so when that love comes out, that gives you confidence that, "Yes, I belong to God." If you don't have love, this is saying you don't belong to him and you should not be confident facing the day of judgment. Do you see what I'm saying? His love is perfected with us. What is perfect love? It is God's love that has made its way out through you to other people, you loving. That is perfected love.

"Because as he is, so also are we in this world." Therefore, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear." What is perfect love? Perfect love is God's love running through you and being manifested through you. So when you love, that's perfected love. When you love others, that is what casts out fear of God's judgment because that is the reassurance to you that you belong to God. That is what that's talking about. It's not love for God that casts out fear, it is love for others that casts out that fear because it is the proof of your faith.

It says, "because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." Do you see he's saying the same things over and over and over again, and if you want, if you're doubting your salvation, maybe start with praying for love for other people. Okay, so that's what that's about.

Alright, so what does the fear of God look like? It's not primarily demonstrated by emotion but by attitude and action and I'd say the very first characteristic of the fear of the Lord based on the Scripture is humility. Number one is humility. This humility is demonstrated because you recognize you're not stronger than God, you're not more righteous than God, and you have to submit completely to him. So there's humility in that. You are accepting his evaluation of you. So the fear of God is demonstrated in

humility and a proper understanding of your place in the order of things and instead of seeking man's approval, which is rooted in pride, you are seeking God's approval and it results also in a diligent search for wisdom. Why? Because you recognize that you don't already have God's wisdom, you don't have what you need. You need to search out his word.

Okay, so Proverbs 2 says this, "My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God." Do you see that? What kind of pursuit does it take to gain God's wisdom? His wisdom is available but it takes some work. You have to receive the words, you have to treasure them, you have to pay attention to them, incline your heart to them, cry out for them, and seek them like hidden treasure. Why? Because you fear the Lord. God has given you his word. He's given you his ways. He has told you how to live and how to please him and he has said, "Hey, look, it's buried in that field, a chest of gold, a chest of wisdom. It's right there. It's gonna take some sweat, it's gonna take some searching, it's gonna take some work but it's there. Go get it." The fear of the Lord drives you to diligently seek his wisdom, as Matthew 5 talks about, a hunger and a thirst for righteousness.

How diligently do you seek wisdom? How much do you even question your own understanding? How much do you actually search out the Scriptures to let it define how you ought to approach your day, your life, your parents, your marriage, your business, your relationships, and how to evaluate the world in which we live because God has given you all of that. He has stored it up and we have more access to it today than ever. It's just right there. Do you search for that like treasure? How valuable is that to you? If it's not valuable to you, I'll tell you why, it's because you do not fear God. That is why you don't seek it out. That is why you are lazy, it's because you don't fear God. We must hunger and thirst for righteousness and it is those who hunger and thirst for it who will be filled, Matthew 5 says.

He will give it in verse 6 of Proverbs 2, "the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones." He wants to give it to you and in the book of Deuteronomy the Lord says to Moses, "O, that My people would fear Me so that I might bless them, so that I might do them good." The Lord longs for you to fear him, to honor him, to respect him.

So it results in humility. 2. Of course all of these are related, it results in holiness, obedience, repentance, sexual purity. Listen to 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality." Okay, this almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful God who controls everything in your life says this is his will, your sanctification that you abstain from sexual immorality. That's his will. When you dabble in that, you are deliberately disregarding this God. It's not, "Oh, I'm

struggling," you see. It's not, "Oh, I just, I slipped." You are disobeying God who is right there with you while you do it; who is evaluating your heart.

Listen to this, this is 1 Thessalonians 4 again. So abstain from sexual immorality, "that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you." This is the New Testament, by the way. The Lord is the avenger of those who would defraud his brother in these sexual matters.

"For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you." And it is a characteristic of false teachers over and over and over and over again to be caught up in sexual immorality and to justify it and to promote it.

Psalm 19:9, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever." Remember Joseph being tempted by Potiphar's wife and he continually repelled her, right? Genesis 39:9. And he finally says, "How can I sin against God?" No one had to know. He could have gotten away with it. It would have been normal. It would have been a normal thing in that culture. He was the only one who knew God in the whole country. No one would have judged him for indulging that. He says, "How could I commit this sin against God?" He obeyed because he feared the Lord.

As we read earlier in 2 Corinthians 5:9, our ambition is to please him, to be holy. Listen to 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1. Listen to this, "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, Come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

So humility, holiness, 3., courage. How does it make us courageous? I remember reading something about General Patton and his troops, it was said, were more scared of him than they were of the Nazis. They revered the guy. They respected the guy and they feared the guy. It might be a slight exaggeration but they went to, they pushed hard and put themselves in great danger in order to please their General. If you fear the Lord, then you will have courage here on earth because you won't fear other things.

This is from Nehemiah 4:12, "When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, 'They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,'" so he's talking about enemies coming against them, he says, "then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows." Okay, so the Jews are rebuilding the

temple, the walls are broken down, they're in a vulnerable place, and they're being threatened. And so Nehemiah stations them with swords and spears and bows and then verse 14, "When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: 'Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.'" That word for "awesome," the root word is fear. God is fearful, terrifying, awesome. Remember him, he is on your side. If you fear him, then you have nothing else to fear. Fight. It gives you courage to fight. It gives you courage to confront.

Nehemiah rebuked in the very next chapter, he rebuked the leaders of the people who were taking, who were charging people interest for their fields and they were way, they were oppressing the poor among them and Nehemiah gets in their face about it because of the fear of the Lord, and then he says, it says there Nehemiah, that he did not do the same things because of the fear of the Lord.

Galatians 6:1, it leads you to get involved in restoring a believer who is caught in sin because of the fear of the Lord. In 1 Timothy, you're to rebuke an elder who persists in sin. It gives you courage to rebuke an elder who persists in sin so that the others would fear, be fearful of sinning.

It gives you courage in evangelism. 2 Corinthians 5:1 which we read earlier and Paul says we make it our aim to be pleasing to the Lord, we'll stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and now we call to you be reconciled to God out of the fear of the Lord, knowing the fear of the Lord.

It leads us to practice church discipline. 1 Corinthians 5:9 says this, "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?" It's a little different than our culture thinks, right? "But those who are outside, God judges." So he says, "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."

So out of the fear of God and his judgment we deal with us. We practice church discipline because we fear the Lord and what would happen among us if we neglected to deal with wicked people in our midst. For those who persist in sin, they need to be removed after a couple of warnings. It's a process, right, not this second, it's a process, but it's not something to be taken lightly. Why? Because we fear the Lord and if you fear man, you will not be faithful in that process. You will shrink back. The fear of the Lord gives you courage to do things that people normally would not want to do.

Listen to Revelation 2:18, "The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have

this against you," speaking to the church at Thyatira, "that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them--I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come." Okay, again that's the New Testament, by the way. That's the Lord Jesus meek and mild who is saying, "I have this against you, you tolerate the immoral woman Jezebel and her teaching. You need to repent and anyone who follows her, I am going to throw into a sickbed and kill." Man.

So it gives us humility, holiness, courage to deal with things that are unpleasant, courage to fight with the Lord for his purposes, and number 4, it causes us to treat others well, with kindness. Leviticus 25:35 says this, that we're not to take advantage of the poor nor treat them with severity because of the fear of the Lord. So they would have poor people living among them and they would take advantage of them because they would have to borrow money and they would lend out money and then charge them a lot of interest. It says don't do that. Don't wrong one another.

In chapter 25, verse 17 it says pay a fair price for the land. So if someone's in a tough spot and they're getting rid of the land for cheap because they're just in a tough spot and they're poor, like don't defraud them by low-balling them. Do what's right because of the fear of God. Treat them well.

Galatians 6:6-8 talks about how God is not mocked, what you sow you will also reap. Some of that context is in bearing one another's burdens and in supporting the man of God; that if you don't support the ministry of the Gospel, in a sense, you're mocking God. You should financially support spiritual things. What else are you going to spend it on if not?

Ephesians 5:3-6, man, we could do a series all summer on this. I'm just skimming across the surface here. Ephesians 5, it talks about how the wrath of God is coming upon immoral people and instead of participating in their immorality, we're to expose their evil deeds, we're to be careful how we walk, and then it says that we're to submit to one another in the fear of Christ. So why do you submit, wives, submitting to your husbands? Out of the fear of Christ. It's respect, reverence and fear of Christ and it has nothing to do with what kind of man your husband is. It is that, it is out of the fear of Christ that you do that.

Now for men in 1 Peter 3 it says that if you don't live with your wife in an understanding way, giving her honor as to a weaker vessel, God will not listen to your prayers. What do you pray for? Things that you want. Things to go well. Things to succeed. God won't

listen to you if you are not treating your wife well. You will fail. You will wither up. God will not support that.

So out of the fear of the Lord, it defines how we're to treat our wives and back in Ephesians again, slaves and how they are to serve their masters, not as men-pleasers but as slaves of Christ, and then masters are to treat their slaves well knowing that they have a Master in heaven.

So we're to treat one another well. We're not to grumble and dispute, as Philippians 2:12 says, we're to work out our salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you to will and to work for his good pleasure. We're not to grumble and dispute, it says in the very next verse, not grumbling or disputing.

In Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron were calling out Moses, "Hey, who made you the leader here? What makes you so special?" And they started to raise a rebellion against him and God descends there and he calls them, he says, "You get over here, Miriam and Aaron," and he says, "Do you not know that there are other prophets and I relay to them in dreams and visions," and all this kind of stuff, "but with Moses I speak face-to-face. Why then did you not fear to grumble against My servant Moses?"

And on and on and on and on and on it goes. We're to endure through persecution because of the fear of the Lord. We're to preach the word in season and out of season. We're to encourage one another in the faith, as Hebrews says, so that because your heart could be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. James 5:9 says don't complain against each other.

I wish I had another month but there are great rewards, I'll end with this, great rewards with the fear of the Lord. You will experience closeness to God, Psalm 25:14, he will share secret, he will be intimate with you, he'll be close to you. It says that goodness is stored up for those who fear him and take refuge in him, Psalm 31:5. There's a storehouse of goodness for those that fear him. Psalm 33:18-19 says, "the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, To deliver their soul from death And to keep them alive in famine." God, it's like a king and he looks out over all of his creation and it says that his eye is on those who fear him. He's watching for good, right? He's not watching you in order to zap you, he's not watching you to hurt you. His desire is to do good for those that fear him. Psalm 34, "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them." You ought to read that whole Psalm, Psalm 34.

So what do you fear? What is on your mind? What is in your consciousness every day as you make these decisions? To what do you look to for wisdom and hope and help, knowledge, security? What are you looking to for those things? May your life, may our life as a congregation be dominated by the overwhelming presence of God and the fear of him that will guide and govern every single decision that we make. It will lead us in humility, in holiness, in courage, and in kindness. May he bless us as we walk in the fear of him.

At this time, we now do another fearful thing, we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper and as the elders come forward, as the elders come forward, I want to read to you from 1 Corinthians 11. Paul says that we are to take of the bread and drink of the cup in a worthy manner.