

A Fearful Thing

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of obedience and faithfulness to God, and the consequences of disobedience and sin.

Duration: 38:38

Scripture: Hebrews 10:26-27, Hebrews 10:29-31

Topics: "Fear Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the consequences of denying and disobeying God. He references the story of Adam and Eve and how their actions set the stage for the fallen nature of humanity. The preacher also mentions the corruption and violence that followed in the days of Noah, emphasizing the parallel with the present day. He warns that moral corruption is prevalent and that there is always a price connected to disobedience. The sermon concludes with a reminder that falling into the hands of the living God is a fearful thing, highlighting the importance of recognizing and repenting from our sins.

Transcript

Well, good morning. My wife sends her greetings. She loves to be here, you know, from Hebrews chapter 10.

But before I get into the message, I just want to share something from my own life. I was saved at the age of 22, and I got into the Bible right away. I couldn't find work.

I was in the dirty thirties, as they used to call them. So I spent 6, 8, 10, 12 hours a day just studying the Bible. And I remember the first time I completed the Bible.

And that was a great thing. But I just couldn't leave the Bible alone, and I sometimes missed meals, just in the interest of studying the Bible a little more. In the year, I was offered a church.

I hadn't baptized anybody before. I wasn't baptized myself. We were conducting a business meeting.

We'd done anything. The pastor was normal. We didn't know anything, you know, except the Bible.

We made it. I didn't stay there a long couple of years. I thought I'd done all I could do in respect.

I should have stayed longer at that place, but we had an evangelist come in. We had about 75 people converted that first year. And some of them went to the mission field, to Japan, to South America, Bolivia, Brazil.

So, Prince Albert, holding meetings, reading the Bible. It wasn't about being a church man at the time. But it finally came to me that, listen, the church, a local church, is a family.

You can join and work. You can't do it all. And they need your help.

And I saw this. I found a good Bible-preaching church in there, and I joined. Because now I was part of the army, part of the family.

Things together. See, don't depend on pastors or deacons to get it all done. They need your help.

You see, each local church has gifted people, whether you know it or not. And you need to find out what your gift is. But in many cases, unless I'm a member of the fellowship, as I should be, I really can't exercise my gift the way I should.

I felt so good about that when I got in, that I could sit in on business meetings and help direct the way the church was going in missions and evangelism. And I was part of it. It was a great blessing.

All right. Verse. If we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under torture and witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye. Well, listen.

How can anything be sorer than death? He's talking about something beyond death and worse than death. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, should he be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, and a holy thing, and has done to spank unto the Spirit of grace. For we know him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me.

I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. Nothing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And that's my text. It's a fearful thing. I don't know if you've ever heard a sermon on that subject.

Maybe not, maybe so. That's something we need to hear. Our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend, our King, and all He is.

Something else we need to know. Fearful to fall into the hands of the living God, like Adam and Eve did. I mean, they went their own way.

Adam did it reluctantly, we know, because Adam was not deceived, the Bible says. But Eve was deceived. And he loved her and didn't want to be separated from her.

And supposedly that's why he went along with the program. If they could have looked ahead and seen what this would mean in the history of the human race, would they have done it? Well, never, never, never. They didn't see it.

And the world is a, let's say, in a sense it's a crummy place. It's a dangerous place too. In the last days perilous, dangerous times will come.

The Bible makes it very clear. And we're living in those days. In the north end where I live, people are not sending their kids out on Halloween.

They've said that. They don't feel to be safe on the street. Every morning we hear of people being stabbed to death in Winnipeg or beaten with a club or shot.

Every morning. Never a day that we don't hear. And recently, as you may know, somebody riding a bike killed two people and wounded a girl.

He'd knock on doors to come to the door and he'd shoot right there at the door. Nobody knows why. So that's all part of it though.

Adam and Eve's, this is what they set things up for. They didn't know that, of course. But it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

That is to deny Him, disobey Him. There's always a price connected. Later on in the days of Noah, he was a preacher of righteousness, but nobody was listening except his own family.

And it says that every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually. This was corruption of the human mind. The world was so corrupt and then corruption is always followed by violence.

We have the same twin problem today. Corruption, moral corruption, it abounds everywhere. Something on TV just recently, I couldn't believe it.

Sometimes I get angry at the TV set. I look for a shotgun, I'd like to shoot it. That wouldn't help any, I suppose.

But here's a gal and she's setting up a party for flirting. And she said with the flirting, there are no laws and no limit. And you know what that means.

On our public TV, yes, it's getting worse. And I suppose it will. But we're heading for something and it's called the hands of the living God.

Ahab and Jezebel. Jezebel was a monster. Her husband was no better except that she stirred him up.

She was worse than he was. And they got away with it for quite a while. At one point Ahab actually, he humbled himself and it looked good.

But he never followed through. And there came a day on the battlefield when somebody shot Ahab with an arrow from behind, not knowing it was a king. Wouldn't have made any difference, I suppose.

And he died that night. Jezebel, she heard about a certain man coming down to execute judgment. She had a great way with men.

No doubt she corrupted dozens of them over the years. So she fixed up her hair and painted her eyes and went out to greet this guy. When he saw her at a second or third story window looking out, he said, Who am I? I said, throw her down.

And some units grabbed her and threw her down. Her blood was sprinkled on the wall and the horses trampled her to death. And she was gone like her husband.

As fearful of the fall of the hands, God had had enough. And God spoke in a violent way. Ahab and Jezebel.

Jehoshaphat was a godly man, but what we call a compromiser. And he compromised by going down to be a friend to King Ahab and to help him in a conflict he had in mind. And so he did.

He shouldn't have gone there. Because while he was there, his son, who later became king, fell in love with one of Ahab's daughters. And after his father was dead, he married her.

He was one of the worst kings that Israel ever had. But it started with his father compromising his position. The first thing he did when he became king, he murdered all his brothers so nobody else could be a claimant to the throne.

That's the first thing he did. A very wicked king. This was partly because Jehoshaphat, a godly king, appointed him, although he knew that his brothers were better than he was, he still appointed him, being the firstborn, to be the king.

Later on, Jehoshaphat yoked up with another king and got a big navy together to go off on some foreign expedition. God was so upset with Jehoshaphat this time, it sent a mighty storm. It didn't just rock the boat, it destroyed the whole outfit.

I don't know if you ever learned, but you can't compromise without a price. Because even there, it's fearful to fall into the hands of a living God. We can think of Judas Iscariot.

He was one of the twelve, and apparently none of them suspected anything. How he got away with this, I don't know. He became the treasurer of the group, and there's no doubt from what the Scripture tells us, he kept stealing from the group and carried on as if there was no God in the skies at all.

Finally, when he saw that Christ was condemned, he betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. I don't think he really thought that Jesus would be hurt by anybody because he'd seen him walk on the water and heal sick people and raise the dead. But when he saw that Christ was condemned, he repented.

But it was too late in his case. And remember, he tried to take his life. Apparently he hung himself.

The rope broke. He fell on some rocks. His bowels gushed out, it says.

But there's a verse in the Psalms that tells us something of Judas Iscariot. And one of the phrases there is, let his praise, let his prayer become sin. And there's no doubt it was.

His children were to become fatherless and his wife a widow. So we're told in the Psalms. I don't know if you understood that.

But he certainly had a very poor end. It could have been different. It wasn't.

Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus destroyed these two larger cities along with Admah and Zabong, two smaller cities in the same plain. And they all died in a violent way.

Some kind of a meteor or something tearing down from the heavens and destroying the whole area. And yet Jesus said, it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for any city that doesn't repent of their sins and believe the gospel. He said that.

I'm sure he meant that also. You know, angels sin. Apparently a third of the angels sinned against God.

It says that God charged His angels with sin. He charged them. He didn't find the heavens clean because of them.

What did He do? Did He forgive them? We don't know anything about the workings of Adam, but we know this. That they are now under judgment in chains of darkness until the judgment day. Angels were charged with folly.

Balaam? You know, Balaam is a very hard person to understand. He had a number of meetings with God. And by that I mean he and God spoke together on a number of occasions.

And here was his prayer. He was talking about the righteous and he said, Let my last end be like His. That was a prayer he made.

How did he die? His last end. He died on the end of a sword in the hand of a Jew some years later. He never made it.

Although he had these meetings with God, he was never truly a believer as he might have been. He loved, it says, the wages of unrighteousness. Living a sinful life had paid him a lot of money.

That's all he was concerned about or interested in. I'm sure many have the same problem today. Somebody said, You can't die the death of the righteous unless you live the life of the righteous.

Otherwise you will not die that way. He didn't. In spite of his prayer, he didn't do that.

The Syrian king who mocked God, one night, the hand of God swept in and 185,000 of his soldiers died that night. Nobody was there killing them. The angel of God did the job, I guess.

The hand of God manifests. He awakens in the morning. Not only 185,000, but all his chief military men died that night.

When he got home, he went to the house of Nisroch, his God, I suppose, to ask some questions. Hey, what happened? Where were you? How did all my men die? I don't suppose he knew it was the hand of God. He had mocked God.

It seems like a heavy price to pay. But remember our text. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Galatians 5, 7 and 8 We are not to be mocked. Be not mocked, because God avenges us if we do that. You can't play around with God.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

You sow sparingly, that's in giving, Paul said. You reap sparingly. You sow bountifully, you reap bountifully.

But this is an axiom that applies to all of life. You get what you sow. Spiritually speaking, you want more of God, He may want you to give more of yourself to Him.

We reap what we sow, is what the Bible tells there in Galatians chapter 5. So do not be deceived, it says. God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, you'll reap.

If you sow to the flesh, you'll reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you'll reap life everlasting. And that's the way it is.

And God wants us to understand. Psalm 917 The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the people that forget God. All the people that what? All the people that forget God.

Give God no time. Have no real interest in God. Interest in money, prestige, power, whatever.

You forget God, you'll pay a heavy price. All those who forget God and all the wicked, they're linked together. And the answer God gives them is simply hell.

The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations, all the people that forget God. That's happening today. People are asking questions.

Why are so many people dying in hurricanes and floods and mudslides and fires and all the rest of it? God is unhappy with the way we're living, the things we're thinking, the things we're doing, the things we're not doing. Doing our own thing. The Bible says, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things, that is, the things necessary to life, shall be added unto you.

But seek first, not last, not a sidetrack, but the main track, for God. And there's no way people like any of us can ever get around the statement of our text. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.

We know He's merciful. God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love over us, He loved us. He sent Christ.

And having loved His own in the world, Jesus Christ loved them to the end. Although the end was a cross. And even thinking of the death of Jesus on the cross should help us to understand the greatness, the power of God, the judgment of God against sin.

There was no other way. Calvary was not dreamed up by some religious people. Nobody even understood when He died on the cross why He was there.

Jesus had told them. They hadn't listened. They hadn't gotten it somehow.

They witnessed it. With us fully understanding He was the Lamb of God who was slain in the mind of God from the foundation of the world. Long before He died on the cross, He knew, and God His Father knew, He would have to do this because of the sins of human beings on the earth that God had created you and me and the rest.

Now, we know Jesus paid an awful price, not just the physical side of dying on the cross, but the fact for some time He was separated from God. My God, my God, He cried. Why have you forsaken Me? It says they all forsook Him and fled.

The disciples, they did. But God His Father, and why would this be so? Because God is a pure horizon to behold evil. And Jesus Christ was made the righteousness of God, of course, on our behalf.

But when He died on the cross, He was made Him to be sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. So when Jesus died, He carried on His shoulders the sins of the world, all of them, all of yours, all of mine. He did that freely.

He loved us. He loves us still. We can never doubt the love of God, no matter what happens in our personal life or family life or church, whatever.

God is behind it. God is with us. He goes before us.

When He puts forth His sheep, He goes before. You can't get into a situation, no matter how bad it is, that Christ doesn't know about. When He puts forth His sheep, He goes before.

He does that for us to prepare things so we never go into any situation unaided, unworthy, or we can unworthy, but Christ remained worthy His death on our behalf. You know, when you think of it, the first time I understood this as a young person, I really couldn't get it. The reason I didn't get it was because I didn't think I was a sinner.

I thought I was a pretty good guy. Came from a good family. I didn't feel a way to sin at all until I saw what Christ had done in a booklet I was reading.

Because the booklet challenged me greatly at the end by asking this question. Saying, first of all, you're a sinner. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

As a sinner, have you ever recognized your sin before God? And, of course, I never have. He made me feel it. The Spirit of God did.

And I repented. Fell on my knees in a little house in Winnipeg, where I live with my parents, and asked Jesus to come into my heart. I went up those stairs about 14 at a time.

I may have a little trouble now, but that's a different story. Anyway, God is so good, so great, but it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Many times Christians fall into His hands.

They don't lose their salvation, but they certainly lose their usefulness. He can't use them because they're not clean. The Bible says, Be you clean who bear the vessels of the Lord.

We've got to be clean through the blood of Christ. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Thank God. From all sin. I say it again.

Thank God. Jesus' Calvary paid it all. Jesus paid it all.

All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

So He did. I can never forget. It seems like yesterday.

It's a lot longer than that. It seems like yesterday when after I prayed I had this peace in my heart. And I knew I was a child of God's.

How wonderful, how can it be that Jesus Christ should die for me? But Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain.

He washed it white as snow. And as Christians we should not be afraid of this text in Hebrews chapter 10. But we need to know it's there.

And God is waiting for Christians to obey Him, to walk in His ways, to not just read the Bible a lot, but to obey it. That's the hard part. And we've mentioned, I think, from this pulpit before of Christians in a certain area in Mexico.

They will not read the Bible any further than they are willing to obey. So if they read something they know they're not doing that. They will not read any further in the Bible until they're doing that.

And the missionaries working in the area say they have constant revival. It's every day of the year, year after year. This is how they live.

I can understand that. One of the things God said to Jeremiah, to Israel, was this. He said, you know, I didn't ask you, when I brought you out of Egypt, I didn't ask you to offer sacrifices.

I said simply, obey my voice. And they disobeyed his voice. They've had a very tragic history, as all of us know.

Thank God for some, for upon Christ, for the nation as a whole. If you become a Christian in the land of Israel, you're no longer considered to be a Jew. You're a Christian.

You can't be a Jew. There's been legal battles over this. I don't know how it's turning out.

But that's how they see it. So blind to their own Messiah when he came. So there is something worse than death.

If I'm not a Christian, there's something worse than death. It says so in the text we read of how much sorer punishment they've been talking about death in the context. There's something, I say again, worse than death.

That is to die without Christ and to expect to make it because you lived a good life. That's not the way. Remember what God told us through James.

If you keep the whole law of God and yet offend, that is offend God, in one point, then you are guilty of everything, of breaking every command God ever gave. That's how he sees it. He's told us that in the Bible.

We need to understand that. Keep the whole law, offend in one point, you're guilty of breaking the whole law of God. And remember, it's not by works of righteousness which we have done, as the Bible says.

But according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, that's new life from God, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which is shed on us abundantly, the marginal reading says richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior. And righteousness in the final analysis and in the first analysis is a gift from God. Romans 3 tells us that the righteousness of God which is unto all and upon all them that believe.

It's a gift from God. It's called that in Romans chapter 5. The gift of righteousness is his righteousness. He's called in the Old Testament, the Lord, our righteousness.

There's no righteousness in me. It's all in Christ. And he offers us through the gospel his righteousness put to my account to the glory of God.

Have I been offending God? Am I walking in ways that displease His Spirit? It's time to end it. No matter what God does to us, there's always a reason for it. It's never a fault on God's side.

It never has been. And it never will be. The Lord, our righteousness.

You cannot charge God with sin. If we continue to sin then after we've received the gospel, that's where the problem is. Don't be satisfied with sin, no matter what kind it is.

Don't be satisfied. Are there people you need to make things right with? Do it as soon as you can. Don't wait.

Do it as soon as you can. Go to the brother or sister you've offended. Ask their forgiveness.

God will guide you. But do pray that prayer. Search me, O God.

And know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts.

And see if there be any wickedness, any sin in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. If you pray that prayer from your heart, and you almost need to get a loan somewhere to do that, just you and God.

Ask Him honestly to search your heart. I know that right now, some of you are too afraid to do that. You're afraid of what God might say.

He may talk to you about your pride. About people you've wronged somewhere. About money you need to pay somewhere.

Or whatever it is. Promising to pray for people and then not doing it. Whatever we've done, seek forgiveness.

That's never a problem when we seek His face. But dear people, you can't search your own heart. I think in Lamentations, there's a verse that says, we can search and try our ways.

But we don't go far enough. We go just as far as it pleases us. Search me, O God.

And know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts.

See if there be any wicked way in me. Nobody who prays that prayer and really means it, will ever be disappointed by God. Father, thank You for this day, beautiful songs we sing.

For me, this was in this way, Lord God, and two sides of God. You're always a loving, kind, forgiving God. But often we do things, we don't repent of them, we don't think of them, we don't ask forgiveness.

So it doesn't help us that You're a forgiving God when we don't repent and ask forgiveness. Father, Paul said, as we know, that he preached two things. He preached more than that, but he mentions two together.

Repentance towards You, dear God. And then forgiveness through Christ. Faith toward Christ.

So bless this congregation as You have been. Work in every heart deeply. Help us to remember we carry Your name.

Others are watching us. Our children are watching. Our neighbors and others.

Dear God, help us to be honest. Let us not forget what we heard this morning. Lord God, help us to get alone somewhere today.

To cry to God. To cry to You. And Father, we know that Your eyes are on the righteous and Your ears are open unto their prayers.

And if you've never received Christ, any of you in the attitude of prayer this moment, receive Him now. Right where you sit, you can call upon Christ. The man on the cross next to Christ, he just prayed, Lord, remember me.

But at the same context, he was confessing that he was a guilty person. And that's essential. Thank You, Lord, for this time together.

We commend each other to Your care. Lord, O God, continue to guide, continue to bless and glorify Your name. Through Jesus, through Jesus, Your Son, in His name we pray.

Amen.

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