

Fear and Folly

by James Smith

The sermon emphasizes the destructive nature of sin, leading to fear and folly, while offering hope through Jesus as the ultimate refuge for sinners.

Scripture: Genesis 3:10, Job 34:22, Isaiah 28:17, Isaiah 32:2, Jeremiah 23:24, Amos 9:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, Revelation 6:16-17

Topics: "Sin And Guilt", "Salvation In Christ"

Description

James Smith preaches on the consequences of sin as seen in Adam's fear and folly after disobeying God in the Garden of Eden. Sin leads to guilt, fear, and ultimately folly, causing individuals to feel exposed, embarrassed, alarmed, and without excuse before God. However, there is hope in Jesus Christ, who serves as the ultimate hiding place for sinners, providing cleansing, righteousness, eternal life, and freedom from guilt and fear. Those who do not seek refuge in Christ face the wrath of God and the dreadful consequences of trying to hide from Him.

Transcript

"And Adam said: I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself!" Genesis 3:10

Sin is the source of both fear and folly .

Sin produces guilt ;

guilt fills with fear ; and

fear betrays into folly .

Every sinner therefore is called a fool in God's Word. All this we see in our first father, Adam. He had loved God as his father, conversed familiarly with him as his friend, and found his presence to be exquisitely delightful. He had no idea of being alarmed at the presence of God, or of being terrified by hearing his voice. He had rather listened to it with the deepest interest, had felt profound reverence, had glowed with holy love, and had been wrought up into a divine rapture while his Maker condescended to hold converse with him. Every thought of God had been pleasant, every view of his Creator had been delightful.

But now, he had new conceptions of God , and new and painful feelings sprang up towards him. He thought of his God as a Judge -- a Judge who would pronounce sentence upon him, and deliver him over to the tormentors. Oh, fearful change! Oh, bitter fruit of sin!

He felt guilty , he had violated his Creator's law. He had merited his just wrath. He could only expect the fulfillment of the sentence, "You shall surely die!"

What was meant by death? He knew not. He had never seen death. He could not guess what was intended by it exactly. No doubt it was something terrible -- very terrible.

He felt embarrassed . He knew not what to do, or which way to take. His minutes were hours. His life became irksome. Heavy sighs escaped him. Deep groans were heard in his soul.

He was alarmed . What was about to happen? What would be his doom? He felt that he was exposed to all that was contained in the divine threatening. But what was that?

He felt also that he was inexcusable . He had no cloak for his sin. He was blame-worthy. He deserved to suffer, and he saw no way of escape.

This is just how every sinner will feel, sooner or later:

guilty,

embarrassed,

alarmed,

exposed to the wrath of God,

without excuse!

All this springing from his own fault -- his own sin!

He was

AFRAID . What made him so?

He was naked . Not merely his body -- but his soul was naked. His righteousness was gone. That righteousness had been to him as a robe , and as a diadem. It made him bold, fearless, confident. It was, like suitable clothing -- his defense, his comfort, and his ornament. But it was gone! He had willfully cast it away -- and he was naked. He felt defenseless, miserable, and degraded.

In this state , with such feelings -- he must meet, face, and account for his conduct to his Maker. Oh, sorry plight to be in! Well may he feel afraid.

But so will every lost sinner. It is a fearful thing to appear naked before God . A naked soul, meeting the piercing glance of God's eye, which is as a flame of fire -- must be most terrible! To feel exposed to the eye of God, ashamed to be seen -- how painful!

Reader, you may have to appear naked before God! What if you should? If you die in your sins -- you must!

Think of standing naked before the Heavenly multitudes!

Think of standing naked before an assembled world!

This is bad enough. But to stand naked before God's eye -- what, oh, what will that be!

He heard his Maker in the garden, he dreaded his presence; and, therefore, instead of going forth to meet him and converse with him as before -- he was filled with fear , and hid himself among the trees of the garden!

What

FOLLY -- to think of hiding himself from the omniscient eye of God, behind the foliage of the shrubs, or the trunk of a tree.

"I hid myself." What pride ! What an endeavor to seem to be what he was not. He did not meditate a defense -- but, like a guilty coward , he fled! He did not sue for, or expect a pardon-for he had never heard of mercy , sweet mercy! He did not think of employing a plea -- what could he plead? He felt . . .

that his sin was great;

that his state was dangerous;

that his prospects were gloomy;

and that his destiny was a secret.

What would become of him?

His was the sin of a world . It was . . .

the turning of a world against God,

the alienating a world from God,

The exposing a world to the wrath of God!

O Adam, what, what have you done?

Well, well might he be afraid!

The crown of glory had fallen from his head;

the robe of beauty was torn from his body;

confidence and courage had fled from his heart;

guilt and fear had taken possession of his breast.

What a fearful change!

What a terrible wreck!

And this is the state , the condition of every unconverted man!

He is naked before God!

Naked by his own fault!

Naked to his eternal shame!

But is there no hope? Blessed be God -- there is! Is there no possibility of being hidden from the eye of justice , and of being once more clothed before God? Yes, yes, there is! "Behold, I bring you good news, glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." There is no ground for despondency , nor cause to fear ; no occasion to try to hide yourself, either behind trees, or under rocks and mountains.

God will hide those who do not attempt to hide from him. He has provided a hiding-place for sinners, and that hiding-place is his own beloved Son. All other hiding-places shall be destroyed, as it is written, "I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding-place!" Isaiah 28:17

Only one shelter remains, "A man shall be a hiding-place!" (Isaiah 32:2.) That man is Jesus -- the spotless Lamb of God. This is the Stronghold -- to which the prisoners of hope are directed. This is the Strong Tower -- into which we may run and be safe. In Jesus there is no condemnation . In Jesus the sinner finds all that he needs !

His filthy nature will be cleansed, in purifying blood.

His naked soul will be clothed with righteousness divine.

A title to eternal life will be given him.

A fitness for life will be wrought in him.

All guilt will be removed from the conscience.

All slavish fear will be chased from the heart.

He will neither be afraid nor ashamed to appear before God.

Paradise was lost by sin; but Heaven is gained, by faith in Jesus. O blessed, thrice blessed hiding - place for a sinner!

Are you, reader, in this hiding-place ?

In Christ -- every blessing is yours.

Out of Christ -- the wrath of God abides on you.

Many, it is to be feared, will yet be as foolish as Adam was. They will try to hide themselves from God, or at least to cover and conceal their nakedness by some fig-leaves of their own. But "There is no darkness, no deep darkness, where evildoers can hide themselves!" Job 34:22.

It will be all in vain to cry "to the mountains and the rocks -- Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Revelation 6:16.

If you are not hiding yourself in Christ, God puts to you this solemn question, "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24.

And all who attempt to hide from God, instead of taking refuge in the hiding-place provided by God, are thus solemnly threatened, "Even if they dig down into Hell -- I will reach down and pull them up. Even if they climb up into the heavens -- I will bring them down. Even if they hide at the very top of Mount Carmel -- I will search them out and capture them. Even if they hide at the bottom of the ocean, I will send the sea serpent after them to bite them!" Amos 9:2-3

It will indeed be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Before his face, so solemn is his glory, that Heaven and earth will be ready to flee away. And then his coming will be so dreadful -- not like when he came to Adam -- in the cool of the day, calm, pitiful, and full of love. No! "The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power!"

Lost sinner! The storm is gathering, the distant thunder is rolling, the lightnings begin to flash! To the refuge -- to the refuge -- to the hiding-place without delay! Soon Almighty God will rain down snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest. Soon you will see the great white throne fixed, and will be summoned to appear before it, for the day of vengeance is in his heart! Think, O think of one passage, which will soon be a fearful reality to you, "The great day of His wrath has come! And who is able to stand?"

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