

Where Is the Fear of God

by Kevin Bruce

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing God, highlighting the consequences of not fearing Him and the need for revival in the church.

Duration: 58:00

Scripture: Psalm 89:7, Jeremiah 2:19, Romans 3:18

Topics: "Fear Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the book of Judges and how each generation became progressively worse in their behavior. Despite God's grace and blessings, the people abused them because they lacked the fear of God. The speaker highlights the tragic verse in Judges that states, 'Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.' This philosophy of doing whatever makes oneself happy is prevalent in today's world and is a form of humanism. The speaker emphasizes the need for the people of God to return to the fear of God and rebuild the altar before they can experience true happiness and fulfillment.

Transcript

If you turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 18, I believe the Lord has a story for us to understand what happens when the fear of the Lord is not amongst His people. As you're turning, I wanted to read this Psalm to you, it's Psalm 89.7. It says, God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him. This is our God.

It says, God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints. That's us. We're assembled here together.

We worship Him. But do we fear Him? Do we fear God? Do we fear His presence? Not because of judgment, but because of His glory and because of His power. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.

Our God reveals Himself throughout Scripture, through the totality of the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. He reveals Himself as a loving God. He reveals Himself as a holy God.

He reveals Himself as a merciful God, and as a compassionate God, and as a kind God, that He draws us to repentance in those ways. But He also reveals Himself to us. He's chosen to reveal Himself to us from the pages of His Word, from the depths of His heart, as a God of wrath, as a God who avenges sin, as a

God who is jealous for His people when they don't fear Him, as a God who is jealous for His people when we depart from Him.

And above all, He reveals Himself as a God who is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints. And if we only take the things that we like, that God has revealed Himself as, and we only walk in those things, and we only walk in those truths, and we only adapt those concepts into our hearts, we've done nothing more than make a God in our own image. We've done nothing more than make a God that we want after our own likeness.

It's nothing more than the philosophies of men, the doctrine of humanism, the doctrine of liberalism, making a God into our own likeness, a God that will be only concerned about our happiness. But the Word of God says that we were not made so that we might walk in happiness, but we exist for God's glory. God is more interested in our holiness than He is in our happiness.

And what happens is when we reject, and when we resist, and when we don't walk in the things that God chooses to reveal Himself to us, when we only take part of what God has said about Himself, we have a skewed view of who our God is. And the Lord wants to express His heart to His people. The Lord wants to reveal Himself to His people.

The Lord wants to retain the place of honor and of glory that has always been His. He wants to hold the supremacy in our hearts and in our lives. He wants to be the pre-eminent One, for He alone is worthy to hold that place in our lives.

And He will not allow anything to contend with Him. In 1 Kings chapter 18, we see a situation that is very similar to what has gone on in our day. There's a wicked king named Ahab who has led the people of God into idolatry.

A wicked king who has not only walked in his own ways, not fearing the Lord, but he's led the people of God away from God. And God wanted to move His people back to Him. And in order to do that, God called a drought on the land.

It wasn't a natural drought, it was a supernatural drought. And He spoke it through the prophet Elijah, except at My word there will be drought on the land. And for three years this drought consumed the land.

The harvests were bleak. The Spirit of God seemed to be nowhere. There was no rain on the land.

There was no abundance on the land. There was no prosperity in the land. And this drought consumed the people.

But what did the people do? They didn't seek God. They didn't cry out to God for rain. They didn't cry out to God in repentance.

It says that they continued to worship this God named Baal. They worshipped this God on the high places where God was meant to be glorified, where God was meant to be worshipped. They worshipped this false God named Baal.

And this false God was a God that was meant to bring fertility, a God that was meant to bring rain and abundance and prosperity. Instead of seeking the God of heaven who controls the rain of heaven, they sought this false God. And they thought, oh, if we could just seek this God, He'll restore the drought.

But they didn't realize that it was a supernatural drought. They didn't realize that only the God of heaven could restore. And so after three years, the word of the Lord came to Elijah.

And He said, go up, go speak to Ahab. Go tell Ahab I'm going to send rain on the earth. But there was something that happened, had to happen first.

There was something that had to take place before God's rain could come, before the drought could be ended. Elijah called all the prophets of Baal, all the prophets that ate at Jezebel's table. And he said, meet me on Mount Carmel.

You assemble on your side. I'll assemble by myself with the Lord. You take a bowl and you put it on your altar and I'll take a bowl and I'll put it on my altar.

And whatever God answers by fire, behold, he is God. He is God, the God that answers by fire. And the people said, okay, we like that idea.

That's a good idea. We'll do it. And all day long, the prophets of Baal called upon their God.

They cut themselves. Nothing happened. It says that no one answered.

No one responded to their cries because their God was not God. Their God could not answer by fire. And then Elijah called the people to him.

He said, come near to me, O children of Israel. And in verse 30, it says, so all the people came near to him and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. In the presence of the people, Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

This altar represented a place that God should have been worshipped, a place that God should have been glorified. But this altar was lying in ruins. It was broken down.

It was in rubble. The people have been worshipping God on their own altars, the God of fertility, the God of the false God of rain, and nothing happened. But Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord in the presence of the people.

And I believe that the word that the Lord has for us is that in the church of Jesus Christ, our bride, this body, the body at large in the world, the broken altar represents the fear of God. God's people do not fear him. God's people do not tremble at his presence.

The fear of God has departed. And just as the fear of God had departed from this people, and there was drought, and there was no rain, and the gods did not answer by fire, I believe that the church at large is not experiencing revival. It's not experiencing the reign of God's blessing.

It's not experiencing the fire of God, because the fear of God still lies in ruins. And God is calling us, repair my altar. Repair my altar.

Begin to fear me. Begin to fear me. For when we fear God, when we fear the Lord, the altar is rebuilt.

What happened after this? Elijah had them douse the altar and the sacrifice with water three times to show that it was not the hands of men that could do this thing. And he said, hear me, oh God. Hear me.

Answer by fire. And it says the fire of God descended. The fire of confirmation upon the altar being rebuilt.

The fire of confirmation that he alone is God, and greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints. The fire of God descended, and it consumed the sacrifice, and it consumed the altar, and it consumed the water in the trough, and it even licked up the dirt. It blew away all the chaff and all the people.

The fire of God descended. And God wants to do that in our lives. God wants to do that in our midst.

But before that can happen, the altar must be rebuilt. The people of God have to be returned back to the fear of God. Turn with me to the last verse in the book of Judges.

It's just a few books left. Joshua, Judges. The last verse in the book of Judges.

A very similar situation was going on. If you're not familiar with the history of the book of Judges, God had been insulating this nation to go before him to receive the law of God, to ultimately prepare the way for the Messiah, to be a light to the Gentiles, to speak forth the word of God, to be a city on a hill, to proclaim his name. But instead of doing that, they drew away from the Lord.

They ceased to fear God, and they walked in idolatry. And each generation was more consecutively wicked than the previous one. And God had to raise up deliverers to set the people free.

When they were caught up in iniquity, when they were caught up in sin, they cried out to God and said, Lord, help us, deliver us. We're under bondage, we're under tyranny, help us. And God would deliver them.

He would show great grace, great mercy, great deliverance, for that is who their God was, and that is who our God is. But each time the Lord would restore them to himself, it wasn't long before they would begin to err in their hearts and begin to depart from the Lord. The fear of God departed from them, and no sooner was it that they had prosperity, and that they had just the blessings of the Lord, that the fear of God departed.

And each generation was consecutively worse, and worse, and worse, and worse. And the people abused God's grace, and the people abused God's blessing. Because the grace of God will always be abused when it's not coupled by the fear of God.

The grace of God will always be taken advantage of when the fear of God is not there to hold it, and to keep it, and to complete it. And so in the last book of the verse of Judges, the last verse in the book of Judges, we see a tragic thing, one of the most tragic verses in all of the Bible. It says, in those days there was no king in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Despite all the blessings, despite all the deliverances, despite God's great grace upon this people, everyone still did what was right in his own eyes.

Is that not the philosophy of the world today? Is that not the philosophy of humanism? Do whatever you need to make yourself happy. The ends justify the means. Do what is right in your own eyes.

And that is what took place in the people. The psalmist had an insight, David, in Psalm 36.1. You don't have to turn there. The God gave him an insight into what was going on.

How could this be? Why do people just continue following in wickedness? Why do people continue to sin against the Lord and depart from their God when they continually experience his grace, when they

continually experience his blessing? Why is that? In Psalm 36.1 it says, an oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked. Something tells me in my heart when I see this happen. This is the answer that God gave him.

It's because there is no fear of God before his eyes. There is no fear of God before his eyes. Where is the fear of God? Where is the fear of God in his people? The Holy Spirit took this word and he spoke it loud and clear to all of mankind in the book of Romans.

In the book of Romans chapter 3, the Holy Spirit has all the world in his courtroom. Both Jews and Greeks charged under sin, it says. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

That's the Jews, that's the Greeks, that's you and me, that's the Gentiles, that's all the people of God, all standing before God in his courtroom. And the Holy Spirit brings us all in and he lays out accusation after accusation, indictment after indictment against the world so that no man could justify himself before God, so that no man could be found to be righteous in his own eyes. And the Holy Spirit lists the offenses that the people that God has created have committed against him.

And he says there is none righteous, no not one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God.

They have all turned aside. They have all together become unprofitable. There is none who does good, no not one.

Their throat is an open tomb. With their tongues they have practiced deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed innocent blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways and the way of peace they have not known. God wants to seal in the people.

God wants to speak to our hearts. We cannot be righteous before him. He wants all the world to become guilty before him so that all the world will cry out for repentance.

But any good prosecuting attorney knows that you have to save your final indictment, your final accusation for last, as the final nail in the coffin. And the Holy Spirit uses the next verse to seal man's fate, to seal against man our sin. In verse 18 of Romans chapter 3 he says, there is no fear of God before their eyes.

All the world, all of mankind, there is no fear of God before their eyes. Have you ever looked into someone's eyes? You just know, does not walk with God, does not fear God. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

There is no fear of God before their eyes. And maybe you're thinking, well that's just speaking of of man at large. Maybe you're just speaking about man in general.

But we hear statistics. We hear things about the church of Jesus Christ. We hear about sin coming into the church.

We see the philosophies of this world coming into the church. We see humanism. We see liberalism.

We see pastors falling. We see congregations being divided. We see pastors embezzling money.

We see pastors falling into fornication and adultery and committing gross wickedness. Members of the congregation causing division. And one time I was in prayer and I said, Lord what is going on with the body of Christ? What is going on with your people? Why is it that your people seems so much like the world? Why is it that the sin of the world seems to be on the sin of on the church? Why isn't there a separation? Why isn't there a distinction when you've called us to holiness? What has happened to God? And I believe he spoke to my heart and said, it's no different with my people.

Yes, I spoke that against all of mankind in Romans chapter 3. But my church, my bride, my body, it has gotten so bad that that verse is now true of them. That verse is now true of my people. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

There's no fear of God among the nations. There's no fear of God among countries. There's no fear of God among the cities that we live in.

There's no fear of God among individual people. Sin runs rampant because of the absence of the fear of God. When the fear of God is absent, sin is present.

When the fear of God is present, sin is absent. God's fear always accompanies him. God cannot be in a place and his fear not accompany him.

If the fear of God is present, God is present. But if his fear is absent, God is absent. There are churches in this world, there are churches in this country, there are churches in this nation where the pastors will not address sin, where the pastors will not speak about heaven and hell and the things of eternity.

And why is that? It's because there is no fear before their eyes. They're not concerned with the people's souls. They're not concerned with the people's hearts.

They're concerned about numbers. They're concerned about losing people. They're concerned about their church and their financial endeavors.

They are not concerned about warning people to flee from the wrath to come. And they're willing to do that because there is no fear of God before their eyes. And that has been spreading.

Lukewarmness has been spreading into God's church and into God's bride and into God's house. Jesus flipped tables because of things like this. When the people of God could not receive the heart of God, when man intervened in the place of God and did not allow the people of God to hear his voice, Jesus came in and cleansed the temple.

And if Jesus were to come back and walk among us, I believe he would claim the pulpit. He would begin to teach the fear of the Lord. The Bible says that in Jesus, his delight was in the fear of the Lord.

If you want to know how God feels about when the fear of God is absent from the heart of his people, you can hear exactly what God's heart is in Jeremiah 2 19. It says your own wickedness will correct you and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see, know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God.

It is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God and the fear of me is not in you. That's how God feels about it when we do not fear him. He says it's evil and our lives will become bitter.

It is absolutely bitter when the fear of God is not on our lives. Our lives are bitter when the fear of God is not in his church. The church is bitter and when the fear of God, which is not in the world, this world is bitter.

This world is devoid of God and it's because the fear of God is not in this world, but it is not supposed to be so amongst his church. It is not supposed to be so among his people. The fear of God is what is meant to separate us and sanctify us and call us out and identify us all throughout the word of God, all throughout the word of God, consistently from Genesis to Revelation.

The people of God were separate and distinct from the world for this one reason, they feared God. When Paul even addressed the people of Israel in the book of Acts, he said, men of Israel and you who fear God, it was a statement, it was a purpose, it was a way of identifying. Can we truly say we are identified with God because we fear him? Are we identified with God because of what we want him to do in our lives? Because of the blessing that we want him to give us? Because of the happiness we want him to bring? Or can we receive that he is jealous for his glory and he wants us to fear him? In the book of Proverbs, there's a testimony that speaks loud and clear about the testimony, the epitaph of the people's lives in the Bible who did not fear God.

It says Proverbs 129, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, did not choose the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a choice. It's a righteous choice.

It's a holy choice. It's a choice that the people of God must make or they will suffer the consequences of knowing that evil or knowing that bitterness. The fear of God is not meant to bring evil or bitterness.

The fear of God is meant to bring life and blessing. Just a few people who did not walk in the fear of God. A few people who did not choose the fear of God.

Cain murdered his brother way back at the beginning of time because he did not fear the Lord. Cain murdered his brother because he did not fear the Lord. Lot's wife cast longing eyes towards Sodom.

In the midst of deliverance, she could not depart from her sin. In the midst of deliverance, she still wanted Sodom and Gomorrah because she did not fear God. She cast longing eyes.

How many of us come and we spend time at the church in the morning? We lay our lives and our sin upon the altar, but before we even reach Monday morning, we're already casting longing eyes upon the things that God is wanting to deliver us from. Pharaoh did not fear God. He hardened his heart.

He did not choose the fear of the Lord. He hardened his heart. He ordered the execution of babies.

He ordered the execution of the children of Israel's babies because he did not fear the Lord. Samson did not fear the Lord. He was one of those deliverers in the book of Judges.

He was one of those deliverers that God raised up with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. With one hand, he slayed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey, but it wasn't moments later before he took that same hand and he defiled his body by sticking it into a carcass of a lion to dip in honey. He didn't fear God.

God had told him, you cannot touch a dead thing. You cannot lie with the harlot. Samson, what are you doing? You just were used by God and now you're lying with the harlot.

Now you're defiling your body. You're abusing my grace because you do not fear God. Saul, made king, raised up by the Lord in a mighty way.

The Lord was moving on his life, but he got arrogant. I used to think that pride was the root of all sin, but God has been revealing to me it's the absence of the fear of God. Just like we saw in Romans 3.18, the absence of the fear of God in our lives leads to pride, leads to haughtiness, leads to destruction.

Saul tried to be priest and king. That right is reserved alone for the Lord Jesus Christ. He tried to burn incense as priest.

God said, I'm removing you. I'm giving your kingdom to someone who is better than you. You do not fear me.

But David, in the contrary, feared the Lord. He feared the Lord. He wrote in 2 Samuel that God showed him he had to rule in the fear of God.

Judas did not fear God. How do you fear God when you dip your bread with him in communion at Passover? When you have sweet fellowship with him, when you follow God, when you see his miracles, when you're used mightily of him, and after dipping his bread with communion with the Lord, he went his own way. He departed with the money box and immediately Satan entered him.

Satan had his way because he did not fear God. How many of us dip our bread with communion with the Lord and we experience that communion with God on Sunday mornings, but the rest of the week we let Satan have his way in our lives because we do not fear God. Ananias and Sapphira, a New Testament example.

They didn't fear God. They lied to the Holy Spirit. They lied to God.

They brought a reproach on the church. And in lying, in lying to the Holy Spirit, the Lord struck them. The Lord allowed there to be a purging, a cleansing from his church, a cleansing in his body.

They did not fear the Lord, but on the contrary, the public judgment and execution and righteousness against sin caused the fear of the Lord to come upon the early church. And that's the way it's supposed to be. When we see sin judged righteously, for we have a God who avenges sin, yes, we receive forgiveness from the Lord.

But in that same verse in the Psalms, it says, your forgiveness is with you that you may be feared. Forgiveness before the Lord does not bring a flippant attitude. It brings fearful expectation that we would walk in that sin again.

It brings fear and trembling into our hearts that we would not turn from God, that we would not walk in that sin again. If someone is relieved from a mighty crime in the courts of men and the judge shows mercy and lets them go, do they skip on the way out? No, their heart is fearful. They're gracious.

How much more when we're acquitted in God's court? How much more when we receive his forgiveness and grace should our hearts fear before him? On the contrary, people who feared the Lord that the God used. In Genesis chapter 22, we see the heart of God revealed and the reason why he asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac. The reason why God asked Abraham.

God wanted to use Abraham as a father of nations, to be the father of faith. Why was God testing Abraham? Why did God bring him up to that mountain? Why would God do such a thing? God interrupted the sacrifice and he said, do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God.

He didn't say, now I know that you trust me, although fearing God led to trust. He didn't say, now I know that you love me, although fearing God led to Abraham loving him. He did not say, now I know that you have faith in me or that you will obey me because the fear of God leads to these things.

He said, now I know that you fear God. I can entrust this message. I can entrust the seed of my servant to you.

I can entrust the Messiah to come through your family because I know that you fear God. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Noah's life was moved by the fear of God.

The fear of God stirs us to obedience. The spear of God stirs us to respond to the Lord. It was the fear of God that moved Noah.

If Noah didn't fear the Lord, he would not have built the ark. If Noah feared man, the reproaches of man, building this ark in a desert, building the ark when there's never been rain. If Noah didn't fear God and listen to God, you and I wouldn't be here.

But it was the fear of God that moved Noah. And then notice what it says, he prepared an ark for the saving of his household. Noah saved his household by walking in the fear of God.

God wants to rescue the households of the church. God wants to rescue the households of America. And the answer is not found in the courthouse or in the White House.

The answer is in God's house. When we return to the fear of God, when the fear of God is brought back, the fear of God is brought back, that altar is restored. If you want to save your household's men, fear the Lord.

If you want to save your marriages, fear the Lord. Return to the fear of the Lord. Invest the fear of God in the hearts of your children.

You want your children to be saved from this perverse and wicked generation? Invest the fear of God into their hearts. It is a consistent teaching all throughout Genesis and Revelation that the fear of God is something that is to be taught and to be passed on. Come to me, little children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord, David said.

Jesus himself feared the Lord. If anyone was to set an example for what it meant to fear the Lord, it was our Lord Jesus himself. In Isaiah chapter 11, verses two and three, it speaks about how the Spirit of God was on Jesus when he was on this earth.

The fullness of the Spirit, the full manifestation of God's Spirit was on Jesus Christ bodily. It says the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a manifestation of the Spirit of God in our lives.

But next, the next verse, it says the most important thing out of that aspect of the fullness of the Spirit. Isaiah 11, 3, it says, his delight is in the fear of the Lord. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the flesh, on earth, it says that his delight was in the fear of the Lord.

He went to the cross because his delight was in the fear of the Lord. He went to Gethsemane because his delight was in the fear of the Lord. He rose from the dead because his delight was in the fear of the Lord.

He left nothing undone from the Father's will because his delight was in the fear of the Lord. If Jesus's delight was in the fear of the Lord, how much more should our delight be in the fear of the Lord? Oh, that God would give us a heart to delight in the things that he delights in. That the delighting in the fear of the Lord would so quench anything in this world that we're allowing ourselves to delight in, that everything that is frivolous and temporary and not expedient for His glory would pale in comparison to the glory of God and to the fear of the Lord and to His presence in our hearts.

Without the fear of the Lord, Abraham would not have offered Isaac. Without the fear of the Lord, Noah would not have built the ark. Without the fear of the Lord, David would not have ruled in the fear of God and become the type of Christ as king on the throne.

Without the fear of the Lord, Jesus' prayers would not have been heard. It says in Hebrews 5, verse 7, speaking of Christ, who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him, who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear. When He sweat great drops of blood in the garden, He's crying out to God.

The Father heard Him because of His godly fear. If you want your prayers to be heard, oh, embrace the fear of God. Embrace the fear of God in your life.

Don't hate knowledge. Choose the fear of the Lord in your life. Some of you are thinking maybe, how has this happened? Why is it that maybe more recently the fear of God has been a broken altar? How has this come to pass that the fear of God is not amongst the people of God? It happens in many ways.

There are many ways that the fear of God has been strained out of the teaching. The fear of God has been left out. In Dr. Robert Murray's book, *Fearing God*, he's done extensive study, extensive research, and while he attributes it to many things, I believe one of the most fascinating and important yet tragic things that he says is that through the adoption of the philosophies of men, through the adoption of liberalism into the church, through the adoption of worldly thinking, through the adoption of humanism, these things begin to permeate into the seminaries.

And the seminaries cease teaching the fear of God because they start to doubt the relevance of the word of God. They start to doubt the accuracy and the authority of the word of God. And they're more consumed with how to build churches and how to be pastors by vocation and how to have financial prosperity, how to grow.

And if the seminaries produce these pastors that get filtered out into the churches and then the pulpits are absent and void of the fear of God because these pastors have not learned the fear of God, then it begins to spread to the congregation and the fear of God is no longer taught to the people. The fear of God is no longer taught to the people. Then ultimately it goes into our families.

When we don't hear it at church, we don't bring it at home, we don't bring it into our families. Fathers stop fearing God. Mothers stop fearing God.

Children stop fearing God. The youth stop fearing God. This generation stops fearing God because it has not been passed down.

In Jeremiah chapter 5 verse 30 and 31, I believe the Lord speaks prophetically into this scene. It says, An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land. This is the only way to describe what has happened.

An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in our land on our watch. It says, The prophets prophesy falsely. The prophets don't teach the whole counsel of God.

The pastors, the people who are meant to proclaim God's word, the fullness of God's counsel, the fullness of who He is, not just all love, grace, and mercy, but a God of wrath, a God of jealousy, and a God who is greatly to be feared. The prophets prophesy falsely because they fear man. Because they fear man.

In verse 31, it says, And the priests rule by their own power. A great Chinese missionary came to America and visited. And when he went home, people said, What did you think about America? What did you think about the church? He said, It's amazing to see what those Americans and their churches can be like without the Spirit of God.

The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests rule by their own power. The Holy Spirit is not leading the church because there's no fear of God. When the fear of God is absent, God is absent.

His presence is absent. God's presence cannot be accompanied without His fear. But the worst thing of all, the thing that perhaps drives everything, is that it says in verse 31, And my people love to have it so.

My people love to have it this way. And you know what? Churches are being built all around the world because people go and canvas neighborhoods and they say, What do you want in this church? We're getting counsel from the ungodly and the heathen what they want to see in the church. Because the people love to not have the fear of God.

The people love to have priests who rule by their own power. And the people love to have smooth words prophesied to them because it is too heavy and it is too hard. There is no fear of God before our eyes.

What is the fear of God? What is the fear of the Lord? God has been making it very evident and abundantly clear that we need it. But what is it? In Proverbs 8, 13, it says that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

We don't live in a generation where evil is called evil anymore. Wickedness is called good. And good is called wickedness.

It's a good thing to abort a baby, but it's a wicked thing to put your dog on a leash on a tree. Just before Nineveh was judged, just before Nineveh was judged, God had pity on them and He said, They don't even know their right hand from their left. This nation needs a Nineveh-like repentance if God is going to rest you.

I believe the church needs a Nineveh-like repentance before God is going to pour out His Spirit and send His reign. If we don't hate sin, if we don't let the fear of God purge our hearts from what the world says about sin, we will not fear God. The fear of God is to hate evil.

Maybe you're struggling in sin this morning. Maybe there's something you've been fighting for years. I'm telling you, in all honesty and in all truth, it doesn't matter how much you come to church and how much you pray.

It doesn't matter how many growths and confessions you go to. You will not be delivered from your sin until you hate your sin. Until it's wicked before your sight.

Until it's wicked before your sight. The fear of God is to hate sin. Paul came to that conclusion in Romans 7. I do the things I don't want to do.

I don't do the things I know I'm supposed to do. That which I hate, that I do. Thank you, God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.

The fear of God gripped his heart. When Potiphar grabbed Joseph and said, Lie with me. How can I do this wickedness in the sight of my God? He saw it as wickedness.

The fear of God had gripped him. He was able to depart from evil. That's why it says, In mercy and truth, atonement is provided for iniquity.

And by the fear of the Lord, one departs from evil. What else is the fear of the Lord? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

It all begins with the fear of God. It all begins in knowing and walking with God and the fear of God. But when we depart from the fear of God, our lives become evil and bitter.

Proverbs 14, 27 says, The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. A fountain of life. Perhaps that devastates your concept about what the fear of God is.

The fear of God is not meant to be something that brings condemnation and judgment and terror. The fear of God is meant to be a fountain of life in your heart and in your life. The fear of God produces life.

The fear of God does not drive us away from the presence of God. The fear of God keeps us in the presence of God. The fear of God is a fountain of life that we are meant to have in our lives.

I know a brother, a dear brother to me, whose heart has recently been exploding in the fear of the Lord. His household has changed. His life has changed.

His walk with God has changed. His victory over sin has changed. There is a fountain of life in him now because of the fear of God.

And if every Christian apprehended the fear of God the way that God intends it for us to, we would all be walking in that victory. If every Christian apprehended the fear of God the way he wants us to, we would have revival. We would not have to cry out and cut ourselves to the balls because God would quench the drought with His rain.

The fear of God is a fountain of life. In Isaiah 33, verse 6, it says this, Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times and the strength of salvation. The fear of the Lord is His treasure.

His treasure. Not even our treasure. It's God's treasure that He wants to give to His church.

But we keep rejecting it and neglecting it. This is not a new message. This is just a neglected message.

We love the grace of God. And it's a very polished message in the church today. But when the fear of God is not taught with the grace of God, it leads to licentiousness.

It leads to the abuse of His grace. And His grace is no longer precious. It's no longer holy.

It's no longer cherished. It's trampled. The other side of that coin is the fear of God that's dusty, that's lying in ruins, that God wants to resurrect, that God wants to instill into His people.

He wants to give it to us as a treasure. And He wants us to treasure it as a treasure. There are privileges and blessings only for those who fear the Lord that are not spoken of or given to any other people or to any other reason in the whole of the Word of God.

And I wish we had three more hours to go through all of them, but we don't. So I just want to read a couple to you. It says, Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way he chooses.

You want God to teach you. You want God to show you His heart. Fear the Lord.

Malachi 3.16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. So a book of remembrances was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and meditate on His name. God listens in when His fear is spoken about.

When our hearts turn back and people talk about what it is to fear the Lord, it says God listens in. God's ears tune into a conversation on the fear of the Lord, and He writes those things down in the book of remembrances. I want to have conversations like that with you guys.

I want to fellowship in the fear of the Lord. I want to fellowship and meditate on the name of our almighty God. I want my conversations not to fall to the wayside and to be counted as chaff when I stand before Christ.

I want my conversations to go down written in God's book because He listened. I want my conversations to catch the ear of God. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

You really want to get near the heart of God. You really want to know the secret of what God is truly feeling in His heart. Fear the Lord, and the Lord will speak to you, and the Lord will show you how do we receive the fear of the Lord.

It's abundantly clear that God wants us to fear Him, but how do we receive the fear of the Lord? It says in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 32, when God is speaking His new covenant to His people, you see, He instilled His fear in His people all throughout the Old Testament through various external ways. He put His fear in His people's heart when they were at Mount Sinai receiving the law. They were terrified of the presence of God, and they begged Moses to go before them because God's presence was so glorious and God's presence was so mighty.

Thunder and lightnings and power, earthquakes, these things put the fear of God into the people's hearts, and it was a glorious thing. But God says, my people need to fear me, and I want to ensure that my people do not lose the fear. I want to ensure that it's more than just an external fear that they understand with their senses.

It needs to be something that goes into their hearts. And so in the making, in the forming of the new covenant that was given to the nation of Israel, which we are partakers of, it says in Jeremiah 32, then I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever, not temporarily, that they may fear me forever. One heart, one way to fear the Lord for the good of them.

That is why God wants to put His fear in our hearts, not to make our lives miserable, not to make our lives paranoid, but it's to make us good for the good of us and their children after them. And in verse 40 He says, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from doing them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts so they will not depart from me. God wants to put His fear in our hearts.

When the fear of God is in our hearts, that fountain of life springs out. It's not good enough to just know the fear of God in our minds. He wants to put it in our hearts.

How does that happen? How does God put His fear in our hearts? Is it just a divine deposit? If the divine deposit from the fear of God just came into our hearts, every Christian would receive it and walk in it. But it's a choice. It's a response.

It's a relationship. God wants to put His fear in our hearts, but we can reject it. We can resist it.

We can refute it. We can quench it. They hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

So as God's wanting to supernaturally implant His word in your heart and His fear in your heart, don't resist the Lord. Don't resist the message that He's speaking. Don't hate knowledge.

Don't resist the Lord. How else? How else does the Lord put His fear in our hearts? When we hear a message from the Word such as this and the conviction of the Holy Spirit is upon our lives and upon our hearts, and we turn to the Lord in brokenness and conviction and in repentance and turn to God, His fear fills our hearts. Repentance leads to the fear of God, but the fear of God also leads to repentance.

When we walk in the fear of God, we will walk a life of repentance. We will walk in a life of brokenness. We will walk in a life of meekness and humility.

We will be those people that God says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of God. How else does God put His fear into our hearts? When we see judgment on sin privately in our own lives, but also corporately, when the fear of the Lord fell on God's people in the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 5 when Ananias and Sapphira were judged and their lives were literally taken to them to be a testimony of what the church is supposed to be like. Not a place of hypocrisy, but a place of holiness.

It says that the fear of the Lord fell mightily on the people. The fear of the Lord greatly came upon the people's hearts in repentance, in brokenness, in responding to the Lord, in receiving it in our hearts and not rejecting it, in receiving His word. It says in Proverbs 2, then you shall understand the fear of the Lord.

Read the verses before that. It has all these words, receive, know, seek. Find all these words that call us to respond to the fear of the Lord.

God brings it into our hearts, but we must receive it. We must receive it into our hearts. We must allow the Lord to speak to us.

When we're in the presence of God, when God's presence comes down, some of you have experienced the overwhelming power and presence of God in your life. And when His presence was upon you, whether

it was a prayer meeting or a Sunday morning worship service, the presence of God is thick and heavy. The fear of God is in that place.

And you can surrender your heart to His fear. There's almost fear not to talk because God's presence is so powerful. That is the fear of God.

That is the fear being instilled into our hearts. Have you ever been in a prayer meeting that was silent? And the silence was more productive than the prayer? It's because we were not mouthing our petitions to the Lord. It's because God was instilling His fear in His people.

God wants to do that to His people. God wants to instill His fear in our hearts. And then lastly, as we already looked at in Isaiah, it says that the fear of the Lord was part of the manifestation of the Spirit of God upon Jesus.

And when we are walking in the fullness of the Spirit, the fear of the Lord will be in our lives. But when we are not walking in the Spirit and we are walking in the flesh, when we are walking in carnality, we will not fear God. We will fear man.

We will fear having a bad reputation. We will fear our own reproach. We will fear bringing a blight on our own lives.

But walking in the fullness of the fear of God, walking in the Spirit, they go hand in hand. Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord. And that's how the Lord moved in His life.

And that's how the Lord used Him. In Acts 9.31, this is speaking of the New Testament church. It says, Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified.

And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. That is the way that the church is supposed to be. Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

We need the comfort of the Holy Spirit so that we might enter His presence. If we only have the Holy Spirit, but we don't have the fear of the Lord, we will not know His presence. But if we just have the fear of the Lord without the comfort of the Holy Spirit, we might not enter His presence.

But the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit is meant to be the testimony of the New Testament church. And it says, And they were multiplied. God multiplies a people when the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit is upon them.

The fear of God produces holiness in our lives. The fear of God brings us and leads us to holiness. In 2 Corinthians 7-1, it says, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If you want your life to be cleansed from sin, if you find yourself drowning in wickedness, drowning in sin, drowning or snared by the fear of man, walk in the fear of God. How is holiness brought into our lives? How is holiness completed in our lives? How are we made separate from the world as God has called His people to be? How do we allow God to separate the light from the darkness? When He says in Isaiah, You who bear the vessels of the Lord have clean hands and a pure heart.

My people, depart from them. Touch no unclean thing, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. How does this happen? It's by the fear of God in our lives and it's by the fear of God in our hearts.

In Hebrews 12, 28, it says, Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. We are receiving a kingdom. Our lives are not meant to be about our own kingdoms.

Our lives are not meant to be our own works and our own plans. We exist for the glory of God. He says, You're receiving a kingdom.

My kingdom. I am the king of my kingdom and I want to give it to you. And I'm giving you my grace that you might serve me acceptably.

But the manner, the attitude, and the spirit in which I want you to do these things is with reverence and godly fear. He speaks this to his bride. He speaks this to his church.

Going back to the story in 1 Kings, Elijah cried out to the Lord. Elijah cried out to the Lord after laying the sacrifice on the altar. And it says that God answered by fire.

God answered by fire. After that altar, God answered by fire. A fire of confirmation.

A fire of cleansing. A fire that showed that He alone is God and He takes delight and He takes blessing in that restoration, in that message. He didn't want the people to call out to God of Baal any longer.

He says, Cry out to me. Turn your hearts to me. Turn to me and live, says the Lord.

And it says when the fire came down and consumed everything, that Elijah cried out to God. Elijah cried out to God and said, Hear me, O God of Israel. Hear me, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Let this people know that you are turning the hearts of the people back to you. Let this people know that you are turning their hearts back to you. And after that, the people fell down on their faces in the fear of God.

And they said, The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God. And immediately after that happened, they rose up in victory.

And Elijah said, Seize the prophets of Baal. And they were taken and they were executed. When the fear of God comes into our lives, prophets of Baal can be seized and executed.

Sin is meant to be expelled when the fear of God is in our lives. Darkness is expelled when the fear of God is in our lives. And God moves in a powerful way.

And after these things, after the fire came down and the sin and the darkness was expelled, Elijah said, Go and tell Ahab, for I hear the sound, the abundance of rain. I hear the sound of the abundance of rain. Do you guys want to hear the sound of the abundance of rain again in your lives? Do you want to see rain pouring out on your families and on your workplace and on your children? Turn to the Lord with the whole heart in the fear of God.

Let Him expel everything that is not of Him. The last verse I want to share comes from the book of Amos. It says, A lion has roared.

Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken. Who can but prophesy? This is the Lord of glory. This is the lion of the tribe of Judah roaring.

It's not a roar of laughter. It's a roar of a battle cry. He's calling out to His bride to be separate from the world.

He's calling out to His bride to return to the fear of the Lord. The lion of the tribe is roaring over His bride this morning. And He's saying, return to the fear of the Lord.

Who will but fear? It's a fearful thing to hear a lion roar. How much more when our lion roars and calls us back to His name and calls us back to His heart. This word must go forth.

Who can but prophesy? His word must go forth. Don't reject. Don't resist what the Lord wants to do in your hearts.

I know we've gone over. I know we've gone long. But the Lord wants us to respond.

This is not a message that can be dismissed. This is not a message that can be turned aside or stacked upon another Bible study. This word must be responded to.

So I urge you, by the mercies of God, respond to the Lord however He asks you to this morning. However the Lord wants you to respond. Lord Jesus, we come before You.

Lord, we hear Your cry. We hear Your call. And we hear Your roar, O God.

We know You are calling Your heart, Your people to turn back to You. And it is Your heart for Your people to turn back to You, Lord. We hear Your word, Lord.

We want to hear the sound of abundance of rain, Lord. And we know, Lord God, that revival always comes when the fear of God and the holiness of God and the glory of God is given place. And the people of God are filled with Your glory.

And the people of God are filled with Your holiness. O God, give us hearts to fear You. Give us hearts to know You.

Give us hearts to walk with You, Lord. We pray that You would have Your way, Lord Jesus. We pray that Your Spirit would fill this place, God.

I pray even now, Lord Jesus, that You would quench the fiery darts of the evil one that would pluck up this word, that would take it out of our hearts from being sewn deep down. Lord, fight against the enemy with the sword of Your mouth. Pierce the darkness, Lord Jesus.

Let us walk in the light, Lord. Let us return to You. Let us respond to You with our whole hearts, God.

Lord Jesus, please have Your way this morning. Please have Your way in our hearts, Lord. We ask, God.

We ask that You would have Your way. We thank You and we praise You, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray.

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