

Precious in the Sight of God

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing God and obeying Him, and how this leads to true blessing and a life that is precious in His sight.

Scripture: Exodus 18:21, Leviticus 19:14, Leviticus 25:17, Job 1:8, Psalm 15:4, Psalm 85:9, Psalm 103:11, Psalm 112:8, Psalm 119:63, Isaiah 6:3

Topics: "Fear Of God", "Obedience"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the significance of fearing God, illustrating that this reverence is what makes individuals precious in His sight. He highlights Job as a prime example, noting that God valued Job's fear of the Lord above his wealth and accomplishments. The sermon underscores that true obedience stems from recognizing God's holiness and authority, and that blessings come to those who fear Him, even amidst life's challenges. Yohannan also reflects on the life of Watchman Nee, whose unwavering commitment to God, despite persecution, exemplifies the profound impact of living in holy fear. Ultimately, the message calls believers to cultivate a deep reverence for God, which leads to true blessing and a life that honors Him.

Transcript

The fear of God is greatly treasured in heaven. It is a mark of one who is special in God's eyes. Listen to what God says of His servant Job: "There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8 NIV, emphasis added). Job was well-off and had many things to be proud of. But God didn't mention anything about how amazingly wealthy, wise or strong Job was. He didn't talk about his good looks, his good deeds or his many children.

Even though these are things that we value, God mentioned none of these. More than anything else, God valued Job's fear of the Lord. Over and over again we see this is the case. When God had Moses select leaders, He said, "But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God . . ." (Exodus 18:21, emphasis added). In the Psalms, it is made clear that those who fear God are promised blessing upon blessing: honor (Psalm 15:4), salvation (Psalm 85:9), love (Psalm 103:11), security (Psalm 112:8) and friendship (Psalm 119:63).

But even if we did not receive blessings from fearing Him, He still is worthy of the utmost respect and honor. He still is to be feared and obeyed. In the book of Leviticus, it states over and over again, "Do this . . . Do not do this . . . I am the Lord . . . Fear your God" (see 19:14 and 25:17). God tells His people to do all

sorts of different things without explanation, simply because, "I am the Lord. Fear your God." Our obedience is not some favor to God. Who He is should be reason enough to obey--no further explanation is needed.

We are told to do things simply because God is God. He is the Master. He is the Lord. Do we fear Him like that today? Do you fear Him? Do His completely blinding purity and love cause you to tremble in awe and reverence before Him? Do you shake before His holy perfection? He is holy, holy, holy. Even the angels cannot look upon Him. If you saw Him, as He really is--all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, timeless and perfect--you would fear Him. Let us remember Abraham--an ordinary man who became the friend of God by fearing and obeying Him.

This is the way of true blessing, for "to partake from the divine nature we too must fear God. It may seem strange to us today, but the foundation of all that we are in Christ is based upon a holy and reverent fear of God."¹ You could do a million great things for God, but it is holy fear and reverence that are so precious in His sight. Even though obedience is the way of true blessing, it does not guarantee that life will be easy. Following the Lord does not mean we will never face difficulties, persecution or martyrdom.

In fact, the disciples who heard Christ call them His friends all lost their lives for the sake of the Gospel. And throughout history, many who have walked intimately with the Lord have faced similar plights. Consider Watchman Nee as just one example of many. During the 1930s, he "relentlessly encouraged the Shanghai Christians to share their faith. His words were hard to ignore: 'Because you are not witnessing, many have not heard the gospel. They will be eternally separated from God.

What a consequence of our apathy! . . . This is my challenge to you. Witness to at least one person a day. Witness to whomever you meet . . . It is time for us to put feet to our faith.'² Because of his passion to preach Christ, Watchman Nee faced incredible persecution. Many times he was urged to leave mainland China to save his own life. But he refused. He saw the call that God gave him to be a shepherd to His people, and he could not run away from that, no matter what it cost him.

Then, on April 10, 1952, Watchman Nee was arrested and placed in prison. He would spend the next 20 years there, his days "divided into three 8-hour segments: hard labor, 'reeducation,' and solitary confinement."³ He was allowed no communication until his 20th, and last, year in prison, in which he learned that his wife had also been arrested and died years earlier. After spending 20 years in chains for the Gospel, Watchman Nee died in prison on June 1, 1972. The life that Watchman Nee lived was not easy.

But the life he lived was precious in the sight of God, for it was one of commitment carried out by holy fear and love. His life became a blessing to millions during his lifetime and even after. May our lives be marked by the same commitment and blessing as we walk the way of true blessing in the fear of the Lord. Notes: 1 Taken from a message shared by Zac Poonen at the Gospel for Asia Biblical Seminary in India. 2 E. Michael and Sharon Rusten, *One Year Book of Church History* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), pp. 202-203. 3 Ibid.

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