

The Fear of the Lord (Part 2 of 2). Subtitle: Seven Blessings of the Fear of the Lord

Isaiah 33:6 (New American Standard Bible)

*And He will be the stability of your times,
A wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;
The fear of the Lord is his treasure.*

Introduction

Let's begin with today's Scripture. Through the mouth of Prophet Isaiah God speaks to us that *the fear of the Lord is his treasure*. Think for a moment about the word **treasure**. What is treasure? It is *a quantity of precious metals, gems, or other valuable objects* (Oxford Dictionaries). Treasure is good and useful. It is something that we all cherish and keep. It comes handy in times of need, and we even pass it on to our children as inheritance.

Imagine this. Let's say someone gave me a huge diamond that is worth of millions of dollars. Imagine also that I fail to recognize its value, thinking nothing of it, and toss it into the trash can. How would you feel about my action? Some of you even would call me a fool, right? Why? Because I threw away a treasure something of great value!

Now, this time, put yourself in God's shoes. In God's eyes, too many people in the world, and even some children of God fail to recognize the value of the fear of the Lord. God says that the fear of the Lord is your treasure. However, when pointed out, we don't recognize its worth and toss it into trash and never look back! Looking at this, God would say, *Alas! My children don't recognize it. How tragic it is!* Folks, this is the reality in our Church today. Few people of God recognize the value of the fear of the Lord let alone walking in it!

Content

If God had one thing to say to people in the world today, this is it: *'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to turn away from evil is understanding'* (Job 28:28). Do you see the connection between the fear of the Lord and turning away from evil? If we are so much concerned about evil in today's world, what do you think the deterrent of evil is? The fear of the Lord, isn't it? The fear of the Lord is God's everlasting invitation to humanity and solution to our problems. Walk in it, God says, that all may be well with you! (Jeremiah 7:23).

Last week, we talked about the fear of the Lord: what it is and what it is not. I told you that the fear of the Lord is not 'natural fear.' The fear of the Lord is not 'demonic' or

‘tormenting’ fear. The fear of the Lord is not the fear of man, either. It is instead the awe and reverence before the Creator. It is submissiveness to the Lord. This morning, I will explain to you the blessings of the fear of the Lord.

There are seven benefits we would garner when we walk in the fear of the Lord.

First, the fear of the Lord would *keep us safe and secure*. Furthermore, it keeps us from falling into temptation. Do you remember the story of Joseph the son of Jacob? Yes, that handsome Hebrew boy who was sold into slavery by his own brothers. Joseph the slave was tempted, even ordered, by his master’s wife to lie down with her. Day after day. Joseph flatly refused to do so, saying, even though no one watches, God in Heaven does. He didn’t want to *do a great evil, and sin against God* (Genesis 39:9). His innate fear of the Lord kept him from committing adultery. Had he succumbed to the temptation, he could’ve lost his own life and jeopardized God’s plan for him. The fear of the Lord keeps us safe in times of temptation.

Next, the fear of the Lord is *essential to answered prayers*. Are you serious about your prayers answered by the Lord? Then, begin your prayer with the fear of the Lord. That’s what Jesus Christ our Lord did. He prayed with the fear of the Lord. Listen to Hebrews 5:7. *During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission* (NIV).

All Christ’s prayers were answered affirmatively. What was the secret? He prayed with reverent submission, which is the fear of the Lord. Therefore, from now on, say your prayers with “Lord’s willing.” Offer up your prayers with a willingness to do God’s will no matter what (John 7:17), then your prayers will be answered affirmatively.

Thirdly, the fear of the Lord is our *acceptance letter from God’s Training School*. We want to learn from God in His School. Before we expect to learn anything from Him, God asks us one question: *do you fear Me and My name* (Psalm 86:11)? Will you obey My voice? If we say YES to those questions, we will be taught by God. Psalm 25:12 says, *Who is the person who fears the Lord? He (God—kc) will instruct him in the way he should choose*. It is conditional, isn’t it? Unless you fear the Lord, God says, forget about learning from Me.

God knows our hearts. He knows who’s ready and who’s not ready to learn from Him. If we are full of ourselves, (that is, self-sufficient and arrogant), God will not teach us because we are not teachable. On the other hand, if we are willing and humble, then the Lord will guide and instruct us with His wisdom and instruction that none can give.

Fourthly, *In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge* (Proverbs 14:26). Remember the story of Daniel's three friends *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*? When they were commanded by King Nebuchadnezzar to bow down to the golden statue, they refused to worship it. Consequently, they were sentenced to death—to be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. When they were brought before the king, ¹⁴*Nebuchadnezzar began speaking and said to them, "... if you do not worship, you will immediately be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can rescue you from my hands?"*

¹⁶*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, "Nebuchadnezzar, we are not in need of an answer to give you concerning this matter. ¹⁷If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods nor worship the golden statue that you have set up"* (Daniel 3:15-18). You know the end of the story. God protected them from the blazing fire. Praise the Lord. In the fear of the Lord there's strong confidence.

Fifthly, *the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, by which one may avoid the snares of death* (Proverbs 14:27). *Fountain: the source from which something proceeds or is supplied* (Oxford Dictionaries). The fear of the Lord is the source from which your life proceeds or is supplied. Do you want a good and abundant life? Let me tell you where such life begins. The fear of the Lord.

Here's an example. If you start the day with the fear of the Lord, you will obey God who tells you what is good in His eyes. You want to please Him throughout the day in your words and actions. So, you say kind words to your family and friends, and even to co-workers. Your home becomes a haven of peace, love, and rest. Your workplace too will turn into a good place for you and co-workers. By the end of the day, you feel happy and blessed and you say to yourself in bed, *Life is good. Thank you, Lord.*

The opposite is true. Let's say that you start the day with selfish attitude, *everything is about me*. You utter the words of complaint and criticism. Along the way, you make everyone in the family miserable. At work, you are nasty to your co-workers. At the end of the day, you still are grumpy, and you carry it into the next day. And you repeat. What kind of life will you have? You want a happy life? Begin with the fear of the Lord and obey His voice.

Sixthly, *the fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened* (Proverbs 10:27). You want a long-blessed life? Learn to fear the Lord. You know, this summer our church launched a YouTube project called “Saints at MUMC.” I am sure most of you have watched it. In this project, I interviewed twelve saints in our congregation, all of them are in their 90s or late 80s. Did you know that most of them still attend our church in person? That means they are still mentally sharp and physically capable of driving.

Some folks don’t consider it a good thing if we have aged members in the church. I disagree. To me, they are the true asset to our congregation. They are the backbone of our church. They are faithful in worship, prayer, service, and offerings. More than anything else, though, they are a godly example to our young generations. How? They walk in the fear of the Lord, and the Lord prolongs their lives.

One person comes to my mind. Professor Samuel Moffett at Princeton Theological Seminary who stayed active and sharp until the age of 98. In his 90s, he published a volume of *History of Christianity in Asia*. Once I had lunch with him, just him and me. He was no longer teaching but still came to seminary every day working on his books. All in his early 90s! I asked him, “Professor, what’s the secret to your longevity?” I was expecting to hear something like “*eating a balanced diet, regular exercise, or everything in moderation.*” But his answer was surprising: “*Clean thinking!*” From that day, I am following his advice. Clean thinking before God. Clean thinking only comes from the clean heart that fears the Lord. Do you want to have a good night sleep? Do you want to have a long and satisfied life? Then, learn to fear the Lord. *The fear of the Lord leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil* (Proverbs 19:23).

Finally, *the reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life* (Proverbs 22:4). You don’t need any further explanation. The Lord rewards those who stand in awe and humility before God with riches, honor, and life. Let us prove it true in our lives.

Conclusion

Please keep in mind that the fear of the Lord doesn’t come to us automatically. Even though you have been going to church for years, still it is not a guarantee that you would have it. It only comes to those who desire it, first. Your heart must want it before you get it from the Lord. Next, you must also choose to submit yourself to the Lord in humility and to walk in God’s ways. When you do, and only then, you will enjoy all the benefits it offers. Desire and choose to fear the Lord and have a blessed life with riches, honor, and life. Amen.