

In the Life of Jesus



The Fear of the Lord (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you on this week's inspiring, but also challenging theme: The Fear of the Lord. In my talk yesterday I described the fear of the Lord in two different ways. First of all I used a picture from this world to illustrate something in the spiritual realm. I pictured a towering craggy mountain with it's steep slope, descending to the sea far below, all craggy and jagged. And then the person in question standing on top of the mountain looking down on the one side at the waves far below, looking out the other way, landward to a beautiful scene of fields and forest, exhilarating, beautiful, impressive, awe-inspiring. And yet, somewhere in the center of your personality there's this continuing realization, "I'm privileged to be here, I'm enjoying it, it's beautiful, it's unique, but if I take one step in the wrong direction I'll plunge down the cliff and end in the sea. And that will be the end!" That's just a picture from the world of the senses to illustrate the fear of the Lord. God shares with us His grandeur, His beauty, His power, His wisdom, it's exhilarating. It's like being right at the top of the mountain. You can enjoy it and worship Him, but there's always this realization, there's just one step I must not take because it will be disaster.

And then the other way that I described the fear of the Lord was with reference to the first of the ten commandments. In Exodus 20 verse 3 where God says, "You shall have no other gods before Me." And I suggested that this is actually the fear of the Lord worked out, giving God total preeminence, never putting anything else before God or on a level with God. Giving Him an absolutely unique place in our lives.

Well, today I'm going to be talking about Jesus as our pattern. I'll be explaining the part that the fear of the Lord played in the life of Jesus. I believe you will find this inspiring but also challenging.

I want to begin in the Old Testament, in the prophet Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1-3. In these verses Isaiah gives us a prophetic preview of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, and of the part that the Holy Spirit had in His earthly life and ministry. He speaks about Him as the Rod from the stem of Jesse, and as a Branch. Those were titles of the Messiah. And you will see that the emphasis in this prophetic revelation is on the part played by the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. Here is what Isaiah says:

> "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, [that's Jesus] And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, [And then he goes on to says:] His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes." (NKJ)

That is actually a full inspired unfolding of the seven aspects of the Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit. I'd like to set side-by-side with that just one verse from the 4th chapter of Revelation, verse 5, a description of a scene in heaven. And it says there:

> "And from the throne [that's the throne of God] proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." (NKJ)

That's an unusual phrase "the seven Spirits of God." Personally, I do not believe that it means there are seven Holy Spirits, but I believe it's the Bible's picturesque way of speaking about the seven manifestations or forms that the Holy Spirit takes. Seven being distinctively the number of the Holy Spirit.

Now if we turn back to that passage in Isaiah chapter 11, I believe we have a revelation of what are the seven forms of the Spirit of God. They are given there in those verses. First of all the Spirit of the Lord, that's the Spirit that speaks in the first person as God. And remember, in the triune Godhead each person is Himself, God. God the Father is God. Jesus the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. He is Lord. So that's the first form, the Spirit of the Lord.

The second, the Spirit of wisdom. Then third, understanding; fourth, counsel; fifth, might; sixth, knowledge; and seventh, fear of the Lord. Notice the culminating manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus was the fear of the Lord. That has always impressed me when I came to see that, that even Jesus, the Son of God, had to have the fear of the Lord and that this was imparted to Him by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit.

So here we have combined the character of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, and they culminate in the fear of the Lord. My thought is this: if Jesus needed the fear of the Lord, and if the Holy Spirit saw fit to impart to Jesus the fear of the Lord and He was the sinless Son of God, divine by nature, if He needed the fear of the Lord, then how much more do you and I need the fear of the Lord.

And you'll see that the emphasis in that passage is on that final manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Because the next verse, verse 3 continuing to speak about Jesus says, "His delight is in the fear of the Lord…." The one aspect of the Holy Spirit that is singled out for particular mention is the fear of the Lord. And one distinctive aspect of Jesus' character is "He delighted in the fear of the Lord." What a pattern! What an example for you and me! It surely causes me, personally, to see the depth of my need of the fear of the Lord imparted to me by the Holy Spirit.

Now I want to speak about one very distinctive and important way in which the fear of the Lord was actually manifested in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. And I'm going to turn to the epistle to the Hebrews, the fifth chapter and read verses 7 and 8 which are speaking about Jesus as our High Priest, but describing how He lived and exercised a priestly ministry in the days of His flesh; that is, while He was still here on earth. And this is what it says about Him:

> "…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. Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." (NKJ)

I wonder whether you picked out that phrase, "…He was heard because of His godly fear." Why did God always answer the prayers of Jesus? What was there in the prayers of Jesus that always brought a positive response from God the Father? We are told Jesus prayed out of "godly fear." He prayed in the fear of the Lord and that caused the Father, always, to answer His prayers. Here He was, in a moment of agony, for the description refers primarily to the scene in Gethsemane. And as He was agonizing before the Father, you remember what He said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." That's the epitome of the fear of the Lord. "Lord, let me not ever put anything of my choice before Yours. Let not anything seem more important to me than Your will. Nevertheless, not my will, but your will, God." That is the essence of the fear of the Lord. That is the keeping of the first commandment. "You shall have no other God before Me." Nothing else in your life will ever take the place that belongs uniquely to God.

And notice the outcome. "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." We must always understand that the other forms of fear are likely to keep us from obeying God. But the fear of the Lord motivates us to obey God. If ever you

have fear in your heart and you are not quite sure what kind of a fear it is, ask yourself this decisive question, “Is this fear motivating me to disobey God or to obey God?” If it’s to disobey God it is not the fear of the Lord. But if it’s motivating you to obey God, then it could and probably is the fear of the Lord. And it will lead you to obedience even at the price of suffering. Jesus, though He was a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered. You see, not even suffering could deter Jesus from giving the Father total preeminence in His life.

Now you and I are probably not going to be exempt from suffering either. But I pray for each one that hears this message and I desire for myself, that the fear of the Lord may always so motivate us that we will not turn back from suffering and refuse the will of the Lord.

Our time is up for today. But I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow we’ll be taking the early Church as our pattern and we’ll be considering the fear of the Lord in the early Church.

Radio Program

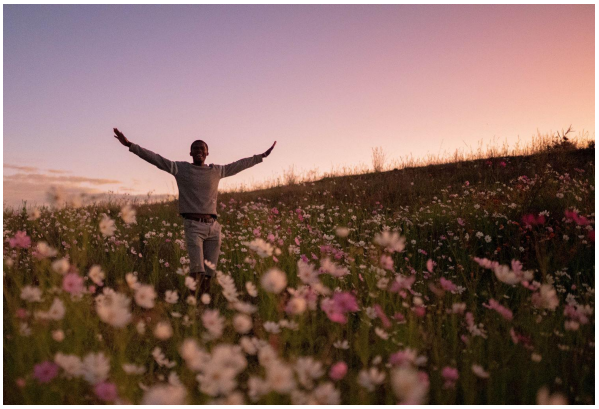
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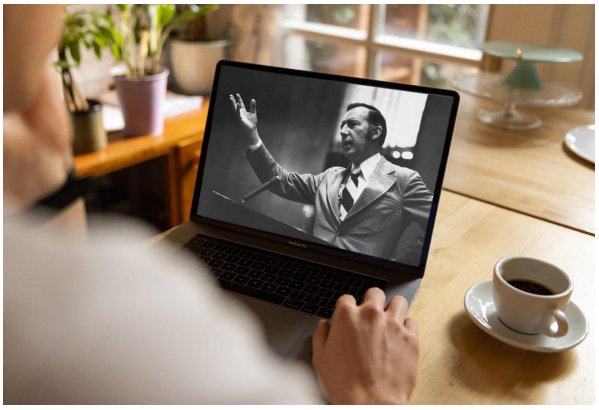
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