

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

VOLUME 27, NO. 9

JUNE, 1996

THE FEAR OF GOD

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INTRODUCTION: It is so easy for us to become lopsided in the truth, or go off on a tangent. It is sometimes said of a preacher that all his sermons are just alike. We say of such a preacher that he harps on one string all the time. We need so much to hold truth in its proper balance. There has been much preaching on the love of God, but very little on the fear of God. If you will use your concordance, you will see that there is quite as much said about our duty to fear God as there is about His love for us. Preaching the love of God to sinners is like casting pearls before swine when there is no fear of God in their hearts.

The fear of God is made up of reverence and awe and love. It is what we call filial fear.

Many are the blessings pronounced upon them that fear Him. *"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy."* Psalms 33:18. *"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."* Psalms 34:7.

Three times we read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."* Psalms

111:10. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* Proverbs 1:7. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."* Proverbs 9:10.

"Come, ye children, harken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Psalms 34:11. David was a famous musician, statesman, and soldier, but he did not say, "I will teach you how to use the harp, or handle the sword, or rule a nation, but I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

The fear of God is the mark of a saint. A Christian is a God fearing man. The lost have no fear of God before their eyes. Many who are cowards before men have no fear of God. It is natural for a person to fear snakes, but no one naturally fears God.

HOW MAY I KNOW WHETHER I FEAR GOD OR NOT?

How does the God fearing man behave?

1. He delights in conversation about God. He does not shun God. He will enjoy a sermon upon the divine attributes. *"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that*

feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Malachi 3:16.

2. He will keep company with others that fear God. They will come together. If you fear God you will love His people. *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."* I John 3:14. Every man has two kinds of associates: necessary and voluntary. *"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."* Psalms 119:63. *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators."* I Corinthians 5:9. The church of Christ is the only organization that is open for membership to all ranks and classes of men, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, famous and obscure, handsome and ugly, with or without a good name. Human institutions seek certain kinds of people. Literary clubs want only the educated. Social clubs invite only those in their social rank. Political clubs want only those who believe in their political philosophy. Musical clubs want only those of musical talent. But the church wants everybody who fears God and keeps his precepts.

3. The God fearing man will be obedient. It is the fear of God that produces the spirit of obedience in men. *"By faith Noah, be-*

ing warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Hebrews 11:7. It was the fear of God that led Abraham to offer up Isaac. *"And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."* Genesis 22:12. *"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."* Proverbs 16:6. *"The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful."* Psalms 36:1-2. Men's sins have a voice to Godly ears. God fearing men see their sins and bewail them. The man who does not fear God flatters himself, he counts himself as a fine fellow. He fixes up his sins with his own conscience, so that his conscience is easy. Spurgeon said, "To smooth over one's own sinful conduct to one's conscience is to smooth one's own path to hell."

Self flattery is a grease that makes slick the road to hell. Self flattery is the hand that breaks the alarm clock of the conscience so that the sinner can sleep till he wakes in hell.

4. The God fearing man will understand the secrets of God: he will know truths that others cannot learn. *"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."* Psalms 25:14. *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* I Corinthians 2:14. *"For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is*

the Lord." I Corinthians 4:4.

Every trade has its secrets to the uninitiated. The realities of the Christian experience are strange things to the natural, self righteous man. To speak about conviction for sin, the abhorrence of self, the witness of the Spirit, the struggles against sin, the hope in Christ is like reasoning with a blind man about colors or trying to explain musical harmony to a deaf man.

God shows his covenant glories to those that fear him. There are many books coming off the press but how few of them explain the deep things of God. There is too little of the fear of God among us today.

WHY ARE WE TO FEAR GOD? *"Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."* Job 36:18. *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Matthew 10:28. *"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."* Luke 12:4-5.

MANY ARE GOING TO FEAR HIM TOO LATE.

Men who do not fear Him in this day of grace will fear him in the day of judgment. *"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."* Proverbs 1:26.

I had a dream the other night. I do not often relate my dreams, but this dream illustrates the truth I want to give you. I was visiting here in our community. We soon observed something wrong at the next house; there was terrible excite-

ment; something awful had happened, people there were dying. We saw men carrying a dead child. They seemed to know what had happened but were too busy to tell us. Several men were trying to get a man in a car to take him to the doctor, but he did not want to go, and he was kicking and knocking with all his might, and then the men got rough with him, and began to use force and rough speech. The best we could learn was that he had been bitten by a deadly insect like a black widow spider, but he insisted there was nothing wrong with him, and did not want to go to the doctor. That is a parable. Men all about us are bitten by the serpent of moral death, in danger of hell fire, the time is short to get them saved. We try to get them to go to Christ the only physician who can save them, and they have no fear of the lawgiver who is able to save them or destroy them. When you hear about the judgment of God and that sin will be punished, you should fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. *"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."* Psalms 130:3-4.

Yes, there is forgiveness with the Lord but that forgiveness comes with an awful price to God in that he had to punish his Son that you might go free by faith in Him. *"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."* Acts 13:38-39. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16.

BEHOLD THE LAMB

BY: C. D. COLE

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. *"Behold the Lamb of God!"* John 1:36.

INTRODUCTION: John the Baptist is introducing Jesus to his disciples, he introduces Him as the Lamb of God, the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world.

To behold Jesus is to make us realize our need of Him. To see Jesus as He is set forth in the Word of God is to make us see ourselves as sinners. Jesus is the kind of man that every man ought to be. If you are prone to feel proud of yourself, stand by the side of Jesus Christ, measure yourself by Him. What kind of a person was He? He was without sin - are you? He always did what pleased God - have you?

When the woman of Sychar saw Jesus she immediately saw herself. Her impurity was seen in the light of his purity. She saw her need as a sinner. S. D. Gordon used to tell how as a boy he would lift up the plank that was used as a walk between the big house and the kitchen. He would watch the little black inhabitants that lived under the plank scurry off from the light; then he would comment on how Jesus lifted the plank for the Samaritan woman that day at Jacob's well, and how she got a good look at herself. She saw what was under the plank of her life and realized her need of a Saviour. She found that Jesus Christ was the Saviour. And when He had supplied her need, she went into her town and told others to come and see Him for themselves. A lot of people were saved by coming and seeing for themselves. The first movement

of a Christian life is a missionary movement. The woman told others about Jesus.

To behold Jesus is to believe on Him. *"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."* John 4:10.

A young man, a student in college and about to graduate with honors, broke the rules of the school and was dismissed. He had to leave before graduating. When he got home, his father rebuked him for what he had done. The young man resented his father's reproof and left home in anger. But after a while he realized his mistake and returned home and asked his father to forgive him, telling him how sorry he was for what he had done. The father forgave him, embraced him and assured him of his forgiveness and love. The Civil War broke out and the young man enlisted. He was wounded in the battle of Gettysburg. His father reached his bedside in a few days. He had a talk with the doctor and was told there was no hope for the son. The father went in to see his son with a heavy heart. The boy asked him what the doctor had said about his chances to get well. The father told him the doctor had said there was no hope. The boy then asked how long the doctor thought he could live. The father had to tell him, not long. Then the boy said, Father I am not ready to die. I wish you would tell me how to be saved. The father said, Do you feel guilty. Yes, the son replied, terribly so. Do you want to be forgiven? Yes, said the son, and may I be, and may I know I am

forgiven? Certainly, you may be forgiven and you may know that you are forgiven. Then the father recalled to him the time he got mad and left home, and how he came back and said he was sorry and asked for forgiveness. And I told you that I forgave you. How did you feel then, asked the father? Why, I felt wonderfully better, I felt happy to be assured of your forgiveness. And I could not have been happy at home if I did not have the assurance of your forgiveness. Then the father went on to say that there is forgiveness with God on the basis of what Jesus Christ had done at the cross. He reminded the dying boy that just as he had not had to purchase forgiveness from him when he returned, but was freely forgiven; so also God freely forgives the sinner who pleads the blood of Christ as the ground of acceptance. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."* Ephesians 1:7. The boy said, I see. To behold Jesus is to love Him.