

"What is truth?" (Slide 1)

Fear God!!

Reading: 1 Timothy 6:3-10

This is another lesson in a short series for better understanding of "What is truth." Though I will highlight several items in this lesson the main focus will be on what it means to "Fear God" and proper fear's relationship with truth.

Fear launches us toward truth!!

What does it mean to have fear?

I recently watched a news story where there was a young girl lying in her bed who kept shouting to her mother: "Mom!! there is a monster under my bed!!!"

Just about every child goes through a phase where they believe there is a monster under the bed or in the closet. This is a learned fear.

However, this young girl was insistent that a monster was under her bed and kept calling to her mother to scare it away. At first the mother kept telling her daughter something like; "There's no such thing as monsters! Go to sleep!"

Yet, the girl was persistent and kept calling her mother and finally her persistence paid off.

The mother came into her bedroom and told her daughter, "Look I'll prove to you there isn't a monster under your bed."

So, she got down on the floor and pulled back the dangling covers and guess what; "There was a man hiding under the girl's bed!" Truly there was a monster under her bed. Who knows what this man's intentions were.

The man got out from under the bed knocking the mother and daughter to the ground and escaped out of the house. Both mom and daughter were frightened and likely will have this "fear" for many years to come.

Personally, even at my age, I don't like to dangle my arms toward the ground while I'm sleeping for fear of my hands being bitten by a snake or some creature. I know it may seem silly but it's a learned fear that stays with you for a long time!

Is this the fear that the Bible refers to when it says to "Fear God?"

*Though Solomon says the **"whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments"** does he mean "fear Him" or else? Certainly there are consequences if we don't. But that kind of fear would make God unapproachable!!*

Let's look at what it means to "Fear God."

Joshua 24:14-15 (Slide 2)

14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

(Slide 3) 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Let's begin this lesson by highlighting some of what Joshua states to the people and the character of his leadership.

(Slide 4) Highlights of Joshua's speech:

fear the LORD

serve him in sincerity and in truth

put away the gods which your fathers served (remove all idols in you life)

I find it fascinating that people could worship something that they likely witnessed its construction. It really demonstrates how feeble and how weak their minds were. For example, Aaron and the “Golden Calf.” They watched him fashion it out of Gold and then bowed down to it, prayed to it and thanked it for leading them out of captivity, even though they knew that couldn’t be the case.

That would be like building a house and worshiping it and thanking it for giving you breath!! Makes no sense but that’s what they did. No wonder God was jealous and punished these people.

If you are unwilling to serve God, choose what idols you will serve

(Slide 5) *Characterize Joshua’s leadership:*

as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD

In other words, no matter what you choose to do we will serve God!!
Without question! Without reservation! We will serve God!!

After Joshua’s statements those who he was speaking to, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, wholeheartedly said they would serve God:

Joshua 24:16-22 (Slide 6)

16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, (Slide 7) and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: (Slide 8) therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

(Slide 9) **20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.**

21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

(Slide 10) **22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.**

I certainly believe that Joshua was skeptical of their commitment.

Here's the Quick Highlight of their response and Joshua's admonition:

We will serve the Lord God!

Joshua's warning:

You cannot serve both God and idols, It has to be either God or your idols!

For God is a jealous God!!! And God has not changed with the times or culture or because of our opinions of Him!!

Malachi 3:5-6 (Slide 11)

5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, (Slide 12) the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. 6 "For I, the LORD, do not change

At the end of Joshua 24 the Bible states that as long as Joshua was alive, the people served God. In the book of Judges we learn that Joshua died and it wasn't long after his death that they fell away from serving God.

They served God because of Joshua and not because of their belief toward God!! How many do you suppose come to worship because of someone other than God?

The testimony of strong leadership is found in Joshua! He spoke of what wasn't popular, called the people out for serving idols and took a stand for his household by protecting their eternity and serving God no matter what anyone else chose to do.

Even today, Choosing is the optimum word for following God, for reading and studying His word, for coming to Him and becoming a Christian!!

In Judges 2, Joshua dies and soon after the people reverted back to their old ways and began to serve idols once again.

The church certainly needs strong leaders but the church also needs those who follow to listen to them and put God over them!! The church needs leaders like Joshua and for that matter, men like Gideon.

Gideon was a warrior appointed by God to defeat the Midianites and though he wasn't designated as a *leader/ Judge*, his character reflected that of a man that feared God.

We're first introduced to Gideon in:

Judges 6:11-16 (Slide 13)

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites.

(Slide 14) ***12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." 13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying,*** (Slide 15) ***'Did not***

the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” 14 The LORD looked at him and said, “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. (Slide 16) Have I not sent you?” 15 He said to Him, “O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.” 16 But the LORD said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.”

Gideon went from despair to gallantry. Because he feared God, God was with him. He defeated the Midianites. That defeat of the Midianites was overwhelming as if His army went up against ***“one man”*** as God said it would be. Gideon’s army, shaped by God’s planning, was much, much smaller than the enemy.

Because of Gideon’s strength and unheralded leadership and his fear of God, as long as he was alive there was peace in the land.

The people wanted to make Gideon their leader but his character, dedication and obedience to God came shining through. So impressed with his defeat of the Midianites the people came to him wanting to make him their leader but Gideon knew why he found success in battle:

Judges 8:22-23 (Slide 17)

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son’s son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.” 23 But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.”

Joshua and Gideon feared God, not false gods that were made with man’s hands.

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of God causes us to pursue Him night and day!!

The fear of God leads to His truth because proper fear causes obedience to God and we are to allow nothing whatever it may be to stand in between us and our God. That includes idols which are not necessarily carved images but most often are our wants and desires.

Let's examine what we we've read:

Fear the Lord: Is he talking about fear that causes one to tremble, to hide as if someone is chasing you and wants to harm you, or is this fear like having a monster under your bed? Is he talking about the fear of the unknown or is he talking about becoming petrified such as many are when it comes to tremendous heights, or the fear some have after watching a scary movie?

Will the fear of the Lord cause one to be incapacitated? In other words, one cannot function on any level, physically or mentally!

No! Absolutely not!

The Fear of God is something we learn to do!! The Fear of God is how we obtain Spiritual intelligence!!

Psalm 34:11 (Slide 18)

***Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.***

Proverbs 9:10

***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***

This cannot be a fear that causes one to faint or to be frightened to the point we freeze physically and mentally.

This fear does not cause us to become incoherent in worship but gives us "Self-Control!"

Moses in the beginning of the book of Deutoronomy gives a *History* lesson to the Israelites and imparts to them how they should behave before God and how and why they should choose to obey God. When we get to chapter 4 he's still speaking and encourages them to recall all they have learned and what God spoke to them:

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 (Slide 19)

9 "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (Slide 20) 10 Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'

Abraham was bringing the knife down to slay his son and the Angel stopped him and we are familiar with this story but listen to what the angel said:

Genesis 22:11-12 (Slide 21)

11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

"for now I know that you fear God"

What does it mean to Fear God?

The answer is to respect Him, to show Him absolute Honor above all else- to revere God and give Him His due. To be obedient!!

This fear includes a healthy fear. Just as I loved my earthly father and he loved me I also had an understanding that if I was disobedient I would be punished. That is part of the beginning of wisdom because it's a healthy fear.

With God we have a healthy "*Spiritual Fear*" knowing disobedience brings His wrath!! But that does not make Him unapproachable but makes us honor Him in all that we do!

Serve Him in sincerity and truth-nothing comes before Him, we cannot serve two masters!!

Matthew 6:24 (Slide 22)

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

I don't personally know anyone who worships a graven or carved image that has been fashioned by the hands of a man, although this type of worship does exist in our world.

Despite not knowing anyone who worships man made gods doesn't mean that I don't personally know people who are caught up into their own idolatry simply because they put other things before God because they lack proper reverence, respect (fear) for God!!

Admittedly, in times of weakness, I know I have put things or desires before God. God please forgive me!!

The proper fear/ reverence for God is the first step toward understanding "*What is truth!*" It is this fear that prevented Joseph from sinning against God with Potiphar's wife.

Invitation

The proper fear of God is our anchor in life's troubled seas. This righteous fear prevents us from sinking, from capsizing and drowning in our own idolatry.

The proper fear of God leads to understanding, that is; understanding His will. It is His will that we come to Him in obedience and clothe ourselves with the *Life Giving Blood of the Lamb, Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God!*

Have you been washed in the Blood of the Lamb? If not, why delay? Arise and be Baptized for the remission of sin.

If you are in Christ, have you pulled the anchor, the fear of God back in your boat and now you rock back and forth close to capsizing? Come back to Jesus today before you sink entirely and we will pray for you and help restore your Godly Fear!

Please let us know how we may assist you today.....

Reading:

1 Timothy 6:3-10

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. 6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

Choose you this day whom you will Serve!!

Please visit our website for the full audio of this study:

Shelbyvillechurch.com

Shelbyville Church of Christ **9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**