



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday : 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDER

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith
Travis Everett Paul White

DEACONS:

Derek Anderson Bret Cox
James Dow Patrick Gaughan
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Skyler Meek Phil Parker
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

EVANGELIST

Paul White

CEDAR PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST



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The Fear of God

The fear of God is a pervasive concept in Scripture, but one I think we don't understand. The scriptures clearly teach that we should fear God.

"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the snares of death." Proverbs 14:27

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Yet, we often have trouble reconciling fear of God with grace and forgiveness. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." If we are forgiven and right with God, why should we still fear Him?

Some have suggested that fearing God means having a deep reverential respect for God. While I believe there is much truth in that, I don't think it goes far enough. When the children of Israel heard the voice of God on Mount Sinai, they didn't feel deep respect. They were terrified (Exodus 20:18-21). God said their fear was good. "They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever" (Deuteronomy 5:28-29). Yet, while their fear was good, Moses told

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them not to fear. “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin” (Exodus 20:20). How do we make sense of a statement like that?

Living with, but not in fear

Do you live in fear? I think most of us can answer “no” to this question. Our lives are not typically characterized by a constant state of fear. However, we engage in dangerous activities daily. We do not fear these activities, but fear is an important factor in keeping these activities safe.

Perhaps the most common dangerous activity we engage in is driving. I am not terrified every time I get behind the wheel. However, I am aware of and afraid of what can happen if my car hits something moving at a high rate of speed. As a result of that fear, I am careful. I pay attention and make sure I am in control at all times. Terrible things happen, when people minimize the dangers of driving and become inattentive. People get into life-ending accidents when they drive while intoxicated or distracted. I can drive down the toll-road at 75 mph without fear, but I would not dare take my eyes off the road for more than a moment. Fear helps me to stay safe in a potentially lethal machine.

Another illustration may help make the point. When we visited Yellowstone in 2012, we stood on a platform at the top of the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River. The platform allowed you to stand just feet from the river and to look over the edge at the falls cascading down the 300 foot drop to the canyon below. Watching the great volume of water in the river surging toward the edge is literally breathtaking. It is awesome and terrifying. You realize you are standing just a few feet away from certain death. Although the experience did inspire feelings of fear, I was not really in fear for my life. I understood that so long as I stood on solid ground at a proper distance, I would be safe. I had no desire to lean on the railing or dip my feet in the river. My fear kept me safe.

Loving and Fearing God

The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 12:28-29, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we

may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.” Our God is a consuming fire, and we need to remember that. However, we have nothing to fear so long as we are in a safe position relative to that fire.

God is on our side. He wants the best for us. We know that when we are walking with Him, we have nothing to fear. Indeed, no power on earth can harm us or take what we have in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:31-39.) We love God, and we want to serve Him. So long as we are driven by love and respect for God, we have no fears. But when our love falters, and we begin to think about going our own way, we need to remember the danger. We need to let the fear of God keep us on the narrow way.

- Pat Gaughan

Love Your Enemies

Peter Miller was a preacher who lived in Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary War. One of his neighbors, a man who had mistreated Miller for years, was convicted of treason and sentenced to be hanged. When Miller heard of the verdict he walked seventy miles to Philadelphia to plead for his neighbor’s life.

George Washington listened patiently to his plea, but then replied, “I am sorry, but your request cannot be granted. Your friend must die.”

“My friend?” cried Miller, “He is the worst enemy I have!”

“What?” said Washington, “You have walked seventy miles to save the life of your enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. The pardon is granted.”



It may be difficult to say the right thing at the right time, but it is far more difficult to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.