

The Fear of the Lord—Joyful Obedience

Text: Psalm 112.1; Genesis 22.12

Theme: A right fear of the Lord brings on joyful obedience to His will

Introduction — Psalm 112:1

- **Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!**

Let's pray and ask God to bless the preaching of His Word

Ecclesiastes 12.13 says,

- **The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.**
- this is man's all, his entire purpose and goal: to fear God and obey Him
- what does God require of us? Do this and live
- in other words, personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience

God's provision of this requirement of obedience, since not met by any man, was His Son

- Jesus' perfect, active obedience in life and in His death are our only hope
- this is what it means to be saved: Jesus' righteousness is imputed to you
- now, when God looks to you to see if you are obeying, you can say:
- "Look at Jesus, Your Son; He has obeyed perfectly for me since I cannot"
- I, O Lord, am Yours, in Christ Jesus

So now, as one redeemed, forgiven, justified and glorified, fear the Lord

- and keep His commandments

God's Word is quite clear in stating that...

I. FEAR AND OBEDIENCE GO HAND IN HAND

- fearing God and obeying Him are actually one and the same thing
- trying to obey apart from God's provision should give you no assurance
- in fact, it should frighten you
- but in Christ, we can now fear God rightly, obey His commands by His grace

Maybe you've noticed in our time considering the Fear of the Lord

- fearing God, worshiping God, serving God, obeying God: all the same thing
- lines seem to be blurred between them
- each is fundamental to the other

Deuteronomy: nine times mentioned together

- **Deuteronomy 5:29 — Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!**
- here is the Lord longing that Israel had a heart that would both fear & obey Him

- **Deuteronomy 6:2 — ...fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.**
- how do they fear the Lord? By keeping His commandments
- **Deuteronomy 8:6 — So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.**
- how do you know you're walking in God's ways: fear & obey
- **Deuteronomy 10:12-13 — And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?**
- all the Lord requires of you: fear Him & obey His commandments
- **Deuteronomy 10:20 — You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.**
- fearing the Lord is revealed by obeying Him
- **Deuteronomy 13:4 — You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.**
- once again, the two are blended together
- **Deuteronomy 17:14, 19 — When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me...' And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them**
- when Israel at last demands a king, here is what he is to do: fear God by keeping God's law
- **Deuteronomy 28:58 — If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God**
- keeping the law shows you fear Him; living in disobedience reveals a heart that does not fear the Lord
- **Deuteronomy 31:12 — Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law**
- how would future leaders of Israel know the people were fearing God? Obedience

Psalms are filled with the beauty of this truth: fear God & obey Him tied together

- **Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.**
- Psalm 34:11, 13-14**

- how do you teach someone to fear the Lord? Teach them to obey His Word

- **Praise the Lord!**

**Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commandments!**

Psalm 112:1

- do you want God's blessing? Then obey Him out of the heart's abundance of fear

- **I am a companion of all who fear you,
of those who keep your precepts.**

Psalm 119:63

- here, the psalmist makes the equivalent connection: those who fear God obey God

Nehemiah, in striving to hold the returned captives together in the midst of great opposition:

- **Nehemiah 5:15 — The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.**

- Nehemiah was a godly leader

- how do we know? Plenty of evidence but largely because he feared the Lord

- **Nehemiah 5:9 — So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?**

- here, the Jewish leaders were grossly mistreating the captives who had returned

- Nehemiah calls them out for not fearing the Lord by charging them with not walking according to God's Word—disobedience

Even Abraham showed his fear of God in an amazing act of faithful obedience through an unimaginable trial

- almost overly familiar with the account of his taking Isaac as a sacrifice

- he follows God's words to the letter

- and just as his knife-wielding hand is about to come down, God provides

- **Genesis 22:12 — He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”**

- now, it could be said that God already knew Abraham's heart; yes, and true

- but here it is: tested, proven, and revealed: he feared the Lord so he obeyed the Lord

In light of this, may you have...

II. A HIGH VIEW OF GOD FOR THIS SUMMER

- what is in your heart comes out: fear of God brings out praise and worship of Him

- we spent some moments with this two weeks ago

- fear of God also brings out acts of obedience because the heart is fixed upon Him

- when you fear God, your heart & mind are overwhelmed with greatness and goodness

- you have now, a very high view of God, who He is and what He has done

- you know what He has promised to do and be for you in Christ Jesus

- this leads to joyful obedience

- if someone were to ask you how you know you fear the Lord, you can say “I obey Him”

- so, when you fear God, you'll obey His commandments

- when you obey His commandments, you fear the Lord

Think of it this way

- favorite teacher, elementary or middle or high school; perhaps a coach
- you respected them, you thought them wise & offering good teaching & counsel
- had little problem obeying them, following their instructions
- even if they didn't always make sense, you followed them
- in doing so, you showed your respect and they saw it in you

Heart that beats with warmth for God, fears Him

- when you rest in His wisdom, your heart is filled with peace & desire to serve Him
- when you comprehend His great mercy and love, you long to obey
- so, when you fear God, your heart almost gushes like a spring of worship & obedience
- if a command doesn't make sense to you, you still strive to keep it
- you have an eagerness to learn from these experiences
- God sees this in you and says, like He did to Abraham: Now I know that you fear God

Challenge for you this summer while I am away

- put your fear of the Lord on display
- gather to worship every week; do not take a vacation from worshiping God
- whether here or while traveling, find another church
- encourage them with your presence and worship
- let them strengthen you with their worship, preaching, and teaching of the Word
- do not skip out, especially here, even if you don't travel
- faithful men filling pulpit, opening God's Word, seeking to feed you each Sunday
- come for a feast of variety of sorts from various voices
- given you a list of who is preaching when
- suggestions how to pray for them each week: and please do so
- suggestions on how to pray for yourselves, one another, as you hear these men preach
- I am eagerly anticipating what God is going to do through all this

Other ways to obey and reveal your fear of the Lord

- help with VBS
- teaching positions filled, and some other key positions
- but still need extra hands to serve, making all the work go effectively
- bring food, come help set up or clean up

Another way is to attend our Summer Special Sunday Class with Jim O'Dell

- if someone asked you, "What is the Bible all about?" Could you answer them?
- this class will show you the glue of God's covenants that run throughout
- from before the foundation of the world God covenanted to redeem a people for Himself
- I would challenge you who have been part of Sunday mornings to come for this time
- I wish I could be here for it

I will add one more application of this: pray

- and don't think that just applies to you in your own private prayer closet
- God calls us to pray together
- Tuesday mornings will have our prayer group gathering to show their fear of the Lord
- someone may think, though, "Tuesday morning doesn't work; I work then"

- then call a group of your friends from here at Albion
- say, "hey, I want us to get together to pray for just a bit. Can you make it Monday evening? Or Wednesday evening?"
- if you wonder what to pray, well, you have been given an insert that should give you plenty of fodder to use
- if that doesn't seem to provide enough grist for the prayer mill...
- take your church directories and pray for every household
- divide them up among you and pray for them
- pray for the Lord to bless them with this right fear of the Lord in their hearts
- pray that their children would be obedient to the Lord
- ask God to draw unsaved loved ones to Himself through Jesus Christ
- intercede for them by asking them on Sunday, "How can I pray for you?"

Conclusion –

**Oh, how abundant is your goodness,
which you have stored up for those who fear you
and worked for those who take refuge in you,
in the sight of the children of mankind!**

Psalm 31:19

I am praying for you already:

- praying that each one of you comes to cherish the fear of the Lord
- praying that you long to be here, the best place on earth every Lord's Day
- praying that your worship is always sweet in the ears of God
- praying that the Word begins to drip off your tongue as you keep it
- praying that God's goodness, which is stored up for you who fear Him...
- ...that He is working out even now as you take refuge in Him...
- ...would come in such great amounts of His favor...
- that there is no doubt all this is from God & not the hands of man

As I prepare to be gone for the summer, I'm asking you to fear the Lord and grow in His wisdom