

# IN AWE OF THE LORD

Last week we learned that one of the ways we who have put our trust in God separate ourselves from the rest of the world is in how we deal with pain, trouble, and difficult circumstances. David says we should be radiant. But what does that look like?

This past week I started revisiting the show LOST. If you're not familiar, a plane crashes on a remote island and the people have to learn how to survive. Some are surviving, some are thriving and some are crashing out.

Rose and her husband were in different parts of the plane, but Rose believes with all the confidence that he is still alive and she will find him.

## VIDEO: LOST-ROSE AND CHARLIE PRAY

Rose remains radiant in this circumstance because her trust is in the Lord. When everyone is falling apart we remain steadfast, not because of denial, not because of delusion, but because our trust is in God.

This week we are looking at verses 9-14 and my sermon is titled "In Awe of the Lord."

### **Psalm 34:9-14**

- 9 Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints,  
for those who fear him have no lack!  
10 The young lions suffer want and hunger;  
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.  
11 Come, O children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
12 What man is there who desires life  
and loves many days, that he may see good?  
13 Keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from speaking deceit.  
14 Turn away from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.

### **The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

I originally titled my sermon *Fear of the Lord*. But many people have a hard time with that phrasing. Fear conjures up images of a scary, capricious, insecure God who wants you to cower in the corner when he kicks open the door. When we try to get people outside the faith to see God as our Father, but then tell them that we have to fear the Lord, they may see Him as an abusive father. And

especially for anyone who had an abusive father in this life, this language could absolutely turn someone away from God before they ever get to taste and see that He is good.

Some people have said we can replace the phrase with *respect and reverence*. But even those word don't do enough.

I have heard it explained like this: if we love our parents we would want to make them proud and so we would fear letting them down. It could be right but its also a bit shallow.

This morning I would like to unpack the difficulties and realities about the fear of God and why it leads to radiance.

## **1. The fear of God should come from who God is**

### **Revelation 1:12-17**

*12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw...(the) son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire...and his voice was like the roar of many waters...and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not...*

Jesus revealed himself to John not like the humble man John knew but full of immense power. His face was like looking into the sun, his voice was like the thundering of a waterfall and his hair was so bright it was white.

At my old church we had a fire pit and around the end of January we used to do the annual lighting of the Christmas tree where we would pour gasoline on an old dry Christmas tree and set it on fire. One year we lit three or four trees at the same time and the fire was so intense you couldn't get near it.

### **VIDEO: Xmas Tree Fire**

Did you ever stare at the sun as a kid? When I was a kid in the 80's parents didn't arrange play dates with scheduled activities to enhance learning and fostering educational prowess. Parents just told you to go outside a play until the street lights came on. You had to invent games, like staring at the sun. "Is this a good activity?" For a while all you see is spots every time you blink.

Jesus was so full of power and glory that it probably hurt John's eyes to look at him. It also said his voice was like many waters.

We took a hike in Silver Falls, Oregon and walked behind a giant waterfall. It's so loud its deafening, you have to shout to be heard.

### **VIDEO: Waterfall**

Jesus' eyes and face were blinding and his voice was deafening and the sheer power of Jesus made John fall to the ground like he was dead.  
But Jesus says "Do not be afraid."

## **AI Image of Jesus full of power.**

I asked AI to make an image of Jesus based on this description in Revelation.

This happens anytime people get near the presence of God. His glory is so immense his Holiness is so palpable that people can't help but fall down before Him. John's natural response wasn't just respect he fell down before Him in awe and fear.

This is part of what it means to fear the Lord.

## **2. The fear of God should be paired with our relationship with God**

### **Matthew 6:9**

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

God is our Father. After John is afraid, Jesus puts His right hand on him and comforts him. Fear of God comes with a balance of God's love, peace, and comfort. Reminding us that he's our dad who loves us and adopted us into His family.

First we acknowledge He is our Father then we acknowledge he is in heaven and is holy and awesome.

## **3. The fear of God should influence our relationships**

### **Acts 9:31**

**31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

As the early church feared God it also influenced those outside the church to want in. Because fearing God made the early Christians care for the people God cared for. They met the needs of those ignored and marginalized by Roman control and power of the religious elite like the Pharisees. And this is how the church grew. If we want to see growth and health in the body of Christ it begins at fearing God, because that will lead us to reach the needs of others.

## **4. The fear of God should overpower our fear of people**

### **Matthew 10:28**

**28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

People can kill you, but God can destroy a soul

Jesus is the ultimate judge. Fear him like a judge who has the keys to freedom and punishment

## **5. The fear of God should lead us to safety**

### **Proverbs 14:26**

In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.

Fear of God comes with dread, but God also has a heart for his people. When we are on His side He rallies beside us and becomes all that we need.

He delivered his people victory when they followed him.

He should be feared because of His sheer power but he uses that same power to create a place of refuge and safety for those who love Him.

Through His power we have the hope of heaven, and access to God's never ending love, and strength to overcome anything that stands against us.

## **6. The fear of God should be a lifestyle**

### **Proverbs 23:17**

Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day.

Always live in the fear of the Lord. It is not a one time thing, but a thing to live in always.

### **A.W. Tozer**

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

When we recognize that God is holy, all powerful, completely, just, and wise we should rightly fear Him but when we are on his side, this brings us comfort.

11 Come, O children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 What man is there who desires life

and loves many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep your tongue from evil

and your lips from speaking deceit.

14 Turn away from evil and do good;

seek peace and pursue it.

Whether they realize it or not what the world needs is the Fear of the Lord. Because those who have a proper fear of the Lord will flee from sin and treat people correctly

Our God who is terrifyingly infinite in power, still possesses a heart that desires to hold us close and bless us beyond measure in the midst of pain and difficulty. This is how we remain radiant.

# SMALL GROUPS

## Psalm 34:9-14 ESV

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What does it mean to "fear the Lord" in the context of this psalm? How does this differ from everyday fear?

How can we actively pursue peace in our relationships and communities?

Why does the psalmist invite "children" (verse 11) to listen and learn about fearing the Lord?

How does seeking the Lord and His ways lead to a fulfilling life?

How does this psalm encourage us to trust in God's goodness and protection, even when we are surrounded by difficulties?