

**CHAPEL ON THE HILL**  
 Shrewsbury, Massachusetts  
[www.cothma.org](http://www.cothma.org)

<b>Date:</b>	April-13-2008	<b>Pastor:</b>	Jeff Gauvin
<b>Message Title:</b>	Learning to Fear the Lord Through His Word (Deut. 17:18-20)		

**Week's Message**

Message	Bible Reference Passage
<p>I heard a preacher say recently “The world spells their religions as ‘DO’, only Christianity spells it as ‘DONE’. Christianity is not about us doing but trusting in what Christ has done; that it was indeed ‘finished’ on the cross. So the end goal of our lives is not to be good people, and it is not to do good things. The end goal of our lives is Jesus Christ. Christians have come to the place where they see that they can do nothing, and that they must totally rely on Jesus and His cross. We have to live by grace, there is no place left to go. In other words the Christian can do nothing, until they sincerely believe that Christ has done everything. Therefore anything we may do is not to earn or make up for anything; but only a grateful overflow of love towards Jesus.</p> <p>And yet as Christians we are called to do good works. Actually we are called, because of His grace, to be zealous for good works. Today I am going to show you, in God’s Word, how to grow in the fear of the Lord. Our temptation is going to be to take it, do it, and think our duty is done and ‘all is well’. No, it was ‘done’ on Calvary long ago, and only because of that cross is it ‘well’ with any soul. And right at the start I want to remind us that apart from resting in His cross and empty tomb, we can do nothing.</p>	<p><i>John 19:30</i>  <i>Philippians 1:21</i></p> <p><i>Galatians 3:1-3</i></p> <p><i>Titus 2:11-14</i></p>
<p><b>1. The fear of the Lord can be learned – Deut. 17:18-20</b></p> <p><b>First notice how great a care the king was to have for God’s Word.</b> The law was to be transcribed by <b>the King’s own hand.</b> This may have just referred to the first 5 books of the Old Testament; even still, can you imagine copying by hand Genesis to Deuteronomy? He is to do it in the presence of the Levitical priests, to ensure it is correct. The reason for this is because the King of Israel was to have his own personal copy of the law. Notice this is something the King was not to delegate. He may delegate the movement of massive troops to his army commander, but let not the slightest letter march onto the king’s copy without it being from his own hand.</p> <p>Vs. 19 - Also notice this law is <b>to be with the king.</b> God’s Word is not to leave his side; it is his most trusted advisor. The king</p>	

<p>is to be ready with God’s Word. Wherever the king goes, this Word is to be with him so that he can look to it at a moment’s notice.</p> <p>Not only is he to be ready with it, he is to <b>actually read it</b>; and do that every day of his life. Much more than a reference book then is this law—I have many reference books, but I don’t ‘read’ them. By the constant reading of it, the words should work their way into the blood and marrow of the man. Much more than just some recipe book, this is a book to grow in and understand.</p> <p>See how he treats the Word of God? It is the King’s most valued treasure. <b>Ps. 119:72</b>. We’ve seen so many people tremble at winning a jackpot. How many tremble at His Word? Hear it for yourself from a King of Israel, David prays in <b>Ps. 17:4</b>.</p> <p>This is no idle Word, it is our life; man doesn’t live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. His Word is truth. We are to have it in our hearts richly.</p> <p>Now let’s go back to Deuteronomy 17 and see <b>the purpose</b> of treating God’s Word with such reverence. What is the expected outcome from treating God’s Word with such honor and carefulness? That he may <b>learn</b> to fear the Lord his God. Our encouragement today is that the fear of God can be learned. How? When great care is taken with God’s Word in our lives.</p>	
<p><b>2. The fear of the Lord and the Word of God are intimately linked</b> – I want to make the connection between God’s Word and the Fear of the Lord tighter for us. One of the functions or benefits of the fear of the Lord is that it helps us not to sin. Please read <b>Ex. 20:20</b>. Those who have lives that tremble after God and walk in His Holy presence, with a constant sense of His majesty, will have greater trouble sinning. God’s Word is said to do the same thing - <b>Ps. 119:11</b>. I believe this is scripture memorization. It isn’t hidden in my heart if you see a bible in front of me. It is hidden in my heart when I have no bible, but there it is inside of me. When we have a habit of hiding God’s Word in our hearts, you will not be able to hide the goodness and fruit of your life from others.</p> <p>Now could it be that hiding His word in my heart produces more of the fear of the Lord in my heart, and thereby helps me not to sin. And thereby blesses many people around me?!</p>	
<p><b>3. Ways the Word of God Teaches us to Fear God</b></p> <p>A. <b>God’s Word brings Conviction for sin - Deut. 31:10-13.</b>          We learn from this verse first that it isn’t just the King who</p>	

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<p>can learn to fear the Lord, but everyone, even the little ones. Verse 13. But notice something. They are not called just to do the best they can. But they are called, to do ALL the law. (So was the King in Deut. 17) ALL. Did they do ALL the law? No!</p> <p>So time and again, when they gathered, for the Feast of Booths, they were supposed to remember how they wandered in the desert after God set them free from the slavery of Egypt. At the same time they are confronted with a new slavery. A new kind of wandering plagues their souls. . . . ALL the LAW! The feast of booths, or tabernacles, occurs 5 days after the day of Atonement, where animals were slaughtered for the sins of the people.</p> <p>This was also during the time when all debts were remitted in the land. As they are sitting in the tents, with the law burdening their hearts, ALL the law, I believe they longed to be freed from this greater debt . . . . ALL the Law!</p> <p>As the nations sits in their tents, fresh on their minds is also the day of Atonement. And the harsh realization that time and again they keep coming short of ALL the Law. And they are learning little by little how much they need a Savior. And that there is a greater slavery than Egypt upon them, they are slaves to their own sins, debtors who cannot pay God what they owe, wandering in the wilderness of their own dark hearts. As they remember how God mightily saved them from such slavery, they would perhaps cry out to God to save them from the slavery of their sin.</p> <p>Maybe one day God will deliver us again. Perhaps as they sat in their booths they would tell their grandchildren of how they were spared in Egypt. There was the great Passover of God’s punishment. And instead of the firstborn in our home being killed, we were told to kill the lamb and spread its blood around our door. Yes, and with a mighty arm we were saved. Perhaps if we cry out to God we will be saved from this greater slavery, “ALL THE LAW”. I wonder if the Lord has another Lamb to be killed in our place.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Leviticus 23:26-36</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>John 1:29</i></p>
<p><b>B. God’s word teaches about His forgiveness</b> – Let me show you another connection between the fear of the Lord and His holy Word. We have examined <b>Ps. 130:3-4</b>. The byproduct of understanding His forgiveness is a reverence of Him. But so many cannot fathom how God’s forgiveness can cause a trembling reverence for God. This is because only half the picture has been painted for them—a god of love and nothing else. And since our sins</p>	

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don't seem so bad in our eyes, surely they must not be so bad in God's eyes. Since so many think they are basically good, then they are all set with God since He is good too.

But when I dethrone myself and determine not to pick and choose which passages I like, when all of the Word of God takes the witness stand and bears testimony as to the dreadful eternal Holiness God is, how fierce His wrath, how real, terrible and just, hell is, then we have something to tremble about. Then it is an eternally great salvation we have because it is an eternal debt we have been forgiven, free and clear. And at great cost to God Himself. Now we see that there is a vastness to the height and breadth and length and depth to Christ's love in saving us from His own wrath for our sins.

So where do we go to learn about and grow in our understanding of this vast beautiful and awesome landscape? You won't find it in the stars, nor in modern science which claims to be close to finding what they call the 'god particle'. We find it in God's revealed Word – Read **1 Peter 2:1-3**. Have you seen a newborn baby go for its mother's milk? Nothing else satisfies. You can give the baby the world, put a crown on its head, and give it a million dollar check with the keys to a speed boat. All these things are useless, meaningless. It longs for one thing—Milk. There is a comfort there. There is the warmth of mom's body. A gentle touch, soft hair, a sweet voice, eyes looking down in love. OH please see the example God gives us in the feast of His word, as a newborn baby who longs for her mother's milk. God doesn't cram His Word down our throats and sent off to work. God's Word is an intimate extension of who He is. **2 Tim. 3:16** declares that the Scriptures are God-breathed.

**Hebrews 4:12** says the Word of God is living and active. And surrounding the food of His Word is warmth, comfort, and a place to rest. Babies often fall asleep when they are feeding—because they are satisfied.

Now I take you back to Psalm 130 and bring you through the logic. With Him there is forgiveness so that He may be revered. This means that when our forgiveness is clear and sharp in our minds and hearts, reverence and fear of Him occurs. Is there anything to help us understand and sharpen the doctrine of our forgiveness?

In 1 Peter we read we can grow in our understanding of our forgiveness (salvation) when we long for the pure milk of God's Word. Simply put, if my study of God's Word helps me to grow in

*Luke 4:4 (Deut. 8:3)*

<p>my understanding God’s forgiveness, and a greater grasp of God’s forgiveness produces reverence for God, then we can say God’s Word produces reverence for God. And it uses the vehicle of forgiveness and salvation to do the job.</p>	
<p><b>4. Encouragement to those who do not tremble at the Word of God yet.</b></p> <p>Remember this is something to be learned. This takes time. Bible study is a constant disciple. Read <b>1 Tim. 4:7</b>. When somebody goes to the gym to work out, they don’t grow muscles the next day. No, they are sore and tired. The exercise often doesn’t feel good. But over time some of you know the great benefits of a regular exercise routine. The <b>word for discipline</b> in 1 Tim. 4:7 is where we get the word gymnasium. There are many spiritual disciplines, but with the study of God’s Word, we are given a precious promise; we can grow in the fear of the Lord.</p> <p>Let me encourage you with a quote from Don Whitney’s book on spiritual disciplines. His first chapters deal with bible intake and at the end of his first chapter he quotes from a theologian named Geoff Thomas—just listen and be encouraged.</p> <p>“Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word. The apostle Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in the epistles of Paul (2 Peter 3:16). I am glad he wrote those words because I have felt that often. So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct. You will probably be the last to recognize these. Often you will feel very, very small, because increasingly the God of the Bible will become to you wonderfully great. So go on reading it until you can read no longer, and then you will not need the Bible any more, because when your eyes close for the last time in death, and never again read the Word of God in Scripture you will open them to the Word of God in the flesh, that same Jesus of the Bible whom you have known for so long, standing before you to take you for ever to His eternal home.” [Don Whitney, <i>Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life</i>, (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1991), page 39.]</p>	

*Thank you and have a blessed week.*

**Join us every Sunday morning at 10:15am | Have a prayer request? Send it to us online.**