

CHAPEL ON THE HILL
 Shrewsbury, Massachusetts
www.cothma.org

Date:	March 02, 2008	Pastor:	Jeff Gauvin
Message Title:	The Fear of the Lord is a Peaceful Trembling (Ps. 46:10)		

Week's Message

Message	Bible Reference Passage
<p>1. Resting on the Promises of God</p> <p>Remember last week Solomon looked at all of life and said it was void of purpose and meaning. If you were to give Solomon the book, <u>The Purpose Driven Life</u>, he would laugh at you. Nothing had purpose. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Solomon wouldn't get it. Solomon had all that this world could offer, and yet, it was all meaningless. When did Solomon find purpose in life? When he trembled at the thought of eternity and the awesome Day of Judgment. At the end of Ecclesiastes, when the fear of the Lord was added to the equation, and in Job, when Job had real perspective on his pain, then we saw how all of life had purpose and meaning. We also saw Paul do this in 2 Corinthians.</p> <p>As we have already seen, the man who fears the Lord is trembling because he really sees God is Holy; and in that holy eternal light he is shaken at the horror of his sins. Out of these depths he cries, and finds no rest until he is sure he will be forgiven on that terrible day. That day of judgment becomes the most important thing. When he is given grace to see how free and clean God wipes the dirtiest sinners, not because they deserve it, but because God is just and loves to be merciful, he trembles under such a powerful fountain. The miracle, the awesome miracle we must never get used to, is that I'm clean, white as snow, because of what He did on His cross. This is most vividly expressed in Ps. 130. A man standing in the fear of the Lord is standing on the promises of God, that on that great and terrible day of judgment he will not only be able to stand but be able to stand blameless with great joy. A man who lives in the fear of the Lord has his eye on that day and is not afraid.</p> <p>This is the chief difference between a fear that tries to hide behind bushes in the Garden of Eden from God, and a fear that jumps into the sea after Jesus like Peter did. It is a trembling rest and reliance on the Cross.</p> <p>I have heard people call Christianity a crutch. Some, to be sure, use it as an excuse for their sin. But to those of us who hate our sin and who have been grasped by the mighty grace of God, I say: Christianity <i>is</i> a crutch. And what a beautiful marvelous crutch is my Jesus, apart from whom I have no ability to stand. I am lame, and wretched and dead in sin without Christ. Apart from resting on His cross, I have no rest. That is the kind of thing someone who has been apprehended by the fear of the Lord would say.</p> <p>Do you see a man who is resting his head on the pillow of</p>	<p><i>Ecclesiastes 12:13-14</i></p> <p><i>2 Corinthians 5:10-11</i></p> <p><i>Isaiah 1:18</i> <i>Psalms 130:1-4</i></p> <p><i>Jude 24</i></p> <p><i>Genesis 3:8-10</i> <i>John 21:7</i></p>

but most of all he had Jesus. He told one of the nurses on our team “Everything I have ever asked God for He has given me.” He was a satisfied man. He was not in want. When the Lord is your portion, your cup, you always have enough. Fear of the Lord and ‘contentment’ are friends here.

C. Prv. 14:26 – refuge. I believe the “His” can refer to either the man who fears the Lord, or to the Lord’s children. Children who have parents who fear the Lord have a great upbringing. When they come home it is a safe place. They can talk to mom and dad. If they are unbelievers, they may not like the rhetoric, but they will know about eternity. Likewise, God’s children are never safer than when they are trembling before His feet in awe.

D. Ps. 145:19 – satisfied. Another way to title the sermon would be to say, the fear of the Lord is a *satisfied* trembling. So fearing God and being completely satisfied in Him are not at odds. Guess where my desires are if I fear God. I’m not going to ask for anything that will not glorify Him, or draw me away from Him. This is why Jesus said several times that whenever we pray in His will we will get what we ask for.

E. Ps. 46:10 – stillness. Where is the fear in this verse? The word reverence or fear does not show up yet. But one day this verse will be fulfilled. When He is exalted above all the earth, when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord, even Satan’s knee and tongue, then you will see the trembling reverence of God. The knees and tongues will tremble as they glorify God on this day.

To know Him is to tremble before Him. To know Him as God is to know Him exalted. If He is not exalted and glorious in our eyes, we are not seeing Him correctly. The fear of the Lord is a proper response to knowing the Lord. We are not called just to be still, but to be still and know, or be convinced and convicted, to be sure of something, that He is God.

The word ‘still’ here in the Hebrew רפה (rapah), means to relax. It can mean to drop down, to sink down, or to let go. It can also mean to be quiet. Listen to the prophet Samuel use this word in **1 Sam. 14:16**. King Saul was attempting to make an excuse for his blatant disobedience of God, and God’s prophet told him to be still and listen to what God has to say.

Be still means more than just *stop moving physically*. It means to be still in your mind also, be still in everything you think you know, all the things you think are so important, all your goals and agenda, be still in all your worries, or excuses, or longings. Just stop. Stop the rambling of your mind to so many things. **The fear of the Lord is a**

Psalm 73:25-26

<p>Holy glass of ice water thrown in our faces to shock us out of our temper and ragings over things that do not matter, over the stupid and insignificant. Stop the rambling before this holy God and begin with this one thing, know this, “He is GOD”. This means YOU are not, and nothing else is. He is the only One who will be exalted. If everything else you may know is stilled by this truth, that God is, and Phil. 2:9-10 will happen one day, then everything else in your life will be pulled and directed by this central truth.</p> <p>John Piper has a great analogy here. It is like the sun blazing hot and furiously, powerful in the center of our solar system. It wields an invisible power strong enough to hold Pluto, millions of miles away, in orbit. If God is the blazing fire in the center of your universe, all the planets of your life will rotate in harmony and order. Knowing Him is the central truth that we must live by, or all is chaos.</p> <p>As we close the sermon there is one other aspect of resting and the fear of the Lord that I must bring to our attention.</p>	
<p>4. Resting in the gospel is NOT assuming the gospel – I want to make a distinction here that I believe is absolutely crucial to our day. Resting in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the same thing as assuming the gospel. Many in our day have assumed the gospel. Let me explain.</p> <p>Too often in Christian circles today the promises of the gospel are assumed and not majored on. Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, becomes assumed theology. “Let’s move on to the better, more practical stuff,” they would say, “teach me how to have a better marriage”. So now the major note which is played in many churches is a “how to” kind of doctrine, “how to raise your children well, how to slay your giants, how to have your best life now”. It is essentially the book of Proverbs with verses 1:7 and 9:10 taken out. This isn’t resting in the gospel; it is in fact the exact opposite. It is using Jesus Christ and Him crucified as a step stool. It is using the cross as a wrench to tweak your life. The cross is no wrench to tweak your life, the cross is God’s means to give us life.</p> <p>The gospel is gradually disappearing because it is being assumed. I like the way D.A. Carson, a modern theologian, has put it - “In a lot of generations and not least this one, there is a lot of pressure to sound prophetic from the margins. It’s easy to sound prophetic from the margins. What you say is, ‘of course I believe all that stuff, of course we believe all that. But this is really crucial for understanding mission, or whatever.’ And as soon as you start assuming the center and pour your energy and excitement into the margins, then in the next generation, you displace the center.” (Desiring God 2008 Pastor’s Conference, Speaker Panel)</p> <p>So whatever is majored on, whatever we get most excited about</p>	

<p>becomes the center. It can be end times prophecy, or a certain church growth method, or even some important aspect of our culture. But what Paul says the things of first importance are is found in 1 Cor. 15:3-4. Be still and find your rest there, in the gospel, and never leave it. There are many practical things that come out of the gospel, of course, but the reason so many practical and rich applications come is only because the gospel is in the proper place, the center. <u>Remove this Fountain of Blood, and all the other tributaries and streams will dry up quickly.</u> We must continue to be excited about the gospel and never just assume it. That is why Paul was determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified.</p>	<p><i>1 Corinthians 2:2-3</i></p>
<p>Conclusion – As we close, consider and survey this wonderful cross. His cross was anything but restful as He painfully had to fight for every breath. Even much more than this torture Jesus was crucified and suffered the eternal restless torment of hell so that we may have rest and peace in God. To have this Holy One wrap His arms of forgiveness around you joyfully and take you in as His own is where holy fear begins.</p> <p>So we should use this to test ourselves. Do we have a restful trembling before God? Is there an awe and respect for Him, because He has granted so great a salvation?</p> <p>There is a peaceful trembling a Christian has when he stands under so great a salvation. Let me end with this quote from C.S. Lewis from <i>the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe</i>. Aslan the great Lion represents Jesus Christ in this allegory. The first time the children see Aslan he is standing amidst some other animals, talking to them:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">But as for Aslan himself, the Beavers and the children didn't know what to do or say when they saw him. People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever thought so, they were cured of it now. For when they tried to look at Aslan's face they just caught a glimpse of the golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then they found they couldn't look at him and went all trembly. (Chapter 12)</p> <p>But then Aslan speaks to them and at this Lewis says, "His voice was deep and rich and somehow took the fidgets out of them. They now felt glad and quiet and it didn't seem awkward to them to stand and say nothing." This week may the Lord bless you to be quiet before Him and as you live out your week, to know He is God. Make no mistake, He will be exalted in all the earth.</p>	

Thank you and have a blessed week.

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