

CHAPEL ON THE HILL
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts
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| Date: | Feb-17-2008 | Pastor: | Jeff Gauvin |
| Message Title: | Exodus 20:20 “Two Ways to Fear One God” | | |

Week’s Message

| Message | Bible Reference Passage |
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| <p>I want you to know I am planning to preach through the book of Galatians. I wanted you to know so you can begin praying and reading and studying what we will be going through.</p> <p>So before we go through Galatians I want to do something I’ve been wanting to do for a long time. And I’m not sure how many sermons it will take. It is a topic I have been studying and reading specifically for about 2 years, and I’ve listened to many sermon series on it. Rarely do you find just one sermon on it because it is such a huge issue, and I’ve read several books concerning the biblical treatment of this subject. I also read through my bible at least once a year, and for the past couple of years, whenever I come to this issue, I write a letter ‘F’ and circle it. You need to know there are a lot of ‘F’s. What am I talking about?</p> | |
| <p>1 John 4 says there is NO fear in love. No fear. So fear seems like a bad thing. Also in Romans 8 we are told that we have not received a spirit of fear, leading to slavery again. Yet look at Ps. 34:7-9. At any given time ‘fearing God’ is seen as a good thing, and at other times it is seen as a negative. What is going on here? The fear of the Lord has been a confusing doctrine for many. What does it mean to ‘fear the Lord’?</p> <p>In defining what the fear of the Lord is, we must first see that there are two ways to fear God. And I want to show this distinction in two ways - in Exodus 20 and then in the life of Peter.</p> | <p><i>1 John 4:18; Romans 8:15; Ps. 34:7-9</i></p> |
| <p>1. Israel’s Fear - Ex. 20:20 – From this verse we can clearly see that ‘fear’ is being used in two different senses. One is discouraged, the other encouraged. Let’s try to dissect this verse here.</p> <p>A. Why are they afraid? Isn’t God good? Isn’t God love? Yes, and that is exactly the problem. God is good, and we are not. In fact God is so good the only term useful to describe His goodness is, “Holiness”. God is Holy, which means there is no darkness in Him at all.</p> <p>Remember that whenever we see God showing up, either through an angel or directly in a vision, we see people falling on their faces trembling, unable to move, drained of strength, and terrified; this is because God is Holy. Holy means simply, ‘set apart’. There is nobody like Him. The angels around His throne are not crying out ‘love, love, love’. They are crying out, ‘holy, holy, holy’. Holiness is what the Puritans called the crown attribute of who He is. Everything is defined by His Holiness. Sure God is love, but it is a holy love. It isn’t like our kind of love; it is infinitely high, and wide and broad. God is Holy, and we are not.</p> | <p><i>Exodus 20:20</i></p> |

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| <p>I used this example a few Wednesday nights ago. I have never, nor do I ever want to, swim in the deep ocean. I have looked over the edge of large ships into the deep dark blue, and have no desire whatsoever to jump in. Now, I can snorkel and scuba dive, but I use a lot of oxygen because I'm breathing so fast. I remember looking off the ocean shelf one time in Jamaica, and it filled me with dread; it terrified me. It is a deep scary ocean; but it does have a bottom. If that is scary, what of God who has no bottom? God is infinitely deeper and high; God is Holy. And when we get that, there is a proper fear. So forget what you might see on TV; whenever God or even His angels come near, it is typically something that causes a person to come undone.</p> <p>See, the very sad truth here is that nothing has changed since the Garden of Eden. When God came near after they ate the fruit, they hid because they could not stand to be in God's presence. The shame, the nakedness of their sin, was too much. Here in Exodus God came near again and we still couldn't stand it. It was His voice we couldn't take. The lightening and fireworks show was enough to scare anyone, but what really bothered us was His voice. He makes us want to hide. When He speaks, it terrifies us, and we need to see the horrible state we are in. The One whose voice is so lovely that his voice created the universe out of nothing, <i>that One</i>, we simply cannot stand; but we know we must hear Him. So we want a mediator, someone between this awesome God and us. So Moses, you speak to God and endure His glory for our sakes.</p> | <p><i>Genesis 3:10</i></p> |
| <p>B. Why should they not be afraid? Because God is not going to kill them like they deserved and like he did with the Egyptians. He is here for a different reason - to test them.</p> <p>You test something to find out information. God doesn't need to find out anything, He knows the heart of man, and He knows what we will pray before we open our mouth. This test is to show us something. To show us how well we fare in speaking to God face to face. The puritan commentator, Matthew Henry, notes that ever since the garden man is not in a condition to deal with God directly. He is stewing in sin and shame; he is unbearably naked. He needs a mediator, a go-between.</p> <p>For example, if a young lady gets an unexpected visit from a young man she's interested in, if she's not properly dressed, hair scraggly, she becomes stressed and calls for a mediator, a go-between, to give her a moment to prep herself.</p> <p>The only problem with us and God is that there is no way to remove these spots, this sin. God has come near, is infinitely holy, and we are crying out for a mediator. And so God provides Moses as a mediator, a type of Christ who will be the glorious Chief Mediator. This Mediator doesn't just stand between us and God, He cleans us up, and presents us to the Father as His own.</p> <p>We also see in this context of Exodus 20, the giving of the Law, the 10 commandments. Remember a few weeks ago we were reminded out of</p> | <p><i>Exodus 20:20</i></p> |

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| <p>Galatians that the function and purpose of the law was never to save, but to teach us of our need of a Savior. So this test is meant to teach us something about ourselves and God. We must have a Mediator, a Savior, a Redeemer!</p> <p>So it seems there are two fears we can have in reference to God. There is the fear and dread of what we saw with Adam and Eve in the garden, and what Israel has in Exodus 20. This is a fear that wants to run and hide from God. This is a fear that has learned how awful and majestic God’s glory really is; and knows it will not survive unless someone is standing between God and itself, and a mediator is needed.</p> <p>But we haven’t yet spoken about the other fear, the fear of the Lord that is proper and good. This kind of fear actually attracts like a magnet; whereas, the other one cannot bear God’s presence, this fear is drawn to God. It is here in Exodus 20 but you must look carefully. The text says in Ex. 20:20 that the ‘good’ fear of the Lord actually helps us not to sin. A heart that is able to resist sin is a heart that is enjoying the presence of his God. Or to put it another way, the only thing that helps us not to sin is enjoying God’s presence. Sin is what blocks our fellowship and closeness and our nearness to God. And this fear of the Lord will draw you to God like a magnet, and help you not to sin.</p> | <p><i>Hosea 3:5</i></p> |
| <p>2. Peter’s Fear</p> <p>A. Luke 5:4-10 – What caused Peter to say that? This is like the fear in the garden. This is Israel before Mt. Sinai crying out for a mediator. This is the typical human experience of terror before raw glory. Go away from me Lord. Why? “Because I am a sinful man!” And I know I am naked and shameful in your great presence. Isaiah had a similar experience in Isaiah 6 when he sees the Lord on His throne, glorious, highly exalted, he is overcome with fear, and cries out, “Woe is me.” Why? “Because my mouth, my lips, are dirty and sinful.”</p> | <p><i>Luke 5:4-10</i></p> <p><i>Isaiah 6:1-7</i></p> |
| <p>B. John 21:4-6 – Notice this is the same situation and it is no mistake. The fishing all night with no catch; the suggestion of Jesus; the miracle of a multitude of fish; all are designed to bring Peter back to that terrifying moment when he was first overcome with Jesus’ Holiness. It was the same situation that brought Peter to say in great fear, “Depart from me, I am a sinful man.” This was the same miracle that brought Peter’s shame to bear down on him so heavy that he wanted to hide like Adam and Eve in the garden, and that he wanted to be at a distance from Jesus’ glory like Israel was at Mt. Sinai; but instead of running away, or requesting Jesus to depart, we see Peter jumping into the sea! He is swimming towards that which once terrified him.</p> <p>What has changed? If Peter was a sinful man before, he is a much worse sinner now. Peter had denied Jesus three times. So Peter wasn’t any more holy himself, not any less sinful. If anything, Peter was more sinful and vile, and Peter has even more to be ashamed of; and yet, here he is, jumping into the sea to swim after Jesus.</p> <p>Perhaps Jesus turned down the volume on His glory and holiness, so</p> | <p><i>John 21:4-6</i></p> |

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| <p>it didn't scare Peter quite so much, so that Jesus didn't appear quite so holy. No, if anything Peter would understand Jesus to be even more holy. Not only did Peter see Jesus transfigured and hear the Father's testimony from heaven, but this is Jesus resurrected, with a glorified body.</p> <p>Peter has never been such a wretch in his life, and Jesus has never appeared so glorious to Peter. What is causing Peter to flee towards Jesus?</p> <p>What drove Peter to say "depart from me" was that he could feel he was a sinful man, and being around Jesus made him feel that all the more, at first. Peter heard Jesus tell him, 'don't be afraid'; and then he began to see, with Him there is forgiveness, so that He may be feared. (Ps. 130)</p> <p>Somewhere along the way Peter understood the grace and forgiveness of God. Peter found the Mediator between God and man. And that Mediator was God Himself.</p> <p>So, Peter saw an opportunity to see Jesus' smile of forgiveness over him. We see God's forgiveness and smile by faith .If you had an opportunity to see Jesus and hear His words of forgiveness and grace over you, you would jump into the sea as well.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Psalm 130:1-4</i></p> |
| <p>Something has changed about Peter. And it must be the thing that changes about you and me if we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. If we do not have a Savior for our sins on the day of judgment we will not have to say "depart from me, I am a sinful man"; God Himself will say it, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness. Go into the lake of fire. But if the Holy Spirit has touched our hearts, if we have asked God's sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to cover our sin, then as Hebrews says, we will be able to enter with boldness into the throne room of God. Like Peter we will throw ourselves into the ocean of God's love and be able to finally comprehend the breadth and length and height.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Matthew 16:15-16; John 6:66-69</i></p> |
| <p>[More specifically there is one more aspect I want us to see before we leave this. You remember in Exodus 20 there is the sound of a trumpet; actually we hear about this trumpet several times in the account 19:16. God Himself has come near, and the sound of the trumpet is too much for us. But by the time Jesus comes again something has changed. 1 Thess. 4:16-17 – that which used to repulse and threaten, and terrify us, will actually pull us to be with Him forever.]</p> <p>So there are two ways to fear God; but there is much more to be said about the fear of the Lord and I hope, Lord willing, to preach more on this next week.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Exodus 19:16</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>1 Thessalonians 4:16-17</i></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.