

Introduction: Over the past several weeks we have embarked on what has become a series dealing with certain elements of the Christian in relationship to God. This has included such subjects as knowing God, walking with God, imitating God, and resting in God. We come to yet another, which I would like to introduce with a question: **Do you fear God? Should you fear God?** My answer is, as is well known and will probably end up being put on my gravestone: yes...and no.

- **Yes** – Abraham described by the Lord as one who feared God (Genesis 22:12), Job feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1), the assembly of the saints (Psalms 89:7), those who get wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), the early church walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).
- **No** – Believers do not receive the spirit of fear (Romans 8:15 2 Timothy 1:7) and perfect love casts out fear (1John 4:8).
- As we have seen in many other instances through the years, our answers to simple questions aren't always simple, and often can't be watered down into easy or glib sayings. It takes diligence to study, pray, and hold in tension those things which initially seem to contradict, and worship God in the fullness of His Word.
- This morning I want you to look with me to a text that teaches us much about the fear of God for the purpose of seeing that we should have it, why we should have it, the benefits of it, and then something of what it actually is.

Hebrews 12:28-29

I. **Who Should Have It?** - *You who are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken*

- This is the Kingdom of God, that which alone will outlast all others, will be established in righteousness, and will crush all others at the coming of the Lord Jesus
- The sober reality is that every kingdom, every dynasty, every nation in human history can and will be shaken
- While we live in a nation with wonderful freedoms and blessings, even America, should the Lord tarry, will fall and another will take its place as a world power

II. **Why Should You Have It?** - *Because God is a consuming fire*

III. **How Do You Have It?** - *Let us have grace*

- It is by grace (or God's gift) it is received, and by grace that it is maintained

IV. **What Is Its' Benefit?** - *Having our worship accepted by God*

- Worship in the NT goes beyond the boundaries of the door of the church, but into all of life – Proverbs 28:14
- True worship is not glib and lighthearted, but a joyful awe of the majesty and greatness of God
- This is what Jesus had that caused Him to be heard - Hebrews 5:7
- This is what motivated Noah to obedience - Hebrews 11:7

V. **What Is It?**

- Two words are used in the verse: reverence (Gk. eulabeia = honor or respect) and godly-fear (Gk. deous [only here in NT] = profound respect, awe). Even these words with their definitions are hard to hold on to. Let's dig deeper.
- Here let's consider from the three passages I mentioned in the introduction some particulars
- Romans 8:15 It is a fear that doesn't bring a sense of slavish bondage or oppression, but that of a freed and **adopted** person. Such love is demonstrated that there is the particularly tender term "Abba" which becomes the Christian's cry to God.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 the fear of God is the opposite of the spirit of fear. The fear of God brings **power** (as opposed to weakness) **love** (as opposed to self-centeredness or hate), and a **sound mind** (as opposed to an unsound and disrupted mind).
- 1John 4:18 This fear casts out another kind of fear because of the love of God. This casts out the "torment" of the fear of destruction.

Illustration: You are on a hike with a good friend through the mountains. You realized that bad weather is coming, and darkness. You must keep moving, but as darkness falls you realize that one misstep will be your doom. Without light there is fear, bondage, timidity. Your partner on the trail sacrifices himself to give you his light. You walk now still in fear of what is life threatening, but also in thankfulness, love, and greater liberty. You hold on to the light, knowing your life depends on it. You have hope that as you walk carefully, staying on the right path, holding on to the light given by the sacrifice of another, you will escape safely.

- It is to fear the consequences of sin because of God's holiness, both in time and eternity. It is a reverence and awe for the fact that Jesus Christ has given His life for you to live. This godly fear will cause you to turn FROM sin and flee TO God. It says "If God is for me, who can be against me" and also "If God is against me, what does it matter who is for me?"
- Do you fear God? This is more than being afraid, but the acceptance of the light of His truth for your salvation.