

Experiencing Joy through the Fear of the Lord - Part 3¹

Review

In this series, we want to demonstrate that the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ both _____ us from sinful fear and enables us to fear rightly. In fact, the right fear of God is a blessing of the _____ inaugurated by Christ (Jeremiah 32:38–41). So, rightly understood and believed, the Gospel frees us from crippling fears and replaces them with an incredibly _____ and wonderful fear!

The Means to Joy in the Lord

“Just as the fear of God defines true love for God, so it defines true joy in God” (Reeves, 59): **Nehemiah 1:11; Psalm 2:11; Proverbs 28:14**; “*Our desire for God and delight in him are not intended to be lukewarm. As our love for God is a trembling and wonder-filled love, so our joy in God is at its purest a trembling and wonder-filled joy*” (Reeves, 61).

Charles Spurgeon: “*Believers adore and worship the living God with a joyful, tender fear, which both lays us low, and lifts us very high; for never do we seem to be nearer to heaven’s golden throne than when our spirit gives itself up to worship him whom it does not see, but in whose realized presence it trembles with sacred delight*” (Cited by Reeves, 59).

William Ames: “*The principal cause of our fear is not any evil which we are in danger of, but the excellent perfection of God*” (Cited by Reeves, 60). Examples: **Deuteronomy 10:12, 17; 1 Samuel 12:24; Psalm 130:4; Jeremiah 10:7; Revelation 15:4**.

Two Kinds of the Right Fear of the Lord

In his 2 volume *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin speaks of two kinds of knowledge of God: as Creator (Book 1) and as Redeemer (Book 2). And this corresponds to two kinds of fear of God.

1. Fear of the Lord as _____ : **Psalm 8:1–4**.

Spurgeon: “*Gazing upon the vast expanse of waters, looking up to the innumerable stars, examining the wing of an insect and seeing there the matchless skill of God displayed in the minute; or standing in a thunderstorm, watching as best you can, the flashes of lightning and listening to the thunder of Jehovah’s voice, have you not often shrunk into yourself and said, “Great God, how terrible you are!”—not afraid, but full of delight, like a child who rejoices to see his father’s wealth, his father’s wisdom, his father’s power—happy and at home, but feeling oh, so little!*” (Cited in Reeves, 79).

2. Fear of the Lord as Redeemer: **Isaiah 41:10, 13, 14, 16b; 43:1-3; 44:6-8; 63:16**. “Knowing God as our Redeemer in Christ will make our fear distinct from the fear shone by the devotees of other gods” (Reeves, 90). So, this is a distinctively _____ fear.

¹ Adapted from Michael Reeves, *Rejoice & Tremble: The Surprising Good News of the Fear of the Lord* (2021).

Martin Luther: “It is not enough to know God is Creator and Judge. Only when God is known as a loving Father is he known aright” (Cited by Reeves, 97). In this regard we can speak of the *filial* fear of God (from Latin *filius*, meaning “son”). J.I. Packer: “The distinctive characteristic of a Christian is that he can call God his _____” (**John 1:12; 1 John 3:1**).

Spurgeon: “As loving children, we feel a holy awe and reverence as we realize our relationship to Him who is our Father in Heaven, a dear, loving, tender, pitiful Father” (Cited in Reeves, 100–101).

To fear the Lord does not mean being _____ of the Lord nor does it mean fearing the _____ of salvation. Rather, it means to _____ in the Lord and fear the loss of _____ with Him: “If there is any fear of separation from God in believers, it is not the fear of being ultimately separated; it is the fear that our sins might part us from the warmth of enjoyed communion with God. More positively, it is the fear that inspires us to appreciate God's character and so hate sin and long to be more Christ-like” (Reeves, 101).