

FIVE FEARS: Dismantling the Fears of Life with the Fear of God (Pt. 1) // Luke 12:1-7

Message from the series, The Gospel of Luke

The previous passage in Luke dealt with Jesus' address to the hypocrites, the Pharisees, and detailed the "woes" that would befall them. Then in chapter 12, Jesus turns his attention to his disciples, and warns them to beware hypocrisy and hypocrites and instructs them on the topic of the fear of God. A major commentary on the life of the hypocrite is that he does not fear God. Conversely, the only thing a Christian is to fear is God himself. Solomon summarizes this principle in Ecclesiastes 12:13: "*The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*" We will either fear God or we will fear everything else. The disciple is not to fear as the hypocrite fears, but there is a slice of hypocrisy in us all—we don't fear God in all areas of our life, and we can tie whatever sin we are struggling with to that lack of fear of God.

The fear of God is the reverent respect, love, and honor that is due his majesty (cf. Proverbs 1:7)

Martin Luther wrote that the fear of the Lord is the fear that a child has for his father—a fear of displeasing the one who is your security and chief love. We don't fear his hand against us, but fear his hand removed from us.

Main idea of the series: The fear of God brings confidence to the Christian life and dismantles our most common fears.

Fear #1: Truth—But the fear of God brings moral integrity to the privacies of life (v. 2-3)

The fear here is the fear of exposure of truth. The hypocrite fears that they will be found out. Whatever we cover, God will uncover. But whatever we uncover before him, God will cover with his grace. When we fear God, we don't have to fear the truth. God has called us to clean living—to be happy and holy. We should be light-dwellers and truth-seekers. To that end, we need to find someone with whom we can share the truth about ourselves.

Fear #2: Death—But the fear of God brings biblical clarity to the reality of hell (v. 4-5)

There is something worse than death—the second death. The unsaved are born once, but die twice; the Christian is born twice, but dies only once. If you live in fear of death, you will live with an emotional and spiritual straight-jacket, prizing the body above all else. Martyrs and those who have died for Christ have recognized that their healthy fear of God is stronger than any fear of death.

Fear #3: Loss—But the fear of God brings divine security to emotional frailty (v. 6)

We often make an idol out of ourselves and feel that as long as we are happy and healthy, all is well. Jesus wants to remind us that we are worth more. This is not only an issue of thinking too highly of ourselves—we may also think too low of ourselves. They are two sides of the same coin—pride of self on the one side and depression and low self-estimation on the other. But in both cases, the focus is on the self, not Jesus. We begin to live differently when we live before a God who says we have value.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What fear are we most struggling with now? How does this fear change when we prioritize the fear of God in our lives?
2. How do we cultivate a fear of the Lord in our lives? Does understanding this fear as being the fear a child has of displeasing his father—his security and chief love--help us to know how to cultivate this fear?
3. How does fearing God free us from the idol of self? How does our focus and our heart change when we are no longer most concerned about protecting our image, our bodies, our self-esteem?