Afraid of God? Why?

(Overcoming the Fear of Surrendering to God)

Part 3 in a series of messages on Conquering Fear
(Selected Scriptures)
11/20/05

Introduction:

There is a proper fear (respect & reverence) of God

Why would anyone be afraid of God so as to...hide from Him?...ignore Him?

People are afraid of God...
Due to the Shame of Sin & Guilt
Due to the Judgment People expect from God because of sin
Due to the suspicion that God is withholding something from them

- We are often afraid to give up our **Independence** (due to our pride in our ability)
- We are often afraid to give up our **Security** (due to our reliance on our things)
- We are often afraid to give up our **Pleasure** (due to our lusts in our flesh)
- We are often afraid to give up our **Rights** (due to our pursuit of our self-interest)

I. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Soul to God for Salvation?**
(Trust the Hands of God to rescue you)

II. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Body to God for Sanctification?**
(Trust the Will of God to guide you)

III. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Mind to God for Edification?**
(Trust the Word of God to instruct you)

IV. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Time, Talent, & Treasure to God for Service?**
(Trust the Wisdom of God to use you)

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Introduction:

Many fear live their lives in constant fear!

- Don't look. You might see.
- Don't listen. You might hear.
- Don't think. You might learn.
- Don't make a decision. You might be wrong.
- Don't walk. You might stumble.
- Don't run. You might fall.
- Don't live. You might die.

There is a proper fear (respect & reverence) of God

Christians should fear <u>God</u> -
The fear of the Lord is:
"<u>clean</u>" (Ps. 119:9)
"the beginning of <u>wisdom</u>" (Prov. 1:7)
"to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13)
"a fountain of life" (Prov. 14:26)
"By the fear of the LORD, men depart from evil" (Prov. 16:6).
1) A fear of <u>respect</u>
Ps. 112:1; Mal. 1:6; Luke 12:4-5; I Pet. 2:7; Rev. 14:7
2) A fear of <u>displeasing Him</u>
II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12; I Pet. 1:17

Why would anyone be afraid of God so as to...

- hide from Him?
- ignore Him?
- refuse to yield one's life over to Him?

People are afraid of God...

- **Due to the Shame of Sin & Guilt**
  Ge 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

- **Due to the Judgment People expect from God because of sin**
  De 9:19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

Mt 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

- **Due to the suspicion that God is withholding something from them**
  Basically, people are afraid of God, due to a fear that He might hold something very good and desirable back from them
  (This was Satan's basic temptation toward Eve in the Garden of Eden)

  Ge 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.
  Satan implicitly questions God's integrity, that He is not perfectly good after all. Why would a good God withhold such easily attainable knowledge?

  "For God doth know" - Satan in effect accuses God of selfishness (keeping the best knowledge for Himself); he leads Eve to believe that God was withholding something from her that would benefit her if she had it.

  God, however, only and always gives what is good (Ja. 1:17); "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." If He keeps something from us, He does so with good reason.

- We are often afraid to give up our **Independence** (due to our pride in our ability)
  We are dependant upon God

- We are often afraid to give up our **Security** (due to our reliance on our things)
  Security is not found in money or material, but in the LIving God

- We are often afraid to give up our **Pleasure** (due to our lusts in our flesh)
  We are on this Earth to Please our Creator and Savior

- We are often afraid to give up our **Rights** (due to our pursuit of our self-interest)
  The only Right we have is to Do Right and Glorify God

Matthew 8:23-27)

V. 24
The little Sea of Galilee, because of its geographical location, can become a raging sea in a matter of minutes.

"The ship" - was no huge ocean vessel, but was by today's standards a little boat (cp. Mk. 4:36).

"He was asleep" - Had they known who Jesus was, they would not have been worried that He was asleep. He, though He took upon Himself physical limitations, was still in total control of things - even asleep!

V. 25
Being fishermen, the disciples had been in storms before; they perhaps exhausted all of their efforts and finally in desperation go to wake up Jesus.

Can you imagine what they must have thought:
"How could He sleep during a time like this?!"
"Doesn't He realize what is going on?!"
"Doesn't He care about us?"

Sometimes we are tempted to ask such questions in the midst of turmoil, confusion, and severe trial, but remember Jesus has everything under control! (In Heaven, *"He neither slumbers nor sleeps"*)

V. 26
Matthew is contrasting the *"little faith"* of the disciples with the *"great faith"* (8:10) of the Centurion.

"Fear" is always the result of ***"little faith."***

Whenever we worry it is always because we are not trusting God like we should.

"Rebuked the winds and the sea" - Perhaps all Jesus said to the wind was "Stop it" and to the sea, "Peace, be still" (Mk. 4:39). All it took was the power of His word.

"Great calm" - the sea went from violent, raging, beating waves to a peaceful, serene, smooth calm.

It wasn't just a calm, it was a great calm. Not a ripple remained! The sea became like a sheet of glass. It was not a gradual calming, but it was a sudden and complete calm.

One second the disciples are rocking back and forth in their little boat, and the next, they were completely stationary.

The wind went from a howling, vicious torrent to non-existence; not a breeze remained.

v. 27
The disciples were amazed! They knew Jesus had power over leprosy (v. 3), palsy (v. 13), sickness (v. 14), and demon possession (v. 16) -- but did He have the power to instantaneously control the natural elements?! No one can do this! No one except God!

So they responded, *"What manner of man is this?"* He was no ordinary man!

The problem with the disciple's question is that it reveals that they still didn't know who Jesus was. They still thought He was a mere man.

Despite His authoritative teaching and His tremendous miracles, they still didn't see that He was the God-Man!

Psalm 89:8-9 - *"O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee? of to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."*

"The winds and the sea obey Him" - when Jesus speaks the elements submit. When Jesus speaks, the humanly impossible is accomplished. When Jesus sends forth the command, "Mother Nature" proves she is not "Mother" but is an obedient servant to her Creator.

I. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Soul to God for Salvation?**
(Trust the Hands of God to rescue you)

Matthew 19:16-26

V. 20
"What lack I yet" - This man, although he had a great deal of confidence in his self-righteousness, still saw that he was missing something. A gnawing emptiness bothered him. He knew he was empty on the inside. There was a void in his life that hadn't been filled, not even by money.

Luke tells us that this man was a *"ruler,"* most likely a ruler in the synagogue, revealing this man to be not only rich, but also spiritual in the eyes of the world.

V. 21
"God. . . come" - This command involved repentance and faith.

Repentance = a turning from anything that is keeping you from turning to Jesus Christ.

"Thou shalt have treasure in Heaven" - It required faith for this man to believe this.

Jesus said earlier: Mt. 6:19-21 - *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Why did Jesus tell this man to ***"sell all"***? Answer: He wanted this man to see his own selfish, idolatrous, materialistic, covetous spirit.

Jesus actually had touched the root of this man's sin (by giving this request).

"Give to the poor" - If fulfilled, this would validate his claim to ***"love his neighbor as himself"*** (v. 19).

"Should all believers sell everything they own? No. We are responsible to care for our own needs and the needs of our families, so as not to be a burden on others. We should, however, be willing to give up anything if God asks us to do so. . . If you

are comforted by the fact that Christ did not tell his followers to sell all their possessions, then you may be too attached to what you have" (Life Application Bible note).

"Perfect" - complete; to reach God's goal for one's life. This perfection is not attained is simply because the rich man gave up his wealth, but because his wealth would no longer be a hindrance to him coming to Christ. One must ***"come"*** to Christ to be ***"perfect"***.

It was Christ's finished work on Calvary that *"perfects"* us forever (Heb. 10:14 - *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

V. 22

"He went away sorrowful" - He left the scene grieving (with deep sadness in his heart).

Why? Because he could not have his "cake and eat it, too"; i.e. He could not have *"eternal life"* (v. 16) and still have money as his God, his trust.

"He had great possessions" - the more you have, the harder it is to give it up.

This man's joy and security was all wrapped up in the bundle of wealth he had.

What was it that kept him from eternal life? According to Jesus, the man's problem was that he *"trusted in riches"* (Mk. 10:24 KJV).

Having riches does not necessarily mean that you are materialistic and trust in them.

EX: Abraham and Job had vast wealth, yet were men of great faith (their complete trust was in God).

No man can serve 2 masters. You cannot serve God and mammon. You have to decide! Who or what are you going to live for? Anything that would prevent or hinder you as a Christian from following Christ must be repented of!

Many Fear to Come to Jesus Christ for salvation due to a fear of what they might have to give up in doing so.

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

1Pe 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

II. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Body to God for Sanctification?**
(Trust the Will of God to guide you)

Romans 12:1-2

When a sacrifice was made in ancient Israel on the brazen altar, the sheep, goat, or calf was given completely over to God to be burned with fire. The offerer could lay no further claim on it.

In Leviticus chapter 1, the first offering required after the great Passover sacrifice was the burnt offering. Just as the offering of Christ on Calvary symbolized the passover lamb and our salvation, the whole burnt offering symbolizes our total dedication.

--You either are completely given over to God, or you are not.

*It's all or nothing!

To be acceptable, it must be all (no man can serve two masters).

Why should you give such a sacrifice?

--It is "your reasonable service"
(sacrifice is the logical, intelligent choice)

"Reasonable" - we derive our English word "logic" from the Greek.

The believer's devotion to God as a living sacrifice is not an unreasonable demand. It is very logical, a very intelligent choice.

Our complete sacrifice is very logical for two reasons:

1. Sacrifice is the logical response to God's ownership of my life.

In light of the mercies of God, the most reasonable response of the believer would be total devotion.
Poem: "After all He's done for me..."

If you are saved, God is not asking you to give Him anything that is not His already (our spirit and our body is God's already - I Cor. 6:19, 20).

ILLUS: It would be foolish for you to buy a car and not use it. God bought you and now desires to use you. It would be wrong for the one from whom you bought it to demand it back after the price was paid. Christ paid the price to buy you. If He has bought you, what right do you have to selfishly reserve the rights to your life?

2. Sacrifice is the logical key to the abundant life

The Lord Jesus did not give you eternal life so that life would be a drag (dull and boring). Rather, He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (Jn. 10:10).

The most intelligent decision in the world is to dedicate your life to Christ, when you realize the rewards of such dedication.

The most irrational, foolish decision would be to not surrender all.

Our amount of joy is determined by the degree to which we surrender to God.

Someone who surrenders all (has nothing held back) lives the most abundant life.

Romans 12:2

The reason why we should refuse to be conformed to the world, and the reason why we should have a transformed mind is so that we might know God's will for our lives.

"That you may prove" - in order that you may accept after testing.

We need to know God's will in regards to:

1) Morals of right and wrong

2) Issues which face society

3) Specific direction in our lives

   a) Whom to marry
   b) what to do (vocationally)
   c) where to live, etc.

God's will is described in three ways:

1) God's will is "good" -

It is good - morally (our lives will be clean)
It is good - socially (our relationships will be blessed)
It is good - pragmatically (we will be successful - Prov. 3:5-6)

To not be in God's will is to live a wasted life.

2) God's will is "acceptable" (well-pleasing)

Knowing and doing what God wants is life's greatest privilege.

To please God by knowing and doing His will is life's greatest opportunity.

3) God's will is "perfect"

It is complete - it's all you need for happiness and success.

God's will is "good, acceptable, and perfect" - the contrast is the world's mold, which is no good, unacceptable (to God), and infinitely opposite of perfect.

You who are worldly do not know God's will.

Your perceptions to discern God's will have been numbed, calloused, or cauterized because of their soaking in the world's philosophies, goals, methodologies, etc.

However, when in a moment of decision, when you need to know, "Is this God's will?" -- if you have been living Romans 12:1-2, you will be able to clearly see the true picture in its true light.

III. ***Why would you be afraid of surrendering your*** **Mind to God for Edification?**
(Trust the Word of God to instruct you)

Example of Mary who sat and listened to the Lord Jesus (Luke 10:37-42)

Mt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"Take My yoke and learn" - Jesus is actually quoting a well-known Jewish metaphor for discipline and discipleship - "Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction" (Sir 51:26).

To learn ("mathete") from Jesus is to be His disciple ("mathetes").

Christ alone is the Teacher, who by His person and work can instruct men regarding the Father (cp. v. 25-27) (Wycliffe Bible Comm, p. 949).

"Learn of me" = learn from (apo) me.

True learning takes place in the life of one who is walking each day with Christ.

Note: How people took notice how the unlearned & ignorant fishermen from Galilee had "been with Jesus"

To be like Mary of Bethany and sit at the feet of Jesus is the key to acquiring profound spiritual knowledge (Luke 10:39-42).

True humility is learned only from the Master (Jn. 13:15).

True love is learned only from the Master (Jn. 15:13).

True forgiveness is learned only from the Master (Jn. 8:11; Lk. 23:34, 43).

True peace is learned only from the Master (Jn. 17:33; Jn. 14:1ff).

Lest anyone should be fearful or apprehensive to yoke up with Christ, our Lord gives these words of reassurance -

"For I am meek and lowly in heart."

"Meek" = gentle (Jesus is gentle, not harsh) "He upbraideth not" (Jms. 1:5)

"Lowly" = humble (Jesus is humble enough to yoke up with us, humble enough to personally tutor us. Though He is God [exalted above all], He is humble enough to associate with the lowest of the low).

IV. *Why would you be afraid of surrendering your* Time, Talent, & Treasure to God for Service?

(Trust the Wisdom of God to use you)

We are stewards of our time, talent & treasure:

1 Peter 4:10-11

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

"Minister" - Serve (same word as "deacon")

"ability" - ( ) Physical & intellectual strength, might, power. (Ex. We are commanded to love God with all our strength. Mk.12:30)

"giveth" - To supply, furnish, provide.
(Ill. Of a Doctor working for a hospital. The hospital supplies the necessary instruments and equipment.
(Ill. Of a Soldier going to war. The National army supplies him with arms. He doesn't go out & buy his own tank, ammunition etc.) **God supplies His soldiers** with the necessary power to fight the spiritual warfare.

"Which God giveth":

1) We can't take pride in it. (I Cor. 4:10; 10:27) God uses the weak (I Cor.1:25-ff), and empowers them. (ill. Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7)
We need to rely of God's power because in man there is no power sufficient for the task.
"I can do all things through Christ which strengheneth me." (Phil.4:13)

2) We can't do it in the flesh. Spiritual work accomplished by decaying flesh stinks!
Why do we do work for the Lord in the flesh? Confidence of self-strength, or desire for self-glory.
(Ex. of Hymn: "Brethren we have met to worship" says: "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down".

Why should we have a strengthened service? "that (for the purpose and result that) God alone will receive the credit, and praise. ("Glory" N.T.- ( ): radiance, that light or brightness which shines out from God. Honor, fame, repute.

The Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit) are the **power house** (power source)
Jesus Christ is the **power line** (channel of power) "through"
God's Servants need to be **plugged** in to God's power! (Usage of power).

"in all things" - in every sphere of life.

Why should Jesus Christ receive Glory? Because He is Glory; (the light of world) and He is the power & might (dominion). (All power is given unto me)
"All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father..."(Jn. 5:23)

When you minister by God's power (people know it isn't you who is doing it) but it is God through you. And consequently all the praise goes back to God (who really deserves it)

You should not be afraid to surrender to God Because...

- God is Great in Character and nature (know who He is)
- You are Bought and Owned by God (Know who He is toward you)
- You are Loved and Cared for by God (Know who you are in Him)
- He has a Wise and Good plan for the rest of your life (Know what He can do in & through you)

Hebrews 13:5-6

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. [6] So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

(What affection do you have toward money and material things?)

"Conversation" - way of life; character and conduct; lifestyle.

"Coveteousness" = lit. without an affection for money; no love for money (cp. I Tim. 6:6-10, 17)

"Content" - satisfied; view what you have as enough (food and clothing are all you need!) (I Tim. 6:8)

A greed for money reveals insecurity in a person's life; people treasure wealth because it offers them a false sense of comfort and security for their future.

However, our trust ought to be in God; in the Giver rather than the gifts; in the Supplier rather than the supply; in the Provider rather than the provision!

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - A clause often taken out of context; its specific application is to provide a substantial reason why we can be content and free from a love for money.

The reason we don't need to worry about money is because the Provider is never going to leave us! Our security is in Him! He is not a Savior who is "here today and gone tomorrow"! He will never abandon or desert us!

Dt. 31:6 - *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."*

Psalm 37:28 - *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Psalm 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

"The Lord is my <u>helper</u>" - One who comes to the rescue in time of need.

Saying "the Lord is my helper" is to say:

--the Lord is my <u>provider</u>
--the Lord is my <u>guide</u>
--the Lord is my <u>protector</u>
--the Lord is my <u>preserver</u>
--the Lord is my <u>job security</u>
--the Lord is my <u>mortgage payer</u>
--the Lord is my <u>bank account</u>
etc.

"I will not fear" - <u>Faith</u> in His abiding presence (v. 5) expels all <u>fear</u> (v. 6)

*Overcome fear with <u>faith</u>! (Prov. 29:25; Mt. 8:26)
(Faith = trust, reliance, confidence in God)

1) Faith in the <u>love</u> of God (I Jn. 4:16-19)
Knowing God's love for us removes all fear.

2) Faith in the <u>companionship</u> of God
a) Remember, God is your <u>Father</u> (Rom. 8:15).
b) Remember, God <u>fights</u> our battles - Psalm 27:1 - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"
(1)Like He did for <u>Israel</u> - Deut. 20:3-5
(2)Like He did for <u>Joshua</u> - Josh. 8:1; 10:8
(3)Like He did for <u>David</u> - I Sam. 17:47; Ps. 23:4
(4)Like He did for <u>Jehosaphat</u> - II Chron. 20:1-30

c. Remember, God will never leave you nor forsake you.
SEE Heb. 13:5-6
EX: Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10)
Disciples at sea (Mt. 8:26)