Divine Respect?

(Reverence for God)

Hebrews 12:25-29

1/5/05

**** The LORD is <u>WORTHY OF RESPECT</u>!***

I. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

II. <u>SERVE</u> HIM with respect (v.28-29)

A. The <u>MOTIVE</u> for our service: *Gratefulness for our Kingdom*

B. The <u>MEANING</u> of our service: *Spiritual Worship to God*

C. The <u>MANNER</u> of our service:

1. *"Acceptably" (well pleasing to God)*

2. *"Reverence and Godly fear" (Respect and Awe)*

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C. The _____ of our service:

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Do You Fear God?

(Reverence for God)

Hebrews 12:25-29

March 14, 1999

Prayer and the Condition of America

The Prayer that really got some attention-Paul Harvey Radio Broadcast

When Pastor Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual politically correct generalities. But on Jan. 23, 96, what they heard instead was a stirring prayer, passionately calling our country to repentance and righteousness. The response was immediate with a number of legislators walking out during the prayer. In six short weeks Central Christian Church logged more than 5,000 phone calls, with only 47 of those calls responding negatively.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired Pastor Joe Wright's prayer on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other program Paul Harvey has ever aired. In addition, Central Christian Church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance, We know Your Word says, "Woe on those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism;

We have worshipped other gods and called it multi-culturalism;

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle;

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery;

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation;

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare;

We have killed our unborn and called it choice;

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable;

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem;

We have abused power and called it political savvy;

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression;

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment;

Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living

Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Pointing Out Washington

In the early days of the Republic, a stranger once asked at Congress how he could distinguish Washington.

He was told, "You can easily distinguish him when Congress goes to prayer. Washington is the gentleman who kneels."

Ingersoll Gives God Five Minutes

Robert Ingersoll, after delivering one of his addresses, pulled his watch from his pocket and said, "According to the Bible, God has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul."

There was a period of perfect silence while one minute went by; two minutes passed, and people began to get nervous; three minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes, and Ingersoll curled his lip.

At five minutes, he snapped shut his watch, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no God, or He would have taken me at my word."

The story was told later to Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?"

—H. A. Ironside

One of the biggest problems (even among some Christians today) is a lack of a fear of God.

Notice Joshua's parting words to Israel:

Joshua 24:1

And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua 24:19

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

There are prerequisites to serving God; Not everyone qualifies. The major Key prerequisite is a FEAR of God (cp. Gen.22:12)

The LORD said to Abraham:

Genesis 22:12

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Verses from Proverbs on *"the fear of the Lord"*:

Proverbs 1:7
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 3:7
Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Proverbs 8:13
The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 9:10
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Proverbs 14:16
A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Proverbs 15:16
Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Proverbs 16:6
By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

Proverbs 23:17
Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

**** The God of Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion is <u>WORTHY OF RESPECT</u>!***

I. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

V. 25

"See that" - Look out! Be alert and on guard! Take heed; pay attention!

A word of <u>caution</u> emphasizing the seriousness of the command.

"Refuse" - (*paraaiteomai - para* = aside; *alteo* = to ask)

In some contexts the word means:

--to have nothing to do with (I Tim. 4:7, 2:23)

--to intentionally neglect something (I Tim. 5:11)

--to intentionally reject (Ti. 3:10)

--to refuse or decline (Acts 25:11)

**To ask to be excused - cp. Lk. 14:18-19; Heb. 12:19

"Speaketh" - (a present tense - speaking) How is God speaking today? Exclusively through His Word, the Bible.

He has spoken from Heaven via His Son who became incarnate, and through the New testament apostles and prophets who wrote about Jesus Christ and the salvation He brought to us (Heb. 1:1-2, 2:1-4).

"Spoke on earth . . . speaketh from Heaven" - A contrast between Mt. Sinai (23:18-21) and Mt. Zion (12:22-24)

The Israelites who didn't want to listen to God speaking at Sinai (12:190 still were not able to escape responsibility and accountability for their disobedience to the words He gave. When they sinned, they faced the consequences.

Don't think for a moment that you will escape the consequences of disobedience!

"The unbelieving Israelites who ignored God at Sinai did not enter the earthly Promised Land, and unbelievers today, Jew or Gentile, who ignore God when He speaks through His Son from Mt. Zion, will not enter the Promised Land. Whether God speaks from Sinai or from Zion, no man who refuses Him will escape judgment" (MacArthur, p. 417).

V. 26

When God spoke from Mt. Sinai, His voice shook the earth (it thundered with power) (12:19; Ex. 19:16; 20:19).

The next time God will shake the earth will be when Christ returns in "*the Day of the Lord."*

Haggai 2:6-7 - *"For thus saith the LORD of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I*

will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."

Joel 2:30-31 - *"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."*

Joel 3:15, 16 - *"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD shall be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

"Once more" - one final judgment of this earth is yet to come! God's promise will be fulfilled.

Luke 21:25 - 28 - *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the mood, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring: Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh."*

When will such a shaking take place? When Jesus comes back at the Sixth Seal of Rev. 6:12-17; after which time--during the Bowl (vial) Judgments--God will destroy all the cities of the world with a violent shaking of the globe (Rev. 16:17-21).

"Not the earth only (as at Sinai) ***but also the heaven*** (sky and space)" ***"when God roars out of Zion"*** (Joel 3:16) - The implied point in this context is this: If God was to be respected because of His awesome power in shaking the earth at Sinai, then certainly He should be respected now in light of the fact that He will in the future violently shake this earth and shake the stars out of the sky!

V. 27

"Things that are made" - All of the tangible things of the earth will crumble and burn! (II Pet. 3:10-13 - *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto*

the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.")

The physical will be destroyed; the eternal things will remain.

Are you building your life on things that can shake? (When earthly things crumble in our lives, we will be very upset, if this is where our heart is).

What things *"cannot be shaken"?* The kingdom reserved for us by Jesus Christ! (v. 28a)

The world with its glitter, glamour, gold will one day crumble, but God's Kingdom will last.

In Christ, we stand on an unshakable foundation.

Don't put your trust in that which will be destroyed!

The point is this: The God who shook Sinai and the God who will shake the whole earth and Heavens, is a God worthy of respect. We should not turn a deaf ear to Him when He speaks through His Scripture!

Do you respect God enough to take His Word (with its warnings) seriously? Do you *"tremble at His Word"* or treat it lightly?

Who is the one who refuses to listen to God?

A person who does <u>not</u> reverently listen to God is one who:

1) Views His imperatives (N.T. commands) as options rather than obligations
2) Hears but doesn't heed
3) Knows the truth but doesn't practice the truth
4) Has answers for everyone else, but doesn't apply the truth to his own heart
5) Mentally drifts during a preaching service, or slumbers during private devotions
6) Treats lightly the message His preacher or teacher gives (jokes around; whispers under his breath to his/her friends, etc.)

II. <u>SERVE</u> HIM with respect (v.28-29)

A. The <u>MOTIVE</u> for our service: *Gratefulness for our Kingdom*

That which motivates our service for God is our faith in His promises regarding our future!

Out of gratitude for what we have in Christ, we serve Him!

"Let us have grace" - A grace to say thanks and offer God praise for what He has given us.

Do you have a grateful heart for the Kingdom you will receive?

How does it express itself here and now? God's expectation of our attitude of gratitude is repeated in Heb. 13:14-16.

True faith always results in true appreciation; and such appreciation will manifest itself by our service for God!

FAITH ---------- GRATEFULNESS ---------- SERVICE
"I believe" ---------- "I am thankful" ---------- "I will serve"
"I trust God" ---------- "I appreciate God" -------"I will serve God"

B. The <u>MEANING</u> of our service: *Spiritual Worship to God*

"Serve" - to offer to God a worshipful service.

All <u>service</u> for God is a form of your <u>worship</u> to God.

Whenever you serve Him, you worship Him! Worship is not merely singing praises and prayer; everything we say and do for God is worship to God!

C. The <u>MANNER</u> of our service:

1. *"Acceptably" (well pleasing to God)*

"Acceptably" - well-pleasing; to offer God the worshipful service that He would accept.

--He accepts only service done <u>for His glory</u> (not for vain proud reasons)

--He accepts only service done <u>through His power</u> (not the flesh)

--He accepts only service done <u>according to His New Testament instructions</u> (not the Mosaic Law)

--He accepts only service done to the <u>best of our ability</u> (not giving God garbage)

2. ***"Reverence and Godly fear" (Respect and Awe)***

"Reverence" - to have a deep respect for God

"Godly fear" - to be in awe of God

EX: Song: "Our God is an Awesome God"

"There is a big difference between the flame of a candle and the roaring blast of a forest fire. We cannot even stand near a consuming, raging fire. Even with sophisticated fire-fighting equipment, a consuming fire is often beyond human control. God is not within our control either. . . He cannot be contained (by man)." (Life Applic. Bible)

His fire will one day try (test) our works (service we rendered for Him)
SEE: I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10-11a

See Isaiah 6

God's swift judgement of many who profaned His holy standards is a sobering reminder that HE IS HOLY

Examples:

Achan who stole that which was to be set apart for God (Josh. 7:12-14) Nadab & Abihu who offered strange fire to God (not what He prescribed) (Lev.9:23 -10:3);
Uzzah who touched the Ark of the Covenant (II Sam. 6:6-7);
Moses who struck the rock (Num.20:11,12);
Belshazzar who mocked God by praising idols and drinking alcohol out of the holy temple vessels (Dan.5)

b) The great **white** throne judgement reflects a holy judgment (Rev.20:11)

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Pet.1:16)

Don't think for a minute that sin is ever justified before the eyes of a holy God! Don't come to God on your terms but on HIS! Don't make the mistake of thinking that God's ways & standards are like that of the world (Psalm 50:21)

Because God is HOLY:

1) You can't be saved on your own terms (God accepts nothing but the sacrifice of His dear Son (Heb.9:22; Acts 4:12)

2) You can't pray on your own terms

3) You can't worship on your own terms (Lev.10:3; Ps.99:5)
Leviticus 10:3
Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

4) You can't serve on your own terms (Psalm 2:11)
Psalm 2:11
Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

5) You can't please God on your own terms (Heb.11:6; I Sam.15:17,22,23)

6) You can't give yourself to God on your own terms (Rom.12:1,2)