

Dear friends and family,

This week I have been reflecting on what it truly means to fear the Lord. I am also pondering the great mystery of our salvation. We will be studying these two topics next Sunday in our morning worship and evening Bible study. I invite you to come and learn about these great truths Sunday morning at 8:30 or 11 and Sunday evening from 7-8pm.

Here is my key question: *How do the fear of the Lord and the mystery of salvation practically fit together?*

Pastor's Point of View

When I think of the practical, life application, of the fear of God and His great mercy toward us, 1 Peter immediately comes to mind.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again **to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **who are protected** by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5*

These verses reveal three promises resulting from salvation in Jesus Christ.

1. Living hope. We are born again, in this life, to a living hope. This means our hope is here and now! This hope is rooted in our living, resurrected, Lord Jesus Christ. Even though hope is forward looking and it is hope 'of' a future; it is also hope 'in' Jesus Christ who is resurrected and alive. Our hope is alive!

2. Inheritance. When we are born again, we are born into the family of God. We are immediately listed as joint heirs with Jesus Christ to obtain an inheritance along with Him. That inheritance will never fade, will never lose value, and can never be stolen. It is deposited in the bank of heaven, and kept secure from any sort of corruption or defilement.

3. Protection. As believers we have the security that comes along with being one of God's children (John 14:16-21, Isaiah 41:9-10). Our faith is protected by the power of God! What security is better than that?

So how does this all relate to fear and salvation?

If you read through 1 Peter 1:1-12, you will find Peter's introduction to his letter. In verse 13, Peter transitions to application points relating back to the foundation of the opening verses of chapter 1. Therefore, he says, we are to do "something". Because of what we have in Christ (salvation), we are called to uphold a certain standard for living (fear of the Lord).

Day 1

READ – 1 Peter 1:13-16

- What does it mean to:
 - Prepare your mind for action?
 - Keep sober in spirit?
 - Fix your hope completely on the grace?
- How do these three things relate to the fear of the Lord? Are you doing these 3 things?
- Look at verse 14, when you were a child, what happened when you gave in to a temptation? How did your parents react to your wrong doing? Now, as an adult, how do you respond to temptation?
- What should our behavior look like today based on Peter's contrast in verses 15-16?

Day 2

READ – 1 Peter 1:17-19

- What do you think Peter is saying when he writes “If you address as Father”? To whom is he speaking?
- What does Peter tell us is true about God in the second half of verse 17? On what basis does God judge and what did Peter just encourage us to do in verses 13-16?
- The word Peter uses here for fear is the Greek term *phobos*. It is often translated as reverence but it actually implies more than that. This is where our word “phobia” comes from and it means ‘*an anxiety causing terror*’. According to the context of the verses which read “*be holy... God is impartial... you will be judged based on your works...*” what is Peter advising by stating that we should conduct ourselves in **fear**?
- Peter next reinforces his message by reminding us we were bought with a price. The price is one greater than silver and gold; it is the precious blood of Christ.
- Look at Acts 3.
 - What did Peter not have? (Acts 3:6)
 - What did Peter give the man? (Acts 3:6)
 - To what did Peter attribute the man's healing? (Acts 3:16)
 - What did Peter call the people to? (Acts 3:26)

Day 3

READ – 1 Peter 1:20-21

- What does Peter tell us is true of Jesus?
- What does it mean that we are believers in God THROUGH Jesus?
- What did God give to Jesus?

C.S. Lewis wrote, *“In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us.”*

This quote seems to contradict what we have been studying in our Sermon Series on Exodus, “God as He reveals Himself to be”. However, upon closer examination, it seems Lewis is pointing out an important truth, the same Peter records in 1 Peter. The order of things. We MUST know God so that we can understand on what basis we will be judged. We MUST know God to understand that He sent Jesus and gave Him glory. We MUST know God so that our faith and hope are in God. We MUST know God to know what He thinks of us. Lewis is right; it’s not how WE think of God, it’s how God thinks of God and how God thinks of us. We are studying God’s revelation of Himself, not making up our own thoughts of Him.

Day 4

READ – 1 Peter 1:22-25

- Peter reinforces what we considered yesterday regarding the quote by C.S. Lewis. He transitions to our need to adamantly love one another because of our obedience to the truth. What is our source of truth?
- Our source of truth is the seed imperishable, the living and enduring Word of God. It is from this source that we may know God, and that we may know salvation.
- How is your daily Bible study time?
- How is this devotional helping you remain in the Word?
- Who do you need to share the truth of the Gospel with today?

My word to you as your Pastor is this, “The Word of the LORD endures forever. And this is the word which was preached to you.”

In love and fear,

-Pastor Matt

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