

Announcements:

**“Live with Fear”  
1 Peter 1:17-21**

*Introduction:* Pg. \_\_\_\_

How would you feel if I told you that God wants you to live with fear? That’s right: Live with fear. How do those words fall on your ears?

After all, fear is an emotion we experience when we believe our well-being is endangered. What do you fear? Do you fear tiny spiders? difficult professors? unfulfilled dreams? death itself?

Our fears can riddle our hearts with anxiety and range in effect from annoyance to paralysis. Fear is something we seek to put off and run from in our culture, not put on and run toward

Then why, Pastor Tanner, are you saying that God wants us to live with fear? How can that be a good thing?

That’s not the kind of fear I’m talking about! There is a different kind of fear, a virtuous kind of fear, a fear that overrules every other fear, a fear that actually blows wind at our back as we travel down the path God desires.

I’m talking about the FEAR OF GOD.

Our introduction to the Book of 1 Peter has described God’s salvation offered to us in Christ. Then, as we saw last week, this awe-inspiring salvation motivates us to live a life full of hope and holiness. Now, 1 Peter 1:17-21 is going to teach us that...

**The Point: The fear of God produces gospel godliness.**

This text has a very simple structure. Verse 17 gives us the command to fear God. Verses 18-21 gives us reasons to fulfill that command.

Read 1:17-21

**1. Fear God to honor God. (1:17)**

What is the Fear of God?

Sadly, many people would immediately think of expensive clothes rather than one of the key concepts in the Bible, referenced over 150 times!

- In my own journey with God, this has always been one of the hardest words to grasp because it sounds so counterintuitive.
- Does God want us to be afraid of him? Should we feel as though God is out to get us? After all, that doesn’t align with the kind of joy and hope Peter just described.
- The fear of God is not dreadful, nor anxiety producing.

- “Fearing God” means living with a sense of “reverential awe” before God. It is both an emotional response and a state of mind. God’s majestic greatness elicits the highest respect and admiration in our hearts.

T: ... which points us to the secret of growing in the fear of God: seeing God for who he is... Peter tells us that God is a Holy Father and Holy Judge.

#### Holy

- The command to fear God comes on the heels of God being described as “holy.” (Verse 16) Should we be surprised?
- God alone is incomparable and infinite. God is Creator! Everything else? Created. God is Perfect! Everyone and everything else? Imperfect. God alone is eternal, glorious, immutable (does not change), sovereign, self-dependent, self-existent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, full of grace, full of mercy, full of justice, and full of love.
- There is no one or nothing like God. That’s why we fear him and carry a reverential awe before him!

T: But God is also...

#### Father

- He begins v. 17 by saying, “And if you call on him as Father...” He writes in a hypothetical tone to draw them to say: “Yes, God is my Father. He is the one I call on. I depend on him for everything! He is my Provider and Protector. No one loves me like him!”
- When we dig deeper, we see this reverential awe is inspired by love.
- We’re like the kid on the playground who refused to give into the temptation of his friends as they chanted: “His father will punish him!” (2x) And the boy replied, “No, I’m afraid I will disappoint my father.”

T: God is our holy Father. He draws near for an intimate relationship. God is also our...

#### Holy Judge

He is transcendent, ruling over the world he made. Everyone will give account to him.

- While Peter may also have in mind God’s loving discipline as we journey through this life, it seems he has his sights set on God’s ultimate and final judgment on the last day.
- That is when all people will stand before God and hear him say: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Or “Depart from me, I never knew you.” (Matthew 25) On this day, heaven and hell will be at stake. Are you ready?
- Though no one will be saved because of their works, we will all be judged by our works, because our works reflect what’s in our heart (either the presence of absence of the love of God). (Cf. Matt. 16:27; 25:31–46; Rom. 2:6–11; 14:9–12; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Apologetic...

The thought of God as Judge is not popular in our culture. “If God is love, he would never condemn or punish anyone.”

- But how can we cry out for justice now, but reject God bringing eternal justice in the end?
- As N.T. Wright says: “We need to remind ourselves that throughout the Bible, not least in the Psalms, God’s coming judgment is a good thing, something to be celebrated, longed for, yearned over. It causes people to shout for joy and the trees of the field to

*clap their hands. In a world of systematic injustice, bullying, violence, arrogance, and oppression, the thought that there might come a day when the wicked are firmly put in their place and the poor and weak are given their due is the best news there can be. Faced with a world in rebellion, a world full of exploitation and wickedness, a good God must be a God of judgment."*

Though we don't know everything about how consequences and rewards work in eternity, we can be confident God will judge with perfect "impartially."

T: This knowledge of God as a loving Father and a holy Judge should motivate us to want to honor him in everything. That is what Peter is driving at...

### LIFE OF HONOR

- We see the connection between the fear of God and our conduct all throughout the Bible.
- "So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him." (Deuteronomy 8:6)
- Fear is the key to wisdom.
  - **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." Proverbs 9:10**
  - **"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."** Ecclesiastes 12:13
- In light of who he is, I should live like this...
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This is why Princeton theologian, **John Murray**, said: **"The fear of God is the soul of godliness."**

Fear puts a check in our spirit when we're about to dishonor God. As Tom Schreiner said: "There is a kind of fear that does not contradict confidence. A confident driver also possesses a healthy fear of an accident that prevents him from doing anything foolish."

But even more (and we see this increase as we grow to maturity in Christ) fear powerfully produces adoration and love.

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As we live with the fear of God our lives reveal we belong to a different land with an altogether different culture. Peter continues to say: we are like exiles on a journey back to our homeland.

T: #1) Fear God to honor God. #2...

### **2. Fear God because God ransomed you (1:18-21).**

Verses 18-19 tell us the reason we should "conduct ourselves with fear." They begin by saying... "knowing that you were ransomed..."

Just like we saw last week... everything God asks of us is ultimately based on who he is and what he's done for us.

In these two verses, Peter points us to the reality of redemption. Redemption is at the heart of the metanarrative of the Bible and the heart of the good news! To be redeemed is to be transferred from one state of existence to another.

Whether you are curious, entirely committed to Jesus, or somewhere in between, listen carefully with fresh ears to God's story of redemption.

In the very beginning, God created us to experience an unbroken, unhindered relationship with him. A relationship 10,000 times better than any we can experience in this life! He made us to be completely known and fully loved by him!

Everything was perfectly harmonious until our first parents, Adam and Eve, foolishly chose to turn their backs on God by sinning against him. That choice brought the consequences of brokenness into our world. Now, their plight is our plight, because we have followed in their steps. The consequences are a spiritual deadness on the inside. We are numb to God. We don't feel his love. His words have no effect in our lives.

Added to this, Jesus said in John 8:34: "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

That means we need to be rescued! We need to be redeemed out of this broken relationship with God, into a place of healing and wholeness!

But how?! How can we escape this predicament? How can we be brought into a new reality?

We can't. We can't self-medicate our way out of this mess. We can't set ourselves free.

We must be redeemed, and redemption comes at a price. Just as a slave could have their freedom purchased by someone else, so now God has paid the ransom, the price we could never pay if we emptied out our bank accounts and 401ks.

"You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold..."

No... Verse 19...

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- The price of our redemption... cost the life of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
- This points us to the cross where Jesus shed his blood, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. Why does Peter talk about a spotless lamb?
  - In ancient Israel, people expressed their sorrow and repentance for their sin by offering sacrifices. These sacrifices were to be lambs without spot representing the death of something pure for their impurities.
  - But there was one huge problem... they offered these sacrifices year after year because they did not offer lasting forgiveness! They were insufficient.

- Jesus lived a perfect, spotless life of complete purity before God. He died in our place, so that we might taste the consequences of death (separation from God now and forever). He gave his life so that we might experience life with God again!
- He is our ransom. He is our redemption! He brings us out of spiritual death, out of a life of empty searching into at the fullness of a family, into a life that actually satisfies our craving for meaning and purpose.
- That's what Peter is saying when he says we are "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers."

**"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)**

T: The gospel truly is amazingly good news. But *verses 20-21* say more about God's amazing rescue plan

Read 20-21

Here's how we can sum this up? Before one speck of creation came into being, God dreamed up our rescue!!

- *Jesus was foreknown...* God's eternal agenda and divine initiative stand behind the redemptive work of Christ. (Cf. Ephesians 1:3 - "chose us in him before the foundation of the world; and Revelation 13:8 - our names have "been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.")
- *Jesus was made manifest in these last times...* That means God's plan was not revealed until these the last times launched by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We are in the last days of salvation history, not to be confused with "the last time," mentioned in verse 5, which speaks of the time when Jesus will return and we will receive our inheritance.

Can you believe the final phrase of *verse 20*? Jesus appeared "for the sake of you." Does the Bible ever make you take a deep breath and say, "WOW!" Are you ever in awe as you read this words! (!! in the margins! Wow!)

What is Peter doing? Building their confidence to live for Christ in a troubled culture. He is saying: LOOK! LOOK what God has done for you!!

- You're no afterthought. He planned it all out!
- You have value, so much that Jesus gave his life for you.
- Your faith and hope are not weak, but fixed on the one raised from the dead and reigning in glory, right now!
- There's glory beyond your present pain. Ultimate victory fills the horizon! Keep hoping in Christ!
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*Conclusion:*

Are you living with fear, the fear of God? Are you seeing that fear produce a godliness inspired by the gospel day by day?

As we move into a time of responding to what we've heard, I want to invite you to pray the words of Psalm 86:11:

“Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.”  
(Psalm 86:11)

Prayer (\*Music Team comes out)

Lord's Supper - Invite people to the gospel (ABC)... during Lord's Supper