

The Joy of Fearing God

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Preacher: Roger Cryan

[0 : 0 0] Well, there they were in captivity in Babylon for so many years, and as can happen, we could identify that as you continue in a period of time, long period of time that's a challenge, maybe a trial.

It can affect the way you think about God, and then before long you're making conclusions about God that really aren't accurate conclusions.

About who He is in truth. And then, of course, what's inside of us starts to be manifested outwardly. It can't help but eventually come out from us, and as a result, we're beginning to say and do things that wouldn't be glorifying to God or that would show accurately the truth of who God is.

And that's what was happening with the children of Israel. And so in our verse today, Isaiah asks them some questions. And it's a good procedure for us to take with each other instead of just making declarations to somebody about, oh, you shouldn't think that way or whatever, or act that way.

We could ask them the questions to help them evaluate themselves what's going on. A question a friend of ours years ago said, let's say, a question pricks the conscience, but an accusation hardens the will.

[1 : 4 0] So learn to ask good questions of people, as Isaiah was doing here. And as he asked them these questions, hopefully it was to accomplish them changing back, seeing their wrong thinking and their wrong speaking, and get a renewed understanding of God who is their God, and therefore change the way they were speaking to each other and renew a real renewed trust and hope in God and draw them out of their discouragement.

And prior to our verse, he'd been talking about how God is sovereign over his creation, sovereign over the nations, even knows the names of the stars.

Not one ever goes missing. And then he comes to asking them questions. And says, so therefore, why do you say, oh, Jacob?

And on and on he goes. So that's what we want to take a look at this morning. These questions that Isaiah is asking the people of Israel and hopefully bring them to the place of a renewed trust in God.

So say it with me. Isaiah 40, 27, that starts out, why do you say, oh, Jacob? Isaiah 40, 27, why do you say, oh, Jacob, and complain, oh, Israel?

[3 : 1 6] My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God. I mean, you know that already. Was that true?

No, it wasn't true. And so we want to make sure that we have a proper understanding of who God is as well. And that's what we're going to be talking about this morning.

But before we do, let's start with a word of prayer. Father, this morning, how we do give thanks for your word and the reality of who you are. People that you've used in ages past, like Isaiah, to bring your people back then to a place of truth in regard to who you are.

And that continues right up into our day today. And with each one of us here, we need these reminders of the reality of the truth of who you are, Father, to really influence us and so that we can live in the joy of fearing God.

So help us this morning and others in other classes, other teachers, to teach humbly, faithfully your word, and the listeners to receive, have discerning minds, and receive with gladness your word.

[4 : 34] In Jesus' name, amen. And so we want to take a look at this fear of God this morning. We've been taking a look in the past of the link between the knowledge of God and a true reverential awe of God or fear of God.

And this morning we want to take a look at another link in Scripture when it comes to having a proper fear of God and the link that we're going to be taking a look at.

And that we have been taking a look at the last couple weeks is having a true fear of God and the corresponding response that flows out of having that fear of God.

We've seen in Scriptures that there are those who really do not have a fear of God. They have not entered into a relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ and thus have very different responses to God.

And we've seen that in the lessons. We also see this in the Scriptures. In fact, Jerry Bridges points out in his book, the first time the expression fear of God is used in the Bible, it's in this negative sense when Abraham said, there's surely no fear of God in this place.

[6 : 00] So Abraham was speaking about the land in which Abimelech was king and he was about to enter that land and there was something about that nation.

He already knew about the king Abimelech and what was going on in that nation, idol worship. And so all those were indicators that certainly this land that we're entering is not a land where God is feared.

And he could see that in the lives of the people. And also we see it in Luke 23, 39 and 40. And actually we see both sides of the fear of God.

An individual who did not fear God and what his response was and an individual who did fear God, in this case in the person of Jesus Christ, and what his response was.

And the responses were very different. Luke 23, 39 and 40, speaking about the two criminals on the cross who were being crucified, Jesus Christ in the middle.

[7 : 06] And one of the criminals who were hanged railed at him saying, are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. But the other rebuked him saying, do you not fear God?

So there was the indication. I mean, we see the two go together. The individual that does not fear God, it will come out and be expressed outwardly, in this case verbally, and even the tone of voice that he was using with Jesus Christ.

And the other criminal recognized that about that person. Very evident. He had no fear of God. And questioned him, don't you fear God since you're under the same sentence of condemnation?

And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And he said to him, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

So those that do not have fear of God, don't know God by faith in Jesus Christ, they will respond according to their nature at that time and rejecting Christ, not only him, but his wise counsel, his instruction for life.

[8 : 15] But those who know God, in truth, have very, very different responses. And that's what we've been taking a look at these past couple weeks through from Jeremy's lesson.

The individual that truly knows God and fears God wants to know more of God. To grow in his understanding of God. He's tasted what it is to be like, to know God, to walk in God's ways.

And the taste is very good. He wants more and more. We're familiar with that. We taste something nice and sweet, like donuts yesterday in the business meeting.

Very rare will I just take one donut because the flavor appeals to me and I want more. And so I take the action necessary to go and get more.

Well, Psalm 34.8, we see something of that same thing. The psalmist says, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

[9 : 23] Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints. For those who fear him have no lack. That person, the psalmist, has tasted. And what he tasted certainly has appealed to him.

And he wanted more of the Lord in knowing him. And so a person that has tasted, desires to know more of God and Jesus Christ, what do they do?

Well, they'll pray that God would give them hearts and have God as their priority focus in life. Psalm 86.11, the ESV says, Unite my heart to fear your name.

The NIV says, Give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name. So he recognizes that within himself there's a struggle still that wants to turn away from following God, knowing God.

And he's taking steps that that would not happen, taking proper steps and going to God. Teach me your way and I'll walk in your truth. Give me an undivided heart. But, you know, I want it to be single-focused in knowing you.

[10 : 33] And so he goes to God in prayer so we can do the same thing. But then the individual also pursues a regular exposure to God's Word so their minds can be renewed to a new knowledge of God and His counsel.

So we pray. We go to the Word of God. Search the Scriptures. That individual, as we learned last week, will have a new respect for God's authority. And make it their goal to live all of life under God's rule and submissively to God and His authority instead of rebelling against God.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the individual humbly and willingly submits to God. I mean, why would I not? You know, after learning and knowing something of who this God is, it would make no sense whatsoever to turn away from Him and go my own way when here's the one who is the all-wise God and has all that I need for a life of godliness.

And also has new respect for the authorities that God has established for proper functioning in the world. Authority in the home, the family, the church, human government.

So on and on we go. So proper responses to this awesome God that we have the privilege of knowing. Well, this morning we continue to take a look at this link between the fear of God and proper corresponding response.

[11 : 59] And we look at the response of love and obedience to God. To fear God is to love Him. And to love God and really to have a fear of God really is a result of the work of God in the heart of the individual.

So this love for God, the fear of God, the love for God all begins at one's conversion. At that time, the individual really has a genuine fear of God, this reverential awe of God in what he's done.

The individual has really new spiritual life. He's no longer spiritually dead. That which was closed to him prior to his conversion, that which he could not see, now he sees.

It's like Jesus told Nicodemus, unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. It can be translated, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He's blind to that as we see in 2 Corinthians 4.

Satan has blinded the mind of the unbeliever. And so at conversion, now we can see the truth of the reality of God and life in Jesus Christ.

[13 : 17] And the Holy Spirit grants this person new spiritual life and an individual response in faith and true belief in Jesus Christ and acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord of his or her life.

And it's at that moment of regeneration that God's Holy Spirit takes up residence within that individual, within that person's inner being.

And with his indwelling presence, the person begins to have love for God that was not there previously. I mean, if there's anything you take away from this lesson, this is what I want you to take away, the importance of the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit that makes this possible for us to love God.

That's the only reason why I love God. Romans 5.5 says, God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

So love for God is an evidential fruit of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence within that new believer. In fact, we see that in Galatians 5.22, the fruit of the Spirit.

[14 : 36] The very first thing that's mentioned, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. So we're recognizing a few weeks ago we had that lesson on the love of God.

That eternal bond of love that has existed between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from all eternity. They've enjoyed that kind of fellowship and love between one another.

And so, it's only because we, as believers, who have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, that we have hearts that love God.

Apart from the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we would not love God. I mean, as I was working on this lesson and just contemplating that point over and over again, I really had to stop and thank God for the presence of His Holy Spirit.

I would not love God apart from the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit that I have the privilege of having by faith in Jesus Christ.

[15 : 49] What's been taking place between the Father and Son and Holy Spirit from all eternity now, I have the privilege of participating in.

By faith in Jesus Christ, I enter this fellowship of love between God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because that Holy Spirit, I keep saying this over and over again, that dwells within me is going to continue to love the Father and the Son.

That's who they are as God. And so with His Spirit dwelling within me, I'm compelled now to love God in truth in that same way, with that same love.

And I can because His Holy Spirit is dwelling within me. I mean, that's a privilege privilege that we have as human beings who were once estranged from God, not loving God, and the reason we weren't is because we were dead in trespasses and sins.

We were separated from God, but by faith again in Jesus Christ, Spirit dwelling within us, now God dwelling within me by His Holy Spirit.

[17 : 02] His love has been poured out into my heart and finds its expression drawn toward God. Without that, I would not love God.

The Holy Spirit is working within me love for God. Well, so now what does that look like?

If the Spirit of God is dwelling within me, compelled to love God, Father, and Son, it's going to be manifested in me as a new creature in Christ.

What does it look like? We're wondering, yeah, I love God. Do I love God? So, what does that look like in my life?

Well, let's take a look. It is comprehensive. It means that God is loved by us comprehensively. with our total being. Mark 12, 30 says, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

[18 : 16] Our total inner and outer being is devoted to communicating that God is love above all. Nothing is elevated to the place of receiving greater love than I should be giving toward God.

not that we don't love other people and enjoy the things that He's provided for us, but nothing takes precedent in our hearts, in our love for God.

The love of God that's been poured out into our hearts by the presence of His Holy Spirit really compels us to love God above all else.

I mean, that's the love of God between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Neither one of them loves something else above the other.

And so, that's the love that's been poured out into our hearts. For the Christian, there's this compelling love of God that moves us to love Him above everything else.

[19 : 24] And again, I'm not discounting that there's this conflict within us that takes place. Other things vying for, oh, maybe just a little bit of that love would be okay.

No, no. Nothing takes a place or supremacy over our love for God. It is a comprehensive love for God.

But there's also some inner evidences of this love that God has poured out into our hearts. And the first is what I title just an affectionate longing in the soul for God.

Our affections long for God. That's what love compels us to do. To long for Him more and more.

Psalms 42, 1 and 2 says, As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, oh God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

[20 : 25] When shall I come and appear before God? So there's that inner compulsion for Him, that compelling love for Him.

I long for you, oh God. I will get to that a little bit later. So, that longing in the soul for God. Then also, the mind is moved to meditate upon God.

Psalms 145, 5, On the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works, I will meditate. Psalm 143, 5 says, I remember the days of old.

I meditate on all that You have done. I ponder the work of Your hands. You know, we're familiar with some of these inner processes that go on within us, even in our love for one another.

the person you love, you have a compelling desire to be with that person in that time of separation.

[21 : 31] And when you are separated, your mind is thinking over and over again about that person. I trust that's the case with you. I mean, just with the children, visual, some of that faded in time, and if we're not careful, that could fade in times in our relationship with our spouse, our husband and wife.

So we need to labor at times of cultivating that kind of inner love for that person, making it our prayer to God that that would be the case for us, and make it our meditation.

So that's what the psalmist is talking about here, with that compelling love, that longing for God. His mind is fixed on meditating on God and what he's done, how he's worked in the past.

But then also, inner evidences includes the will. The will is committed to knowing God's ways and walking in them. Psalm 121, Paul says, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

These are coming from an individual that was very different in his past life. and so we can see how the presence of the Holy Spirit within Paul's life has really manifested itself very differently now.

[22 : 53] Because prior, he had no regard for Christ. In fact, he wanted to stamp out the name of Christ, the gospel, and anybody who did love him. It was his goal to bring them in chains and put them in prison and even see them killed.

It's such a change now. It's because God has poured out his love into his heart by the presence of his Holy Spirit. And now, for him to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Why? Because he'd be in the presence of the one that he loves. Psalm 3.8, indeed, he says, I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things. And count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. Again, that set of verses, so different this man is in his life.

And this isn't a man that's settling for, okay, I believe in Jesus Christ, and I'll have to give up this, that, and the other thing, and life won't be as fun or as interesting. Now I've got to be a Christian and follow Christ.

[24 : 03] This doesn't sound like a man that is settling for less. I mean, his desire is just give me more and more of Christ. That's that compelling love that's in his heart because of the presence of the Spirit of God that's longing to move him in that direction in knowing God and Christ.

Psalm 86, 11, I already said this verse, teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth. Unite my heart to fear your name. Give me that undivided heart because the psalmist recognizes that a divided heart really will not be for my own good and my joy in life and knowing God.

A divided heart leads me down this path of settling for less than what I could have if my heart was truly united and singly focused in loving God.

Psalm 119, 9-11, also shows this commitment of the will. How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word, with my whole heart I seek you.

Let me not wander from your commandments. I've stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. He's totally committed to knowing God and walking in God's ways.

[25 : 24] Well, there are other inner evidences that we could focus on, but let's focus on some of the outer evidences of our love for God. what is truly in the heart will find outward expression.

Jesus taught that principle to the people. Good man has a good thing stored in his heart and brings forth good things. And so with the presence of the Holy Spirit within us and the love of God that's been poured out into our hearts because of his presence, there will be outer expression of that in our daily lives.

And one way it can be displayed is telling God, I love you. How important are those words, ladies, from your husband?

And just to hear that, I love you. Why is that so important? Because you know that's an outward expression of what's in the heart.

It's a reassurance to me that truly I'm special within within you and within your heart. And so it's nice to hear those words.

[26 : 36] The psalmist here, what's in his heart is just flowing out when he says, I love you, oh God. That kind of expression. When's the last time you told God, I love you? Something that will be an evidence of what's in our heart.

But also an outward evidence is communion with God in prayer. You want to talk to him, to go to him. I mean, we could draw human correlations here.

We understand that you go through your day never talking to your wife or your husband. What's wrong? Something's wrong. Yeah, there is something wrong. If there's that inner compelling love for the individual, it will flow out in communion, communication with the individual.

Sometimes we might say, I'm just not that way, I'm not a talker. Well, you need to become a talker then. You need to change. And allow that kind of outward expression for the one that you love.

And that's what was happening here. David's prayer was a prayer of repentance. It says, have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

[27 : 55] David, he just couldn't bear the guilt of his sin and the broken fellowship that he was experiencing now in his relationship with God.

I mean, there was that compelling love in his heart for God, and when there was something that entered his life, and he had sinned, and that fellowship was broken, he just couldn't bear to go day by day.

And the longer he went, the compulsion to remove that and repent got stronger and stronger because really what was the greater treasure was missing that fellowship with God, and so he makes it his prayer.

God, help me. Repent of my sin. Have mercy on me, God, according to your steadfast love. And also, our outward expression could be the prayer of thanksgiving.

Colossians 1, 3, and 4, Paul said, we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love that you have for all the saints.

[29 : 02] There's the outward expression right there. Paul is saying that, seeing that in the lives of these people in the church of Colossae, and he's rejoicing in it. Thank you, God, that the love that you poured out into the hearts of these people by the presence of your Holy Spirit is being manifested through them toward one another.

That's just something to rejoice about, and to give thanks to God for. Well, there are other ways as well. We pray to God, but also we listen to God and His Word.

Psalms 119, 12, and 14 through 16. Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes. In the way of your testimonies, I delight, as much as in all riches.

I'll meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your Word. So, yeah, he's communing with God, speaking to God, but also listening intently to what God says.

I love you, O God, and as a result, I love your Word. I love what you say to me. and I receive it and I make it my goal to look and to listen to what you have to say.

[30 : 20] These are expressions of His love for us. Let me teach you my ways. You might walk in my ways and enjoy and delight in walking in my ways and knowing me in this relationship you have.

So we enter into that relationship and want to hear Him. But also, an outward expression is that we love others, as we saw in Colossians.

This might be the greatest challenge. I could love God, but I can't love so-and-so. It's very hard to love so-and-so. Well, in that scene in many commands that we have in the Scriptures, Jerry Bridges writes in his book that there are some 50 passages in the New Testament that command us to love one another.

So the need existed back then and it exists today as well. Mark 12, 31, Jesus said, the second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

There's no other commandment greater than these. And then Paul wrote of it in Romans 13, Owe no one anything except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

[31 : 34] For the commandment you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. And any other commandment are summed up in this word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And then 1 John 4, 11, Beloved, if God so loved us, well, we also ought to love one another.

If God so loved us, if God's love, the love of God was manifested toward us in this way, well, obviously it makes sense then that with the love of God poured out into our hearts by the presence of the Holy Spirit, then our love should be manifested that same way toward one another.

Makes sense. We just follow the steps. as challenging as it might be. And I expect the challenge isn't so much in knowing that we are to love others, but what does it look like in this situation?

We know love doesn't always say, okay, I'll just give you what you want. It takes some real discernment and wisdom to know how is the love of God manifested toward this individual in these set of circumstances.

[33 : 01] What does it look like? And throughout the scriptures, God even gives us specific ways in which that love is manifested. Bridges provides a lengthy list quickly just to read that over from Romans 12.

A motive of proper love, love sincerely, be devoted to one another in brotherly love. So there's a devotion. It's that relationship of love isn't quickly broken.

It's devoted to loving, not just when it's easy. Honors others above yourself. It's self-sacrificial. Share with others in need.

Reaches out in very tangible ways of giving. Maybe a material item or in some way of service, practice hospitality. You can understand some of the practical applications of these commands.

Bless those who persecute you. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Don't be proud or conceited. Don't repay evil for evil.

[34 : 08] Seek to live in peace with everyone. Don't take revenge. Overcome evil with good. Very practical. God gets with us in helping us understand. Even in 1 Corinthians 13, love is patient and kind.

Doesn't envy or boast. It's not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It's not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. You want some more ideas? I don't know how to love. Go to the scriptures. God will begin to show you specifically what that love looks like and also empower you to actually love in ways that he has loved us.

To love others as God loves is really to speak and act toward them in ways that glorify God and contribute to their well-being. Well, how is that?

How is it that we can even do that? God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit whom he has given us. kind of eliminates all the excuses we might throw up for not loving somebody else.

[35 : 27] Is God's love insufficient that we cannot love with the love that he's poured out into our hearts? If you're finding yourself saying that, you need to ask some questions and do some self-evaluation.

Why is it that I find it so hard to manifest the love of God toward that person when God has manifested that same love that he's put in my heart has manifested that love toward me who has offended him in a greater way than that person has offended me?

We can love as God has loved us. Well, we love God and want to obey God. Let's move on to that second response to the fear of God. To fear of God is to love him.

To fear God is also to obey him. All three of those link together. Knowing God, I guess there would be four, knowing God, fearing God, loving God, and obeying him.

In fact, we see this in Deuteronomy 6, 1 through 5. It says, Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them, there's obedience, in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments which I command you.

[36 : 55] Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. So, all three combine there.

We see that link between knowing God, fearing God, loving God, and obeying God, and the one who loves God certainly will recognize his authority as we learned it last week, and we will obey him.

And the one who loves God wants to obey him. It's not burdensome. His commands are not burdensome. He loves us and longs for us to enjoy his love.

John 14, 21, we see the link between loving him and obedience. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

And as Jesus taught his disciples, well, then they also taught others the same principle. First John 5, 3, for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

[38 : 10] Jesus loved the Father in his greatest hour of temptation. He was committed to doing the will of the Father. Sometimes I think, you know, when I'm wrestling with something, some point of temptation, I think, this is such a small thing.

Why do I so easily find my heart roving in that direction? Not even, doesn't even compare with the greatest hour of Jesus' temptation when he was committed to do the will of the Father.

So, with the fear of God, the love of God that's within us by his Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we can obey God out of love for him. And the one, again, who loves God wants to obey him.

And, again, obedience is possible because of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. We can obey God. You know, in those times of struggle and temptation when it seems so difficult, many times we're making it more difficult than when it has to be.

We can obey God. Think of the times, I can't, I can't. You're right by just stating that I can't. But you need to follow, I can, because God's abiding Holy Spirit dwells within me.

[39 : 34] I just need to find out how I can right now in this time. So, it's up to us to fear God and love God, to choose to obey him.

I guess I missed a verse there, Galatians 5, 16 and 17. We recognize the struggle that exists within us, but we can walk in the Spirit.

He says, but I say, walk by the Spirit, and you'll not gratify the desires of the flesh. The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. The desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things that you want to.

But if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. So, it is possible for us as we live by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within us, we can keep in step with that Holy Spirit, with what that Holy Spirit is compelling us to do, and that is to walk in obedience to God, as he reminds us of his word.

God's word, his commandments, provide us the framework we need to determine what we are to obey. So, again, just like God commanded us to love and gave us specifics of what the love looks like, God tells us to obey and gives us the framework for understanding and knowing, well, what does that obedience look like?

[40 : 57] What am I supposed to obey now? How does this walk in the Spirit look? What does it look like now? What am I supposed to do? And he tells us all throughout the Scriptures, when a person is saved and spiritually born of God by faith in Jesus Christ, he's transferred from Satan's domain of darkness to God's family, the kingdom of the Son that he loves.

Colossians 1, 13 and 14 verses that I, you know, go back to over and over again, it says that God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

So because of that transferal, we don't live or live in God's kingdom by the standards that we followed when we were in Satan's domain.

There's a new way of life for us. Transferred from this domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And so now, in this kingdom, life is lived differently.

Even while we're still in this world, certainly it will be in eternity, but we're called to live this brand new life now while we're in this world. And we can do that.

[42 : 18] But our minds need to be renewed. They need to be changed unto these new kingdom standards. And that's why Paul wrote to the believers there in Rome and said, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is a spiritual worship.

Don't be conformed any longer to this world, that domain of darkness that you once lived in, but rather be transformed by the renewal of your mind, by the testing, that by testing you might discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So that renewal of our mind takes place, of course, as we enter into God's word, meditate on it, memorize it, sit under the teaching of that word. Well, the time is ending up here.

Let me finish just by saying to fear God, to love and obey God, is to really have a delight in knowing Him and having a joy in fearing God.

God had Moses instruct the people of Israel about this truth. Follow along with Deuteronomy 6, 1 through 3. Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess it, that you might fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, that your days may be long.

[43 : 57] Here, therefore, Israel, be careful to do them, that it might go well with you, that you might multiply greatly as the Lord, the God of your fathers, as promised you, and the land flowing with milk and honey.

And we see it in the book of Psalms as well. All these commands that God gives us, the ways that God is encouraging us to go in, are ways that are good for us and are a blessing and cause us to flourish.

Psalms 1, 1 and 2, it says, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

And then Jesus also taught this principle to the crowds that followed him. I love this set of verses here. In Luke 11, 27 and 28, he had just been finished speaking supreme wisdom to those who were challenging him and condemning him and saying, he's of the devil.

And he had provided them just a beautiful answer. And the woman in the crowd with a mother was just so pleased when she heard that.

[45 : 13] And she says, oh, blessed is the mother that bore this son. Who wouldn't want to have a son like this? And then Jesus responds. As he said these things, the woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, blessed is the womb that bore you and the breast at which you nurse.

But Jesus said, blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it. So the blessing to the person who knows God and walks in his ways is greater than the blessing that the mother experiences when she sees how wonderful her son is.

That's what we can expect. Well, we need to close here. Those who know God, fear God, love God, and obey God have joy in fearing God.

I trust that all of us have that joy here this morning. Let's close in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for communing with us. Without your love, your character as God, you would not have moved in our direction, providing us the Savior that we needed through Jesus Christ.

Even the faith, repentance that we needed to turn toward him, to believe and confess him as Lord. You've manifested your love in great ways toward us.

[46 : 41] You've granted and given to us your blessed Holy Spirit that we might have this love of God within our hearts. You deserve all the praise. Now help us by your indwelling spirit to live out this love and obedience to you and also toward one another.

In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.