

The Fear of the Lord in Worship

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[0:00] Well, today is the last lesson on the fear of the Lord. And today we're going to be talking about the fear of the Lord and worship. We hear a lot about wealth inequality in our day.

Wealth inequality. So how wealthy are the super rich? I looked it up. And the top tenth of a percent. So the top 0.1 percent. owns the same in the United States as the bottom 90 percent. So that's us, I assume.

If we think it's bad here, I don't know if it is bad. I don't know if that's a bad thing or not. I'll leave that to Aaron Chavey to figure out. In Russia, 110 people own 35 percent of the wealth.

In Brazil, 3 percent of the population owns 60 percent of the land. And if you can picture Brazil in your mind on the map, Brazil's a big country.

[1:08] So that 60 percent is more land than Spain, France, Germany, and England combined. That's a lot of land. Now, so we have wealth inequality.

It's part of our world, whether it's good or bad. But I want you to compare the state of affairs in the United States and Brazil and Russia with Psalm 24.1.

It says this, So who owns 100 percent of the land on the whole earth?

The Lord. That's wealth inequality, isn't it? Zero for everyone else, 100 percent for him. What does God own?

Everything in it. So, everything that's found on the land, in the land. All the stuff that's on the land. And what does God own?

[2:14] The world and all who live in it. He owns the land. He owns everything in the land and on the land. And he owns everyone who lives upon the land.

So, in reality, even the most wealthy people are tenant farmers. Are here for a time and gone. God owns everything. So, how much do we own? The breath in our nostrils. That's the great significance of our wealth.

The very air that we have in our nostrils at this time. We don't even own ourselves. God owns us. He owns us because he made us. He made us.

My wife loves to cross stitch. She takes a long time putting her projects together. And, guess what?

[3:13] She decides what she's going to do with her projects when they're done. She keeps some. She gives away some. She frames some. She does different things with them. But I know better than to tell her what to do with them.

Because they're not mine. They're hers. She made it. She's poured her time and energy into it. And so, she owns it.

She gets to decide how those things are disposed. So, why does God own the world and everything in it? Because he made it.

He poured his time and his energy, his thought, into it. 1 Corinthians 6 says that Christians are doubly his.

So, God owns us not only by the, so to speak, the contract of creation. He owns us by the contract of redemption. Because he bought us.

[4:12] Do you remember what 1 Corinthians 6 says? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. You are not your own. You are not your own. So, if we're a Christian, we should have this sense of obligation not only because God made us, but because God saved us.

And it's that recognition that God is the ultimate owner. He's the ultimate creator.

He's the ultimate disposer of everything that lies really at the heart of the fear of God. We need him. We are responsible to him.

And we owe him worship. And again, worship is what I want to talk about this morning. And this is how we are going to finish this series on the fear of the Lord.

God's ownership means that no matter what, we owe him worship. It's that simple logic that the Psalms are full of.

[5:20] That if God made us, if God made everything, then we owe him worship. Job feared God. He also had a great amount of wealth.

He was in the top 1%. Job 1.3 says that Job was the greatest man among all the people of the East. Greatest man, most significant, the wealthiest man among all the East.

But you remember when God allowed Satan to attack Job, and Satan took Job's children, and he took his property all in one day.

How did he respond? And I want you, as I read this, I want you to listen to the ownership that Job is thinking about.

How did Job respond? Naked, I came from my mother's womb. And naked, I will depart. Now that's true of Job.

[6:20] That's also true of you. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.

And then, in all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Now, it's that last line I want you to think about. You hear the sense of God's ownership. I came naked. So this is what I came in the world with.

Nothing. Nothing. And I'm going to leave with nothing. And who gives me, in between those, my birth and my death? Who gives me everything I have?

Well, the Lord. The Lord gave. And so the Lord can take away. And then he says, then the author says, he didn't charge God with wrongdoing. Now, I want to ask you, how could Job have charged God with wrongdoing?

[7:22] What would have Job's complaint been? If Job and God went to court, and Job says, I want to file a complaint, I want to press charges here for God's wrongdoing, what might have been going through Job's mind, or what could have gone through Job's mind, and what goes through our mind?

That's a question for you, Dennis. You could have said, God took my stuff. Yeah. That's the whole thing. God took my stuff.

He didn't have the right to take my camels, and my donkeys, and my children. He could have said and complained that God took something that didn't belong to him.

But Job didn't do that. Because it's not wrong to give your own things away, and it's not wrong to take your own things back. So instead of charging God with wrongdoing, he worshipped.

He worshipped because he feared God. That fear of God, when the hard times came, it moved him to worship.

[8:33] That sense of God owns me, I'm responsible, he's big, I'm little, I'm on the receiving end here. That moved him to worship. So worship.

The Bible uses that word worship in two basic ways. The first is sort of an overall way of life. Jonah said to the sailors, I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the land.

Now, Jonah was not telling them specifically about his Saturday Sabbath worship practices, although that would be included. He wasn't talking about that.

He was saying something more general. It was like he was saying, I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian. And I'm not just a Christian when I'm doing church things.

I'm a Christian in my whole life. I work as a Christian. I do marriage as a Christian. That's what Jonah is talking about here. This week after the elections, I saw this video clip, maybe you saw it, of Ernie Johnson.

[9:46] And he's a sportscaster, sports commentator inside the NBA. And they were having Charles Barkley and Shaquille O'Neal respond to the elections, and Ernie Johnson responded.

And the way Ernie Johnson responded was saying, you know, I didn't feel like I had a good choice, and this is who I voted for, and blah, blah, blah. And then he said, but I want you to know that I am a Christian, and I don't know who's going to be in the Oval Office from year to year, but I do know who's going to be on the throne.

And that line, I am a Christian, that's what he was saying. He's saying what Jonah's saying. I'm not just a Christian when I'm at church.

I was a Christian as this person who's living in this country. I do politics as a Christian, and that's what he was saying.

That was his defining identity. That's what Jonah is saying here. I worship the Lord. I don't worship other things. God has the first place in my heart.

[11:00] So we have worship in the general sense. That's how Jonah used it. But then the Bible uses the word worship in a very specific sense. And that's actually how we're going to talk about mostly, what we're going to talk about mostly today.

Psalms 102. Worship the Lord with gladness. That's what we're talking about. That's what we're doing today. We're worshipping the Lord.

We're coming to bring him songs. We're coming to sing. We're coming with gladness. Now, the fear of the Lord leads to both. The fear of the Lord inevitably, always, always, leads to both sides of that, of worship.

It's going to mean the sense of God's holiness and God's greatness and his love and his faithfulness. It will mean that I will worship him in my everyday life.

I will think his thoughts after him. I will choose his will rather than my will. I will bring myself into conformity to him. I will put my faith in him because he's big.

[12:10] He's good. I'm going to live with him at the center. And at the same time, it will lead to specific acts of worship. I will come before him with joyful songs.

The fear of the Lord shines in what we do here on Sunday morning. How much fear of the Lord we bring into the sanctuary gets expressed in how we sing and how we worship while we are worshipping.

So this broad concept. We're going to talk first about the broad concept of worship, and then we're going to talk about the narrow concept. So this broad concept of worship. This life, this whole life of worship.

You see it in Romans chapter 12, verse 1. Can anyone say that for me? Does anyone know that verse? Romans chapter 12, verse 1.

It begins, Therefore I urge you, brothers. Sure. This is your reasonable service.

[13:21] There's all sorts of worship words even stuck in that verse. Offer your parts of your body. This is your sacrifice.

The NIV says this is your spiritual act of worship. When you're offering your body to God. So our body. That's not just talking about our hands and our feet.

It is obviously talking about our body. But our body is standing in for all that we are. Because all that we do, we do in our bodies. We're going to talk about this on Sunday afternoon in the afternoon service.

Our body is the canvas of our hearts. What we feel and do and love in our hearts gets expressed in our bodies.

So to offer our bodies is to offer all that we are. Because everything we do, we do as embodied souls. We do as physical, spiritual beings.

[14:25] So this is a wholehearted, whole life devotion to God. It's a total way of life that Paul is talking about here in Romans 12.1. Paul calls it a spiritual act of worship.

Romans 6 uses the same sorts of language. Paul tells us to offer the parts of our body to God as instruments of righteousness. To offer.

That means there's an offering involved. Offering is a sacrifice word. It's a worship word. So when you offer your sacrifice, you put it on the altar.

You give it to God. And so what Paul is saying is, what I do with my hands and with my feet and my tongue and my eyes and my brain and my will and my emotions, I am offering it to God.

It's whole life. That's what the fear of the Lord looks like. It's offering my whole life in worship to God. I want to glorify him in everything I do.

[15:35] So whether I eat or drink or whatever I do, I want to do it for the glory of God. So that's the worship in the more general sense. What about worship in the specific sense?

What we're here to do today? Stephen Charnock said, worship is nothing else but rendering, that's giving, giving to God the honor that is due him.

John MacArthur defined worship as honor and adoration directed to God. So I want to honor and adore him.

I like how A.W. Tozer speaks about it. He said, God wants us to cultivate within us the adoration and admiration of which he is worthy.

He wants us to be astonished at the inconceivable elevation and magnitude and splendor of almighty God.

[16 : 44] So did you hear those words? Adoration, admiration, astonishment at his inconceivable elevation and magnitude and splendor.

Now, do you notice that those words, do you notice how close all that is, is to how we've been describing the fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord is living with this big, great, amazing, close, holy, loving God.

Isn't that what the fear of the Lord is? It's living with this real sense of this is how great God is. The eternal weight of glory. We're feeling it.

We're trusting him. We're depending on him because we believe he's good. We believe he's faithful. We have this big view, this great view of God. That's what the fear of the Lord looks like.

[17 : 50] Now, in worship, we take those inward feelings, those inward thoughts, and we make them known. The fear of the Lord, in the fear of the Lord, we realize that God is all those things.

In worship, we take all those thoughts and feelings and we make them known. We externalize them. We take the fear of the Lord that is in our hearts and we give it back to God.

We tell him how we feel. We tell him what we think about him. We tell others. We make it known. So worship is the fear of the Lord externalized.

Worship is the fear of the Lord externalized. Worship is the fear of the Lord gone public. And so, again, it's all those feelings and thoughts and intuitions about God, his greatness, his faithfulness, his holiness.

And we're moving it. We're taking it back to God. We're telling it back to God. Psalm 29 gives us this great description of worship.

[18 : 58] It says, Ascribe to the Lord. Ascribe. Write this down beside him. Beside his name. Describe him like this. Tell what he is like.

Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. So you ascribe what you know and what you believe about God in your heart.

And you can't do that unless you're really gripped by the true reality that God is those things. So where there is no real fear of God in your heart, there can be no true worship.

You can't externalize what you don't have in your guts. Does that make sense? You can't make that known if it's not really in there.

What you really believe and know in your heart. So you don't give honor unless you think he is honorable. And you don't give him glory, ascribe glory, unless you think and you feel he's glorious.

[20 : 15] But when you think and feel he's glorious, you say he is glorious. You can't ascribe him strength unless you think he's strong. Unless you really rely on his strength.

So there's no fear of God. There's no worship. It's impossible. Now you can sing really loudly.

You can have great music. And you can perhaps have a shadow of the feelings of worship. There's no denying that something happens when people are singing together.

But you can't have the real thing unless there's the fear of the Lord in your heart. Because who sings for joy unless they're joyful? Who sings for joy in the Lord unless he's really made their hearts glad?

The seraphim ceaselessly worship God. Why do they do that? It's because they truly know and are truly struck by the holiness of God.

[21 : 27] They truly know it. So they never stop singing, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. That worship is something that comes from within them.

They aren't robots. They understand. They know the glory of God. His holiness has shocked their hearts.

Their holiness has shocked them to their very core. His holiness has thundered in their hearts. His holiness plays upon their heartstrings. They are really in awe of him.

And so they worship. So when did King Nebuchadnezzar really worship God? When the Lord humbled him and then raised him up.

When the Lord flexed his muscles in King Nebuchadnezzar's life. When King Nebuchadnezzar knew the Lord by experience is when he began to worship.

[22:40] And so when Nebuchadnezzar saw that it was really all God's kingdom. That it wasn't Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. No, this is real. He sees it. He knows it. He understands it.

He feels it. This world is God's kingdom. He gives it to whoever, whomever he wants. And so when he saw and felt and knew the greatness of God, he worshiped. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't putting it on.

Nebuchadnezzar wasn't trying to just do this for, he wasn't acting. He was in awe and so he worshiped. So do you see what I'm saying?

The worship, both generally and specifically, it comes out of our hearts. It comes from the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord, externalized, is what worship is. So listen to what Jerry Bridges says at this point. The lesson here is that in order to render heartfelt worship to God, we must be gripped in the depth of our being by his majesty, holiness, and love.

[23:46] Otherwise, our praise and our adoration may be no more than empty words. So the fear of the Lord inevitably produces worship, heartfelt worship.

Now when I say heartfelt worship, what do I mean? I mean, it comes from his heart. It comes from all that's within him.

Praise his holy name. You feel it in your heart. It includes your will. It includes your thinking. It includes your emotions.

Now, I do want to talk about the emotional side here because that's where there's abuses. And that's where there's probably overreactions.

In our current situation with the abuses of the charismatic movement, there is such an emphasis on emotions that we who disagree with them can fall in the other ditch.

[24:56] What I mean by that is we see what they're doing, we see how they're doing it, and we can be so afraid of that that we go too far on the other side. So first we want to talk about that.

That's the side of too much, just this playing on the emotions, without the will, without the thought, without the life, all behind it. John MacArthur says this, music and liturgy can assist or express a worshiping heart, but they cannot make a non-worshiping heart into a worshiping one.

I think that's what a lot of churches are trying to do. They put the situation together.

They put the music together. They put the people together. They do such a thing that it makes people think that they are worshiping. And I'm not going to judge anyone's heart, and I'm not going to, because the Lord only knows.

But the danger is that they can give a non-worshiping heart the sense of having worshiped. That's true. Music and liturgy, the whole thing, can make a non-worshiper someone who has no fear of the Lord in their hearts, and they prove it in their regular life.

[26:13] It can make that person feel like he's worshiped. They feel things. There's no denying their feelings. But it's not true worship.

Now, that's true. There is a danger there, but there is another danger, and it's the danger of saying that emotions are bad. That emotions are the enemy.

And so then we can reduce the emotions as if they were just this unruly child that needs to be managed.

You know, emotions can be an unruly child, but they can also be the sweetest child, too. Emotions aren't the enemy.

Being heartfelt, really feeling something isn't the enemy. Because, again, the fear of the Lord, it's not merely a cognitive thing.

[27:15] The sense of God's greatness and His glory is not something that we just know in our head. It actually goes down to the depth of our being, like what Jerry Bridges said, and it swallows up our whole heart.

It's something that we feel and we know in the core of our being. And so when we worship, we bring God all that we are. All that we are. And so we worship Him with our feelings because the fear of the Lord includes our feelings.

So there's two ditches here. There's a problem when people are swinging from the chandeliers on Sunday and then going out and doing whatever they want on Monday.

That's a problem. But there's also something wrong with robots on Sunday and then obedience on Monday. We aren't player pianos, we aren't merely producing sounds.

We are whole people living whole lives who should give our whole hearts to God in worship. So, the fear of the Lord should produce in us thoughtful worship.

[28:32] The fear of the Lord should produce in us this worship that says, I want to obey. I will offer Him my hands and my feet in obedience and righteousness. And it should also include our feelings.

It's our whole heart. So, this is where I want you to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 17. Luke chapter 17.

And we'll begin reading it verse 11. And this is a very familiar story, but I want to look at what it teaches us and what it convicts us of as far as worship goes.

Acts chapter 17, verse 11. Now, on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As He was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met Him.

They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, Jesus, Master, have pity on us. And when He saw them, He said, Go show yourselves to the priests.

[29:56] And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when He saw He was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.

He threw Himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. And He was a Samaritan. And Jesus asked, Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?

Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? And then He said to Him, Rise and go, Your faith has made you well.

Well, first of all, you do see that this is a text about worship. They praise God. It says that two times. Now, what I want you to look for and what I want you to try to answer here is, what do you see here that shows you that the Samaritan was worshiping God with His whole heart, with His feelings, with everything He had?

What do you see about His worship? I see three things. What do you see? Roger. He certainly wasn't ashamed.

[31:12] He said it in a very loud voice. Said it in a loud voice. He threw Himself.

So He's loud. He's loud. The Cubs won. The fans cheered. There weren't anybody cheering with a quiet voice.

When you're really happy, you can be really loud. He threw Himself down. He couldn't help Himself. His body followed His heart.

Jesus was great. Jesus was awesome. Jesus was the best thing ever to happen to this man and down He goes. What's the third thing that shows you that He was really worshiping with everything He had?

He gave Him thanks. That's good. He came by Himself. He wasn't afraid. Those are both good. That's not what I'm looking for.

[32:16] Not that they're wrong. He was a Samaritan. What was Jesus? A Jew.

We saw this a couple weeks ago. There was a real cultural divide between Jews and Samaritans. Let me try to put this in to something maybe we could understand even better.

This would have been like a white man throwing himself down at a black man's feet in the South in the 1890s.

Something that you just, it didn't happen. It just wasn't done. This cultural divide. This separation. These people thought, I'm better than you.

I'm better than you. But here the Samaritan is worshiping. He's all in. He's not saying, what will people think of me?

[33:29] He's not saying, what will my Samaritan friends think of me? He goes down. He's praising God. He's all in. And that's what worship should look like.

Jesus healed this man of leprosy. But Jesus took our sins upon himself. He who had no sin became sin.

And he's not healed us from leprosy. He's given us eternal life. And yet, how often do we express real heartfelt thanksgiving in our worship to God for the gift of eternal life with as much depth of feeling and bigness of heart as the Samaritan leper?

Jesus said, we're not all ten cleansed. Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?

Even Jesus said, if anyone should have been here, if anyone should have been falling down at my feet praising God, it should have been the Jews.

[34 : 48] But here's this foreigner doing it. So the foreigner puts the children to shame. He washed us from our sins and gave us eternal life.

Jesus has done far more for us than he ever did for that Samaritan. And the whole point of the story is that God takes note of when we thank him and when we know and when we don't.

God knows the difference between heartless words and heartfelt words. The fear of the Lord, we talked about this, it moves us towards gratitude.

Towards gratitude. Away from complaining and instead to thanksgiving. We've seen that. And that's what we see here. Thanksgiving.

And it's not just some sort of perfunctory gratitude. It's heartfelt gratitude. My God is big. My God is good. Even though he's great and holy and I am not, he has loved me.

[35 : 53] He has saved me. He has helped me. And I can't believe that he would notice me. And I'm thankful. I'm thankful. You remember when David called Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, to him.

Mephibosheth bowed down to pay David honor. And David gave him all of his grandfather's property back. Mephibosheth was living in someone else's house, destitute.

And David gives him all of his property back. He makes him a noble of the land. And Mephibosheth, again, bowed down and he said, what is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?

Do you hear the awe, the gratitude, the wonder in Mephibosheth's words? Who am I that you should notice me?

Now I just want you to think about some of the things that we've talked about. Our God holds the waters in the palm of his hand, in the hollow of his hand.

[37 : 13] He lifts his voice and the mountains melt. He marks off the heavens with the breath of his hands. A couple of Wednesdays ago in all church, we looked at Revelation chapter 4 and it's this great throne room scene.

And God is there on his throne. He's sparkling like Jasper and Carnelian. He's beautiful. He's indescribable. And around him are these 24 angelic elders and they all have thrones.

They all have crowns. And then inside of them there's these four living creatures and we notice what those four living creatures were.

They were angelic versions, angelic varieties of the kings of the created world. So you had the lion, the king of the beast, the eagle, the king of the birds.

You had the ox. He's like an oxen. The king of all the domesticated animals. You have man who God put over all of creation. And so here's these four sort of angelic, exalted versions of these are the kings of all of the creation.

[38 : 30] And what are they all doing? They're all bowing down to God. And the elders are taking off their crowns and they're putting them before God.

That's our God. He's holy. He's great. He's strong. He's loving. And yet with all of that there is such mercy, such grace.

He's so generous and so kind that he lets go of his son. and his son takes upon himself all of our sins and then God offers his son to his own wrath and he crushes him and he pierces him and he breaks him just to rescue us.

So what what is the difference between us going to heaven and us going to hell? It's the grace of God to a God who is infinitely above us.

And so shouldn't we say with Mephibosheth who am I that you should notice me? Why was I made to hear your voice and enter while there's still room?

[39 : 50] Why was I a guest? So brothers and sisters that feeling that wonder of God's greatness and yet God's kindness expressed in the cross is where the fear of the Lord comes from and it's where worship comes from.

And in heaven that fear of the Lord will be perfected in us. Jeremiah 32 40 will become absolutely true.

He will inspire us to fear him and so we will never he'll give us that Psalm 86 11 give me an undivided heart that I might fear your name. We will have that 100% undivided heart perfected in us and we will fear him like we ought and then in turn we will worship him like we've always wanted.

They go together. The fear of the Lord is that worship or the worship is the fear of the Lord externalized. It's made real and both will be 100% true in us.

We are dismissed. The fear of the Lord is the