

ARE YOU READY FOR MORE? Part 4

The Fear of the Lord

The BIG IDEA: When we come together to worship, the atmosphere in the room should be instantly RECOGNISABLE by a strong, tangible sense of the FEAR of the LORD.

- * Defⁿ = Deep, strong, weighty REVERENCE & RESPECT for the holiness of God, person of the Lord Jesus & presence of the Holy Spirit.
 - * It is possible for the spiritual TEMPERATURE to gradually SLIP until we become a little BLASÉ, slightly APATHETIC, what John in Revelation called 'LUKEWARM.'
 - * And one day we look around the room & realise we've LOST that razor-sharp REVERENCE & AWE.
- *Would you say that the contemporary Christian church has strayed away from emphasising the fear of the Lord? What do you think it is perhaps lacking? Do you personally hear the clarion call back to the fear of the Lord?*

The Old Testament PATTERN (2 Chr 7:14, Ps 24:3-4, 1 Chr 16:29-30)

- * God is HOLY & calls us to HOLINESS.
- * God is WORTHY & calls us to HONOUR His PRESENCE.
- * God is a CONSUMING FIRE & calls for REVERENTIAL FEAR.

And this should be reflected in HOW we COME to Him.

→ *What does 1 Chron 16:29-30 tell us about 'how we should come?' What about 2 Chron 7:14?*

The New Testament Pattern (Acts 2:42-43, 9:31, 1 Thess 1:5)

a) Sense of AWE

- * If we want the AWE, we'll need the FEAR and the REVERENCE & WORSHIP, HUMILITY & SURRENDER that go with it.
- *What does that 'sense of awe' look and feel like? Can you think of specific times you experienced it strongly, either at the Barn or elsewhere? How might it change our services? How might it help draw people to Jesus?*

b) The CONVICTING power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37).

- * Conviction is the Spirit PROMPTING & STIRRING our hearts; the force that draws us TO JESUS & AWAY FROM SIN.
- *How do you experience 'conviction?' How does it differ from condemnation? What's the difference between a church service where there is a deep conviction and one where there isn't?*

c) The Fear of the Lord CHARACTERISED their LIFESTYLE.

→ *"The fear of the Lord should be visible. The fear of the Lord is our point of difference." Discuss!*

The Fear of the Lord PENDULUM

1. Are you looking to PLEASE GOD or MAN? (Col 1:9-10, Prov 19:25)

- * Who are you trying to IMPRESS? Who are you most concerned about OFFENDING?
- *Why is people-pleasing so tempting? Does people-pleasing keep us from the fear of the Lord? Is it possible to be a God-pleaser & people-pleaser at the same time?*
- *If you're honest, have you allowed yourself to be led / influenced / manipulated by the 'driving agenda of the world' and, if so, how?*

2. SACRED v PROFANE (Matt 5:8, Heb 12:14, 2 Tim 2:16-17)

- * In your thoughts, words & humour, does the pendulum swing towards the SACRED: HOLY, PURE, GODLY or is it the PROFANE: IRREVERENT, DISRESPECTFUL, DISHONOURING.
- *"The world is no longer offended by what it once was. In fact, ungodly is now arguably the norm." Do you agree?*

3. HONOUR v OVER-FAMILIARITY (1 Tim 1:17, Matt 13:57)

- * In your life, is Jesus treated with the UTMOST HONOUR as befitting His status as King of Kings & Lord of Lords or are you at times guilty of OVER-FAMILIARITY, taking Him for GRANTED, even DISHONOURING His presence?
 - * Does the way you behave, worship & carry yourself REFLECT the fact that the KING is in the ROOM?
- *Is He God-Almighty or God All-Matey? Is it either/or or both/and? Are there dangers in the pendulum swinging too far in the direction of God All-Matey?*

4. Do you SHUN / RUN from EVIL or BELITTLE, ENTERTAIN, HUMOUR it? (Prov 3:7, 1 Cor 6:18, 2 Tim 2:22, Prov 8:13)

- * Do you TOLERATE things you know you really shouldn't?
 - * Are you becoming IMMUNE to that voice of conviction?
 - * Are you AWARE of the DOVE on your shoulder?
- *"Do you tolerate things you know you really shouldn't? Are you no longer offended by things you'd never have tolerated 5 years ago?" Discuss!*
- *Are you aware of the Dove on your shoulder? How does He keep you in the fear of the Lord? What happens if you grieve Him?*

5. Are you QUICK to OBEY or QUICK to make EXCUSES?

- * If we TRULY fear Lord, obedience will be WILLING, PRECISE & INSTANT. If we don't, it will be BEGRUDGING, COMPROMISED & DELAYED (Deut 6:24, Phil 2:12).
- *"The fear of the Lord is a form of love and every time we obey the Lord, we take a step towards Him." Discuss!*