Knowing the Fear of the Lord

Study 1 – The Fear of the Lord

Message Mate

- Fear is an emotion that arises from the threat of harm. While a healthy emotion of fear protects us from real or perceived threats, an unhealthy emotion of fear can be detrimental to our health and well-being. Similarly, a holy Fear of the Lord (also called Fear of God) is good for us, while an unholy fear of God is bad for us. Unholy fear leads to us being afraid of God which keeps us distant from God, whereas holy Fear of the Lord brings us closer to God.

- When God appeared at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19:16, 20:18-20) the Israelites trembled with fear causing Moses to say to them, "Do not be afraid", but then he said "the fear of God will be with you" showing that being afraid of God is different to Fear of God. Because the people were afraid of God they stayed at a distance, whereas Moses who feared God approached God (Ex 20:21).

- When Adam sinned, he became afraid of God and hid from Him (Genesis 3:8-10). That's because unholy fear drives you away from God. Being afraid of God prevents us from trusting God and receiving the blessings of his goodness and generosity (Luke 19:12-27).

- Fear of the Lord was evident in the life of Jesus who delighted in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 3:1-3) and intimacy with his Father. This can be our journey as we are cleansed of sin to grow in holiness in Fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

- Jeremiah 32:38-40 reveals that God will give us a loyalty of our heart and actions that will cause us to Fear Him and never turn away from Him. Our heart attitudes include Fear of and loving God, while actions include walking in obedience, serving and observing His commands (Deuteronomy 10:12,13) and each of these actions are associated with fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1, Ps 2:11, Josh 24:14, Eccl 12:13, Deut 8:6). As we practice these actions with Fear of the Lord, they will bring us closer to God.

- The Scriptural principle is that the more you fear God, the closer you come to God. In contrast, being afraid of the Lord keeps us distant from God, so let us rediscover how to fear God and come closer to Him.

Some Questions to Consider

1. When you think about being close to someone you love and respect, what makes you want to draw closer to them?

2. What do you think is the difference between being afraid of God and having a healthy Fear of the Lord? How does each one affect our relationship with Him?

3. In Exodus 20:18-21, the Israelites stood at a distance from God while Moses approached Him. What can we learn from our different responses, and how might that affect our relationship with God?

4. How can an unhealthy fear of God prevent us from trusting His goodness, generosity and love? What does the parable of Luke 19:12-27 teach us about this?

5. Jeremiah 32:38-40 tells us that God wants to give us hearts that remain faithful to Him? What attitudes and heart changes help us grow in genuine Fear of the Lord?

6. Deuteronomy 10:12-13 shows us two heart attitudes and three actions that demonstrate our Fear of the Lord. What practical ways can you demonstrate your Fear of the Lord through the way you walk in His ways, serve and observe His commandments?

7. The Scriptural principle is that the more you Fear God the closer you come to God, while being afraid of God keeps us distant from God. What is one practical change you can make this week to grow in holy Fear of the Lord and deepen your intimacy with Him?

Pray –

Pray with thanks that God's character is one of goodness and generosity, and as we learn to Fear God, we grow closer to God.

If you are willing, pray for the Fear of the Lord in your life, our church, city and community.