Growing in Fear of the Lord

Study 4 – The Fear of the Lord

Message Mate

- Growing in Fear of the Lord is not about growing in knowledge about God, but growing in knowing God. Growing in Fear of the Lord starts at the cross where we experience God's love and justice. We come to the cross with the Fear of the Lord as we honestly acknowledge our sinfulness before a just God, as we realise how deeply and undeservedly we are loved by God and as we experience His undeserved grace poured into our lives to restore us into relationship with our loving Father. The cross is the foundation of a healthy and holy Fear of the Lord.

- Growing in Fear of the Lord requires the work of the Holy Spirit. The early church grew through living in Fear of the Lord and encouragement by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8) and pours God's love into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Growing in Fear of the Lord involves others who Fear the Lord, such as a mentor (2 Chron 26:3-5) and others you join with in esteeming or worshipping our holy God (Mal 3:16).

- Growing in Fear of the Lord requires joyfully obeying God (Ps 112:1) and an increasing hatred of sin (Prov 8:13). Fear of the Lord will keep God's people from sinning, whereas those who do not Fear God sin without concern of consequences (Ex 20:20, Ps 36:1). Our increasing hatred of sin leads us to repentance.

- Proverbs 16:6 (By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil) reminds us again of a pendulum. By coming to the Fear of the Lord, we turn away from sin and evil. By coming to the love and grace of God, we confess our sins and receive forgiveness. As we walk in the balance and fullness of Fear of the Lord and love of God we come into intimacy with God as our heavenly Father.

- If we desire to approach our holy God and come into His presence, Psalm 24:3-5 calls us to have clean hands (our actions), a pure heart (heart devoted to God), a soul (mind, will and emotions) that does not put anyone or anything else before God, and speaking words that are good and godly.

- If we want to grow in Fear of the Lord, we have to address our relationship with sin. We must come to the cross, where sin was defeated and there we must allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin as we face the justice of God which leads to punishment of sin. We must come to the cross and confess our sin, receiving salvation through Christ, and accept God's love and grace, so that we come into relationship with our Father God. As we then grow in Fear of the Lord, we increasingly obey God's commands and we increasingly hate sin, so we have to deal with sin through repentance. Let us start at the cross with salvation and finish at the cross with ongoing repentance for where we have not walked in Fear of the Lord as we should have.

Some Questions to Consider

1. How would you describe the difference between knowing about God and truly knowing Him?

2. When you reflect on the cross, what does it teach you about the seriousness of your sin and the depth of God's love and grace towards you? How should this shape your relationship with Him?

3. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin or reminding you of God's love? Why are both aspects important in growing in Fear of the Lord?

4. How can other believers, mentors and being part of a worshipping community help us grow in Fear of the Lord? Who has helped you to grow in this area and how?

5. Proverbs 16:6 (By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil) reminds us of a pendulum. How does God's steadfast love and faithfulness lead us to receive forgiveness, while Fear of the Lord leads us to turn away from evil? Why do we need both to grow in intimacy with our heavenly Father?

6. Why is it important that we being our journey with God at the cross through salvation and continue returning to the cross through repentance? Is there an area of your life where you need to confess sin, receive God's grace and take a step of obedience?

Pray –

Pray with thanks for the work of the Holy Spirit that convicts us of sin and pours God's love into our hearts (John 16:8, Romans 5:5).

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one area of your life where you can grow in Fear of the Lord. Take time to bring it to the cross, receive God's grace and respond with joyful obedience.

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