

Monday, 28 May 2018 Joshua 22:22-27

"The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against the LORD, do not spare us today for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD. Or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings on it, may the LORD himself take vengeance. No, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, 'What have you to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? For the LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you people of Reuben and people of Gad. You have no portion in the LORD.' So your children might make our children cease to worship the LORD. Therefore we said, 'Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do perform the service of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings, so your children will not say to our children in time to come, "You have no portion in the LORD."'"

The fear expressed here is in the sense of afraid, but hidden within the passage is a recognition of the fear of the LORD, God the Almighty. The two and a half tribes who were given the land on the eastern side of the Jordan were concerned that the other tribes would erect an artificial barrier, preventing them from serving the LORD as directed. Their understanding, correctly, I believe, was that they needed to build a reminder to their brethren that they were also part of the elect.

I need to examine my heart to determine that I am not erecting artificial, non-scriptural barriers against my willingness to join other saints in worship. Do I refuse to worship with someone because they are a different sinner than I am? The list of possible objections is endless.

Tuesday, 29 May 2018 Joshua 24:14-15

"Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

A powerful linking of the relationship between the fear of the LORD and obedience. It is my voluntary choice to live in conformance with the Word of the LORD. It is my voluntary choice to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this task of transformation. He is the One who enables the renewing of my mind (Rom. 12:2).

In one sense, the Holy Spirit is a powerful lever in the transformation process. He is the lever that moves a stubborn, self-centered heart into a heart of flesh with God's Word written on it. (Eze.26:26-27)

Wednesday, 30 May 2018 Judges 6:7-10

When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites, the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, "Thus

says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. And I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.' But you have not obeyed my voice."

Israel didn't get the point, and neither do we. Proverbs 28:9 told them and tells us that *"If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination."* The history of the people of Israel is filled with examples of this truth. But we claim that because we are saved by grace, we no longer have to pay any attention to the Word of the LORD for instruction in life. You know, He is ready and willing to forgive all sin. Right? Yes, but! We want a god who is an enabler; the LORD, God the Almighty is a mentor, a teacher, and one who disciplines. In short, a loving Father.

Thursday, 31 May 2018 Judges 6:23, 27

But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die."...So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

An interesting juxtaposition between fear of the LORD and fear of man. The first instructs me that fear of the LORD, God the Almighty is demonstrated by obedience to His directions; the fear (fright) of man's retaliation may remain, but the LORD is with me. Trust Him.

Friday, 1 June 2018 Judges 7:1-2,7

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'...And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home."

Gideon had an army of 32,000 who answered his call to rise up against the Midianites. (Judges 6:33-35) But the LORD trimmed the fighting force to about 1% of the respondents. Interesting because so many times I overestimate the requirements of a particular call. Never enough people or money or time or... No the only requirement lacking in my willingness to call upon the name of the LORD. What kind of crazy logic convinces me that I need to worry and fret over the availability of needed resources when the Holy Spirit has placed the call on my heart?

Now get this straight, John, "When answering a call of the LORD, when obeying the will of God, His good, acceptable and perfect will, He will supply. Trust Him and light the torches." Or to quote my favorite line from the movie, God's Not Dead, "Put the luggage in the trunk."

Saturday, 2 June 2018 Judges 7:19-21

So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled.

It didn't take 32,000 armed warriors wielding swords, arrows, and spears. It took 300 men armed with the fear of the LORD, God, the Almighty, moving in obedience against a very large, well-armed army. Let's jump to today; how should the people of the LORD, God the Almighty, as an example, proceed against the forces of the god of Choice? Our weapons are not the ballot box, passing laws prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks, insisting every woman be offered an ultrasound by a neutral party, and on and on and on. These are the weapons of the culture, the Midianites of this day and age. What are our weapons, our torches, and jars? Are they not the agonizing prayers for the faithful that His Body would stand against this evil in their midst? Remember, Gideon's first act of obedience was to destroy the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah pole—these evil practices that existed among the people of Israel, the LORD's people. We are called to start likewise, the Holy Spirit will reveal the next step in His time.

Lord's Day, 3 June 2018 Psalms 119:1-3

*Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in His ways!*

Lord, You showed me this morning that the blessing comes not from the place but from the Presence in the place. Now, You are showing me that the blessing comes not from the doing, the obedience to the Law, but from the Presence that is in the obedience. When I obey, my relationship with You is no longer sullied by disobedience and is full and complete.

Therefore, my goal, my purpose, my intent has to be to purge that which sullies and enhance that which purifies and enables. A task far beyond my feeble strivings, but easily within Your power to transform my lowly body into one like Your glorious body; that same power by which all things are subject to You.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



May 28-June 3, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Lord, our prayer is that we will respond to the gift of grace that comes to us in the form of eternal encouragement and good hope. We pray that this gift will be expressed in both deed and word. We pray that our faith will be evident in every step we take and every word we speak. Amen

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

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