

Monday, 11 June 2018 1 Samuel 18:7-12

And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul eyed David from that day on. The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice. Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul.

A powerful vignette here. God sent a harming (tormenting in the NLT) spirit. The LORD, God, the Almighty had removed His protective shield over Saul, (see 1 Sam.13:11-13 and 15:22-35 for examples of the reasons the shield was removed) Saul was jealous of David because he had received the praises that Saul regarded as his due as King. Saul's pride had been hurt. Saul's life was no longer being, if it ever was, in the fear of the LORD.

How often are jealousy and pride at the very root of problems that I may be experiencing as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Do I need to routinely examine the state of my heart, soul, and mind to see if I am loving (fearing) the LORD, God. the Almighty with all my being?

Tuesday, 12 June 2018 1 Samuel 23:15-17

David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this."

Jonathan and David were soul friends, see 1 Sam. 18:1; both seeking to live in the fear of the LORD. It is so significant to me that Jonathan sensed that his soul friend needed encouragement and went to him. There was no internet, no cell phones in those days but the Spirit of the LORD, God the Almighty moved.

Jonathan put some effort into answering this call, not just a trip to a local convenience store to meet a friend for a cup of coffee. He went out into the wilderness of Ziph to find David.

Am I alert to these sensing from the Spirit? And do I respond? Do I put the necessary effort into encouraging a brother who is in covenant with me?

Wednesday, 13 June 2018 1 Samuel 28:5-7

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor."

Saul's pleadings were an abomination to the LORD, Pro. 29:9, for

they were not being answered. I need to continuously ask myself if my prayers are in line with God's will. This needs to be an earnest soul-searching, guided by the Word of God. If I find a state of defiance to the Word, I need to repent and seek the Spirit's restoration of my soul. Sometimes my request is not in God's timing, and I need to accept that and seek the Spirit's support in waiting for my time to be His time. I am never, ever, under any circumstances to seek an answer from a source expressly forbidden by the Word to me. Saul's witch of En-dor being an example of such. Bull headedly charging ahead in my strength and initiative is another example. All are examples of a hypocritical fear of the LORD; an I'll obey You as long as You answer my prayers in the way and at the time I have specified.

Thursday, 14 June 2018 1 Samuel 28:15-20

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines." Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel.

It was not the words of Samuel, but the Word of the LORD spoken through him that brought Saul into a prostrate position on the ground. His great disobedience was going to cost his life and the lives of his sons. It was going to be the instrument that caused the nation of Israel to be in subjection to the Philistines. The LORD, God the Almighty expects that His instructions will be carried out in full. There is no "good enough" in the LORD's economy.

Friday, 15 June 2018 1 Samuel 31:1-4, 2 Samuel 1:13-14

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me." But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it.

And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?" And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite." David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put

out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

Is there some guidance here as we considered the morality of physician-assisted suicide? The word applied to describe the armor-bearer, feared, is the same word used in the phrase, the fear of the LORD. The same word in Hebrew, *yare*, is used by David in questioning the Amalekite whose thinking did not begin to consider the concept of fearing the LORD.

We should not be surprised that the non-believing world does not recognize the image of God as present in all human life, but we must guard against any violation in our own life and witness.

Saturday, 16 June 2018 2 Samuel 6:3-8

And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day.

There are at least two crucial points here that should be primary in our consideration of the fear of the LORD.

1. The LORD, God, the Almighty has given specific instruction regarding every aspect of our worship of Him. See Exodus 25:14-15 regarding how the ark was to be moved. While we do not have an ark to transport, we do need to be determined in searching the Scriptures for direction in every aspect of our relationship with Him.

2. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah decided that the LORD needed help in protecting His ark. I suspect that if Uzzah had not attempted to intervene, the ark would never have touched the ground. How often do I commit the same sin by jumping into a situation before the LORD has accomplished His purpose? Sometimes I need to allow individuals in my ministry to burn and crash as a result of their own folly. Allow the LORD to discipline those whom He loves.

Lord's Day, 17 June 2018 Psalm 119:13

With my lips I declare all the rules of Your mouth.

O Lord, that I would take this to heart today, fully accepting the truth and importance of this short little verse. It is so easy to say that it is the way I live that provides a testimony to you, that is both true and necessary, but it is insufficient. I cannot stop there, Lord, I must declare that it is Your goodness that is exhibited in me, I must shout that it is all the wisdom and goodness that comes from Your mouth, I must cry out that You are Lord of my life and to You alone, I am obedient.

To do otherwise is to plagiarize and to take credit for Your grace and mercy. Help me, Lord, keep me from adding more layers of this sin to my life.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



June 11-17, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

Lord, may that peace that passes all understanding be the fleece that guides us through our ministries. Our prayer for the [congregation] is that we will always be guided by that infallible lantern, Your peace; that it will be the lamp for our feet and the light for our path. 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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