

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 30th October 2022 10 am

Living in Godly fear - Philippians 2:12-18

Welcome to all. I hope you spent that 'extra' hour well?

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 1086 Light of the world

Scripture Psalm 118:24-Psalm 119:1-16 (page 617)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk

Chorus MP 14 All heaven declares

Notices Tuesday CI, Pray on time, BCM support. Fellowship Lunch

Prayer time

Reading Philippians 2:12-18 (page 1179)

Hymn MP 239 Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord

Sermon Living in Godly fear

Hymn MP 445 Lord the light of your love is shining

Closing Prayer

Close



why we meet on Sunday

Worship and praise

Thanksgiving

To hear God speak together

To prayer together

Fellowship as believers belong to each other

To demonstrate we love each other

The Lord's supper proclaiming the Lord

Exordium and Prayer

- This Friday Bachop will be going to Rubery for the firework display. There they have a huge bonfire, even though some distance away you can feel the heat, it turns all our faces red in its light. Gaze into the middle and there are turbulent flames devouring the wood.

To gaze into the fire - is like gazing at God. He is described as **a consuming fire**. One who is holy and whose eyes are too pure to behold evil.

When God appeared on the mountain at Sinai he was shrouded in a dark cloud, the earth shook and the voice was so terrible and **the sight so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."** Hebrews 12:21

In our passage this morning Paul is speaking about **obedience** and then immediately after the insert links it with **fear** and **trembling**. Does **obedience** produce **fear and trembling**? Or **fear and trembling** produce **obedience**?

'Ah' you say 'we live in NT times now', Jesus has averted the anger of God and now I can say 'Abba father'. Yes, that is true. Does that mean God is not to be feared? Should I treat a father like a pal, a 'best mate', as some Americans are want to do. Or is God now all loving, so loving 'He's always there when I need him' a sort of benign carer.

In the NT the cross shows that God is no less to be feared. Christ averted God's wrath by taking it on himself bringing peace with God to all who turn to Him. Now "fear" is used in the sense of "stand in awe of," to "fear God" means to walking in reverence of God.

That is how Jesus Christ changes things for His people. Not the dark cloud of Sinai but the bright cloud of Christ. If you do not have Christ you will have **only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God,.. for it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** Heb 10:27,31 Here then "fearful" rightly means "terrible," something well to be feared. Who here has rejected Jesus Christ's call?

As Christians we are to live in Godly fear (the title). Paul says to the Christians in Philippi — **continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling**, x2 This is the main passage we are looking at this morning.

Worked out

The Christian life needs to be worked out x2, our salvation is not worked for, Jesus did that, he did the work and we are given the fruit of his labours. Salvation is completely the work of Christ, it is of the Lord, it is not affected by you. It is given as free grace, the gift of God - to all who will come.

How different that is from many who say: "I'm doing my best" I often hear, "I'm doing my best", your best – my friend - will never be good enough.

No, a true Christian does not work for his or her salvation - but we work out our salvation. Living for Christ – and dying for Christ. **Whether we live or die we belong to the Lord.** If you have professed to follow Christ then **you are no longer your own** – you are His. Your life is not your own, you gave up any right to that when he received you.

So what do we mean when we say we are to live in Godly fear?

Physical fear is a natural and often beneficial feeling arising in the presence or anticipation of danger, it moves us to a place of safety. A different kind of fear is also awakened in the presence of superiors and those in power, etc., taking the form of awe or reverence.

■ For ex: imagine relaxing and chatting among a group of colleagues at work. But should one of them be promoted and becomes your boss immediately there is a change, there's a sense that there should be respect, some honour due, some submission and obedience given.

■ Those MPs who were once Rishi Sunak's peers and colleagues now see him differently, he may be as friendly as ever, yet there is something more now, because of his office he is to be honoured.

✚ This is our built-in - God given response - to God given authority.

'The fear of God' is prominent in the OT; the 'the fear of the Lord,' is synonymous with the right way to live Ps 34:11; Pr 1:7; Isa 11:2,3; Jer 2:19; Ec 12:13, AS we see on the front of the bulletin it is the whole duty of man. "to fear God"

When the people of God started to enter the land and gain victory they had to learn this. Achan disobeyed the Lord's command and coveted some silver and clothing. He did not respect, revere God and therefore he did not obey the command.

Everyone suffered until Joshua investigated and the judgment came.

So too after Christ rose and the church formed Ananias and Sapphira tried to live dishonestly among the believers. They gave the impression that they loved God when in fact they were holding back for themselves. Christ spat them out of his mouth, and they were struck down dead. What was the result?

11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. All the believers used to meet together,.. **13 No-one else dared join**

them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. **14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.** Acts 5:11-14 God was now greatly at work. – a real connection So we are to live "**with fear and trembling**". Not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, for Christ's work stands and I am free from judgment. That is something I have no fear of losing! Salvation, if you have it - you cannot lose.

A Christian's life is a responsive life - realizing who Christ is – and what he has done for me, I now give my whole life as an offering of deep gratitude. I marvel at Him, I revere Him; I magnify the suffering Servant, and in the same way live a life of cheerful, constant obedience, and in humility of soul...**Live in Godly fear.**

The passage gives – in case you hadn't noticed - the glaring reason why....

It starts with the word 'therefore' so ask why is 'therefore' there for?

"God exalted him to the highest place and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil 2:9-11

That is why we should fear God. You and I, all here in this room, everyone across the road, - and across the world - and indeed everyone who has ever lived - will one day bow the knee to the Lord. Yes you will. So...

Don't live all your life aimlessly, as if you are in the school playground!

No! There is an exam ahead, a day of accounting, therefore every moment now is important. One day, on that day you will declare him Lord. x2 And then your judgment will come. For anyone who has not looked to Christ as Lord, there will be everlasting pain, misery and punishment without end.

We all deserve punishment, but you can bow to him now, humble yourself and he will save you from Hell. Christ has that power – so have a change of heart like one of the criminals on the cross next to Jesus **But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?"** Luke 23:40 He feared God, he humbled himself, and Christ saved Him at that 11th hour. - That is why we all should fear and revere Him

The key to living in Godly fear is to consider the cross, consider what Christ has done – His suffering to rescue me from that dreadful punishment in hell, - if only I could really see just what we have been saved from – that would change everything.

When we come to worship it would be full of reverence, I would look up to heaven in awe and shout His praise from my heart. It would be as if looking into – not a fire - but the brightness of Glory of God in the face of Christ. Followers of Christ are to live in Godly fear.

- Not café church, not casual, not drift in with no preparation, haven't read anything beforehand, haven't stopped for a moment to prepare the heart realizing we are coming together into the Lord's presence.
- No-one ever went to Buckingham palace without a thought, without preparation. No the opposite.

How much more when we approach the eternal throne in Heavenly Glory

That's fear – what about 'trembling'?

When Jesus spoke to Daniel he trembled at the sight of Jesus in all his glory. Dan 10:10,11

Moses at the burning bush we are told **trembled with fear and did not dare to look.** Acts 7:32

"Should you not fear me?" declares the LORD. "Should you not tremble in my presence?" Jeremiah 5:22 and again in Ezekiel.. **and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence.** Ezekiel 38:20

The psalmist says: **My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.** Psalms 119:120. **my heart trembles at your word.** Psalms 119:161

That is what the Lord desires **"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.** declares the LORD. Isaiah 66:2

The Christian has the presence of God within - not to leave you petrified in fear – but that He can have His way in you. 13 **for it is God who works in you.**

To have Christ in you means he has saved, recreated and empowered you ... **to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

both to will and to do ..God works in the will so that I want to do - what He wants me to do. That concern for something is one way I know how Christ guides me.

God does not – as the religions of the world believe - throw out commands that people unwillingly and begrudgingly must submit to. No, he makes us want to, willingly, gladly. The Spirit of Christ sweetly and powerfully draws with the cords of love to Glorify God in all we do:

The belief that God has spoken, that we know His will, must be acted on

- We are waiting for my mother's Will to be acted on – yes still waiting

The desire to do something - and the action in doing it - must go together. They fell short of this in the church at Corinth. They wanted to give but never put it into practice - **Now finish the work**, Paul says to them, **so that your eager willingness to do it - may be matched by your completion of it.** 2 Cor 8:11

- William Booth who said, 'Faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of men walking. First faith, and then works; and then faith again, and then works again - until they can scarcely distinguish which is the one and which is the other.'

And how is all this done? With a cheerful, grateful heart. What above all un- does God's work? **complaining or arguing**, so we are told 14 **Do everything without complaining or arguing**,

This was a constant problem in the wilderness and grieved the Lord. God's people murmured against Moses and in so doing against God himself. Ex 16:2,7

The world does it all the time, all around there is; anger, grumbling, complaining, finger pointing, the pervasive ugly disease of the tongue.

Not for a follower of Jesus - not now, no, says the AV **All things do without murmurings and disputings** the murmurings, that onomatopoeic word.

The Greek word for 'complaining', or '**murmurings**' is Gongusmos 'gong-goos-mos' can you say it? 'gong-goos-mos' have you heard it?

- Can you hear them? ..., did you hear about? she has done this, he has done that, oh look what has the pastor done now etc...

What a blight it is to have **murmurings** and **complaining**

And we must not **argue / dispute**. When we see something is the will of God, Act!, Do it! Don't dispute with a '*should I / shouldn't I*'? x2 – Don't argue about it in your head. in other words when you know what God wants - don't hesitating over it. The will of God is not just another opinion, I do not consult my reasoning to see how it fits with me, or look to my feelings, No. Nor do I argue with others and put them off by being contentious. It is very easy to discourage Christians.

- ✚ Beware, it is easier to cool down a hot coal - than warm up a cold one.

A pure and blameless life

Let us live in Godly fear, will you live in Godly fear?... 15 **so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe ...**

Blameless and pure – I am not without sin but I am clothed in Christ, I am declared blameless before the Lord. And so with His power I must live blamelessly before man. As Jesus said we are to **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.** Matthew 5:48

✚ Can someone look at your life - and find no fault??

■ Like the Queen through the seventy years on the throne she had not blundered or failed in speech and action. That is an amazing record and is a faith 'worked out' She was indeed a lady under authority.

John KNOX said to his church "w.r.t God "I am a man undone" but before you I have in every way acted in integrity, honesty & uprightness

Every Christian, leaders particularly, are to be of good reputation with outsiders. No **blotting the copy book** so people say 'a Christian huh! Sure'

■ Pauline at work with her tongue. Others bad conduct, "please don't tell people you are a Christian" I think and on one occasion have said.

I address you men and women of God - may all who see you, - see Jesus in you. The sign that you are **children of God** is that you are like the father.

On a wall near the main entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription: "James Butler Bonham--no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom." (Bill Morgan)

No literal portrait of Jesus exists either. But the likeness of the Son who makes us free can be seen in the lives of His true followers.

And therefore, like Jesus we must live **without fault in a crooked and depraved generation.** The language is full of contrast - **blameless / crooked, pure / depraved,** in other words a Christian should stand out.

We are to be a rose among thorns, a diamond gleaming from the gutter.

This world is, in a moral sense, is what the original chaos was in a natural sense, covered with darkness; the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, of godlessness and superstition, there is a shroud of darkness over the world. You and I are all naturally men and women of darkness – Jesus who knows the human heart said we **are evil** not just that we live in darkness, - but are darkness. Doing the deeds of darkness, groping around not knowing who we are. This evil's world's backdrop is dark **a crooked and depraved generation.**

■ Halloween, how people love it, I have been walking around and going up to the front door past the skeletons and the devils, the blood, the macabre imagery, every year new merchandise is dreamt up.

men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. John 3:19

The 50's described as "The end of deference" the end of the fear of God

Christ has called His people out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9

so now we who were once darkness, are now light in the Lord. **Live as children of light** Eph 5:8 **AS sons of the light and sons of the day.** You do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 1 Thess 5:5

Are you different from your neighbour, that unbelieving family member, your friend, your work colleague? - That means you should, like light, stand out as bright stars will stand out.

The background will always be dark - but will the stars always be bright? **Being without fault** means we should **shine like stars in the universe.**

There should be a contrast, the brightness of the stars against the dark sky.

✚ **We need to turn up the brightness, and keep the contrast high!**

Is your tongue clean? Are your finances faultless? Are your relationships honourable? Is your use of time commendable? Is your interest in people noticeable? If so you will shine like the stars in this world's long night.

A house near Bromsgrove with so many Xmas illuminations people go and visit it – it can be seen from afar, even space!

So should you be

And **hold onto** or **and hold out - the word of life** to others through the gospel.

Not like Lot in Sodom, he did not stand out – he blended in – his light was smothered.

Jesus said: "**You are the light of the world. let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**" Mt 5:14-16

Will your obedience shine? Will you live in Godly fear? Christ's call you to

JC Ryle 'Obedience is the only reality. It is faith visible, faith acting, and faith manifest. It is the test of real discipleship among the Lord's people.'

Obedience is scorned at by the world - but actually it is beautiful –

As someone has said: 'the greatest visible evidence of the fear of God - is obedience to God'

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Dan 12:3 **END**