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2014 OS - The Fear of The Lord - The Lord's Prayer

Introduction

It has been my privilege and honour to be in fellowship with the people of God for fifty-five years. During that time I have heard ministry on many matters of Christian living, a multitude of articles have been read to profit on God and Christian living, yet I would have a very difficult time remembering any on the subject before us. Thank God salvation is obtained in a moment, but the ideal ongoing christian life means an increase in the awe and fear of the Lord. Like Corinth, many gatherings of saints are split due to personality clashes, the promotion of men, and party sidings. There have been schisms between the local churches, like Israel, who were split and lived as if the others did not exist. Add to this the dead structured functioning of Laodicea and the result is a void of the Spirit's moving, life, and liberty. It is my conviction that this is due in part to the lack of the fear of the Lord.

The first observation is that when we read of the Lord, fear of the Lord (Heb. 5:7 piety), His was not the same as ours. That lovely man lived in the profound awareness of God in His every attribute, and while He never needed to be brought to spiritual maturity, He did need to be made suitable to be our High priest and one who was becoming to God (Heb. 2:10). To become such, He took part of humanity and learnt obedience (Heb. 5:8). He "felt" every experience, humiliation, sorrow, afflictions from others due to fidelity, and temptations as permitted by God for the blessing of others and the opportunity to glorify God (Jn. 17:4). Christ always lived in the fear of the Lord, consequently, He knew nothing of iniquity by bribes (2 Chron. 19:7), erroneous judgments, foolish assessments (Lk. 12:13), or being favorable toward the wealthy setting aside the poor (Jam. 2:1-4).

Summarizing, to live in the fear of the Lord is to be aware of the reality of God in His abiding presence and in the living knowledge of His unchanging attributes and abilities. When there is such a fear of the Lord the individual begins to see Him as a loving Lord who seeks to bring His beloved to spiritual maturity. He is ever seeking likeness to Himself through the disappointments, disciplines, and encouragements of life.

From the scriptures we learn that, "The fear of the LORD is:

- a) "The beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Prov. 9:1)
- b) "A fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (Prov. 14:27)
- c) "And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure" (Isa. 33:6)

That Which is Commonly Called the "Lord's Prayer"

Taking each clause in this prayer we learn what it is to pray in the fear of the Lord. When the disciples asked the Lord: "Teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1), it was not what words do we say, but I believe it was: "Teach us to pray with that simplicity, proper prioritizing, and closeness you have".

While we cannot deal with every clause, there will be a brief comment on three of them.

1) Our Father which art in Heaven

- a) The individual who lives and prays in the fear of the Lord knows the truth of their relationship with God, but also recognizes the vast distance there is between He and them. I am aware that there are saints who, because of not being taught correctly, or still fighting the old way of speaking about God, call Him "daddy" or "the man upstairs". I judge this to be a mistake and honestly feel that the individual who has a fear of the Lord will never speak to, or speak of God as "daddy", "the man upstairs". Furthermore, they will never speak blasphemously about divine persons by telling jokes concerning them.
- b) There will be the following of holy men in the scriptures like Moses who knew what it was to tremble before God (Heb. 12:21), or Paul who speaks of bowing his knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:14).
- c) There was no one who had the "right" to be freer with God than His co-equal, yet being man, He spoke of God as "Father" and "Abba" (Matt. 7:21; Mk. 14:36). Never ever does "Abba" mean

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“daddy”, but it is the expression of childlike trust in a father. It is not childish trust which indicates immaturity, but “childlike” which is unwavering confidence in the love and care of another. It is good to remember the words of the preacher: “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” (Ecc. 5:2). The individual who lives in the fear of the Lord will never be casual when communicating with Divine Persons.

2) Hallowed be Thy Name

- a) When speaking to God, He is to be held in the highest esteem. The Psalmist wrote: “Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy” (Psa. 99:3); “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Psa. 89:7). When speaking to God one needs to recognize the glory of who we are speaking to. Consider His:
- i) Omnipresence: “Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee” (1 Kgs. 8:27). Putting it another way one, could say: “Thou fillest immensity”.
 - ii) Majesty and dominion over his creatures: “Art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?” (2 Chron. 20:6)
 - iii) Power and might: “Art thou not God in heaven? . . . and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee!” (2 Chron. 20:6). “Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psa. 115:3).
 - iv) Omniscience: “The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eye-lids try, the children of men” (Psa. 11:4); “The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men” (Psa. 33:13).
 - v) Holiness and eternity: “Look down from thy holy habitation, from Heaven” (Deut. 26:15); “Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy” (Isa. 57:15).
- b) Furthermore, the individual who seeks to live in the fear of the Lord develops an appreciation of the infiniteness of God's abilities and attributes, the vastness of the divine purposes, and the infinite holiness of God. To such a one, approaching God, speaking to God or for God is not a casual function, but an activity of increasing reverence and piety. In the presence of such a God, it is no wonder those in celestial glory cry: “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:4). How abominable must those who mock and blaspheme His Holy name be in His sight.

3) Thy Kingdom come

- a) We live in a world where people that live for the present, political correctness has gone awry, injustice rules the land. The scriptures speak of such days when men: “call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isa. 5:20). In sharp contrast are those who fear the Lord and live in the anticipation of His Kingdom. Then, at His coming to set up His kingdom: “in righteousness He shall judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11). When our glorious Lord sits on the Throne as the King of Kings, He shall reign, then the heavens will resound with praise and adoration. What a glorious reign that shall be when He cometh to judge the earth:
- i) “Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth.” (1 Chron. 16:33)
 - ii) “Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.” (Psa. 96:13)
 - iii) “Before the LORD . . . for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.” (Psa. 98:9)

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- b) Some of the characteristics of that coming Kingdom:
- i) Governmentally, Christ will be King (Isa. 11:10) and He will be the King who will: “reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment” (Isa. 32:1). He will rule with a “rod of iron” (Rev. 19:15) and all disobedience will be judged (Zech. 12:9; 14:16-18). There will be changes in the animal world (Isa. 11:6-9); in the geographical world (Zech. chs. 12-13); and in the horticultural world (Isa. 55:13). There will be peace among the nations (Mic. 4:3-4); there will be bodily health (Isa. 35:5-6); joy (Isa. 9:3-4; 12:3-6; 14:7-8; 25:8-9); and justice (Isa. 9:7; 11:5). Then in that glorious Kingdom, Jesus the Redeemer (Isa. 59:20); the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2); the Stone (Isa. 28:16); and: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psa. 72:8). When such a truth grips the heart of the saint for the glory of God they will pray. Surely, at such a truth, the prayer of the saint who loves and has a reverential fear of the Lord is: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”.

The Fear of The Lord

- 1) Will cause me to live outside the box of:
 - a) Religious atheism but in the world of truth, as the religious leaders lived also (Psa. 14:1). Wisdom is not living in the denial of God but in the reality of God (Psa. 111:10).
 - b) Imagined spirituality in contrast to true condition - Laodicea (Rev. 3:17).
 - c) Unconscious spiritual blindness in contrast to Divine sight and understanding of the works and ways of God (2 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 3:17).
 - d) Localized prayer but praying in the consciousness of God's greater purposes, the eternal purposes, and the glory of God (Matt. 6:10).
 - e) The burden of all activity is the glory of God and Christ (1 Cor. 10:31).
- 2) The fear of the Lord will prevent:
 - a) Murmuring against the disciplines of God as Israel did (Ex. 15:24; 16:2; 17:3).
 - b) Giving suggestions to God as Peter did on the mount of transfiguration (Mk. 9:5).
- 3) As an individual who lives in the fear of the Lord and the understanding of His greatness will consciously live in a world of:
 - a) Unlimited power in contrast to earthly weakness, the child the disciples could not cast out the demons (Matt. 17:18-19). Note that the King James Version says “devil”, but there is only one devil and the word is “demon”.
 - b) Unrestricted sovereignty in contrast to earthly limitations, as Pilate had to learn (Jn. 19:10-11).
 - c) Immeasurable resources in contrast to earthly means, the child with five loaves and two fishes (Matt. 14:17).
 - d) Awareness of His excellencies:
 - i) “And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses” (Ex. 14:31).
 - ii) “So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel” (1 Sam. 12:18).
 - iii) “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Mal. 3:16).
 - e) There are those who feared the Lord but in a state of ignorance.
 - i) “So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places” (2 Kgs. 17:32-33, 41).
 - ii) “Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows” (Jon. 1:16).

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The Danger of Having a Knowledge of The Will of God Without Having a Godly Fear

It is perhaps one of the most solemn truths of the scriptures, a “spiritual” individual can have a knowledge of the will of God but not live in His fear. For instance:

- a) Moses knew the purposes of God for him and he did not act in the fear of the Lord on several counts:
 - i) He did not wait on the Lord's time, for he was not prepared sufficiently by God for the task ahead (Ex. 2:12).
 - ii) He did not wait on the Lord's way, how foolish to think that by slaying one man he could begin the process of deliverance for the children of Israel (Ex. 2:12).

Due to our natural tendency to sin and failing to see the infiniteness of divine authority and greatness, we all can be like Moses and act rashly. In the midst of a world that knows no fear of the Lord, may the Lord help us to live in the consciousness of His abiding presence, power, person, purposes, and prerogatives. Then we will say in truth, “Thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”.

... *Rowan Jennings*