***Fear of the Lord

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-078***

We are studying Colossians 1:9-14. Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," segment number 12.

One of our enthusiastic Berean tapers called me long distance this past week in order to thank me for something he had just learned on the tapes that he was listening to. He was listening to the Romans series, and he was bubbling over with joy over an illustration that I had used in that series, which gave him an exciting new perspective on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. The illustration that I had used was of my boyhood practice of building armies, out on tabletops, made of lead soldiers – soldiers which I would make myself. I had a various number of molds of soldiers in various positions and various activities. And molten lead would be poured into the mold. And after it cooled, the mold was opened, and then the excessive burs and excessive lead would be trimmed off, and the soldier made perfect in appearance. And then I would paint him with appropriate colors. And I would have another soldier to place into his position in the growing ranks of my toy army.

Now, I compared this to the work of the Holy Spirit, Who pours a Christian who has positive volition attitude toward the Word of God, into the mold of the man Jesus Christ. And that's what the Spirit of God is doing every day to the Christians who are positive to His Word, and to their maintenance of temporal fellowship. God is pouring us into the mold of Jesus Christ. The believer is thus formed into the image of Jesus Christ in terms of His humanity. The rough edges are gradually removed from us, and the believer is made attractive as a functional human being. The functional Christian soldier is then placed into the ranks of God's army, and into the Lord's service in the angelic warfare. What a marvelous act of God's grace – to make us normal in living our lives. And that's what we've been talking about – God pouring us into the mold of the humanity of Christ, and making us normal, functional human beings. A Christian should never be anything less than that. It was a good illustration, and it does get across a very significant spiritual point. It is no wonder that he was ready to shout "Hallelujahs," and had to rush to the telephone to call me, to thank God once more for the availability of the ministry of Berean Church in its outreach through the tapes. He said, in the course of the conversation, that book alone – what is on the instruction in the book of Romans, if that could be brought together, it would go miles and miles in every direction before anything comparable could be found. It was very humbling to hear him say that, because the area in which he lives is surrounded by some very major theological seminaries.

Well, nothing is more important for living in the devil's world than to be a functional human being in the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when was the last time that you were a jerk? When was the last time that you really got off track? When was the last time that you were rowing with one oar? When was the last time that your lights were out? When was the last time, near or distant, when you demonstrated how horrendous a Christian is when he gets dysfunctional as a human being, and he can't live in the devil's world without being a victim of that system?

People generally look for therapy to solve their dysfunctional characteristics. People don't need therapy. That is a con job from top to bottom. What people need, to correct their dysfunctional ways, is the Word of doctrine. And, of course, in the Christian community, you have two problems. One: Christians attend church, but the instruction is not in the Word of God, or it is so trivialized that nobody can find how to function on the basis of that information. Or, if you have a church where you can count on the fact you're going to walk in and you're going to walk out with something worth dropping something into the offering box for, because of what you have received that will transform you as a human being and help you function in the week ahead, people stay home, and don't attend. But for those who do, and for those who are attentive, God has provided this marvelous system that Jesus Christ Himself used, Who field-tested this for us in His humanity. I remind you once more that He did not live by His deity. He lived exactly by what you have to live with. He only had one advantage over us. He didn't have a sin nature to fight against. The rest is just the same as where you are right now. And if you use the system that we've been laying out here now for these several weeks, you'll be nothing but a victor in your life. You'll be a functional human being. You'll be a winner. People don't need therapy to correct their problems. They need the Word of God.

People need the work of the Holy Spirit filling the void of divine viewpoint in their lives. People need the seven virtues which we've been looking at in Isaiah 11:2, which describe the characteristics of the humanity of the coming Savior. This humanity is what makes you normal. These characteristics make you a normal human being. And Jesus Christ is the prime example of a constantly functional human being.

The essential basis for living a functional life, we find in the passage in Isaiah 11:2, was, first of all, that the Holy Spirit would be upon him. That's the beginning point of being a normal human being.

So, how many people do you know who can even be normal? All the people that you rub shoulders with all week long, in one way or another, and in the business dealings you do, you're dealing it dealing with human beings who are dysfunctional by the fact that the Spirit of God is not upon them. They're not believers. And I point out to you that the Bible has two animals to which it compares unsaved people. And if you want to teach your children something, try to drive it into their craniums that this is what God sees in an unsaved person, and that's what they should see.

It's very interesting that, through the Scriptures, unsaved people are compared to dogs, which in the ancient world was a filthy, vile creature. It was not a house pet. Or, it's compared to pigs. The Bible says that the dog returns to his what? His vomit. He eats it; digests a little; throws it up; looks it over again to see if he missed anything; and, eats it again to see if it's as good as it was the first time. That's a dog. That's the unsaved person.

What does the Bible say about a pig? The Bible says to wash him up; clean him up; make him look good; put a ribbon on him; and he'll head right back to the mud hole. He will go back to what he is on the inside. The unsaved person will never be anything but what he is on the inside.

So, when you walk along with unsaved people, in God's name, at least recognize that you're walking with pigs and dogs by divine estimate. There's a good doctrinal principle. If you learn that, you won't expose yourself to these people. You will not open yourself to them. You will not take them into your life in any way whatsoever. You'll simply view them as a mission field, and yourself as the missionary. But a dog is a dog; and, a pig is a pig. These who do not have the Spirit of God resting upon them have that category in the evaluation of the Almighty God.

The Spirit of God resting upon a person means, first of all, obviously, that that person has been regenerated. He has been born-again spiritually. He is the one who has believed the gospel of the grace of God, and he has appropriated salvation through trusting in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it means that the Christian is in temporal fellowship with the Father through confession of his sins, and of his human good. So, he is, as a result, filled with the Spirit. Therefore, he is active in the spiritual warfare.

So when it talks about, in Isaiah 11:2, that the Spirit of God would rest upon Christ in his humanity, it means that he was a child of God, and that He was in fellowship with God the Father. The first step, then, to becoming a person who is in touch with God is to maintain your temporal fellowship through confession of what needs to be confessed. The first step to becoming a dysfunctional Christian is to fail to maintain your temporal fellowship with the Father. Therefore, you will make wrong use of your life. You'll have no guidance from the Spirit of God. You will go astray. You will get off-track. Christians who are out of fellowship will use their lives doing what the unsaved can do as well, instead of functioning in God's service.

Now, here is an important factor that characterizes the dysfunctional Christian. He's doing things with his life that he should not be doing. If the Spirit of God rests upon you, and you're a born-again person, then you have available to you the direct leading of the Spirit of God through His leading, and through the Word of God, as to what to do with your life – how to live your life. And it is amazing, over the years, how I have watched Christians who have risen to great spiritual quality, great super-grace living, and what's the first thing they do? Dog gone it, if they won't get themselves sidetracked off into doing something off in the world, such that there are all kinds of unbelievers who can do it, but they do it. And when they do it as Christians, there's only so much a human being can do, and only so much capacity. Then the Lord's work, all of a sudden, gets put in a secondary place, or they're doing it on a hit-and-run basis – a lick-and-a-promise basis. They're walking into an area of ministry, huffing and puffing, because they've been out there doing something that the world should be doing just as well, and they should be doing the things of the work of God.

Let me give you an illustration in Luke 9:59-60. Last week, Mrs. Danish was thinking about this subject – Christians using their lives. And she said, "There are two verses in the Bible (two passages of Scripture) that are prime examples of the terrible thing that happens when Christians get sidetracked off from what they should be doing, and butting into what unbelievers should be doing. And one of the passages she pointed out, and reminded me of was Luke 9:59-60.

Jesus is inviting various people to follow Him to become His disciples: "He said to another, 'Follow Me.' And he said, 'Permit me first to go and bury my father.' But He (Jesus) said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Oh boy, isn't that a passage? Now, just think for a moment of what that says: "Let the dead bury their dead." This man says, "Yes, Jesus, I want to follow you, but I have a mission here in the world that I want to perform. I want to go bury my father."

Now, it's probably not likely that the old boy was dead already – otherwise he'd have been home preparing things. Probably what he's saying is: He's getting on in years. He's getting very frail. It's not going to be much longer. Let me wait until he's gone. That is what I'm going to devote myself to." Jesus says, "Oh no, you let the spiritually dead bury the dead. That undertaker who is spiritually dead can do the job for you. You don't need to be there to take care of that. What you need to be is My disciple. And if you're My disciple, then, where you will be functioning is in the kingdom of God. You'll be going everywhere and serving God to do that which gets Bible doctrine out, whether it's painting the campus, or helping to think up new creative ways to contact people, or whatever it takes. You'll be using your life; your skills; and, above all, your spiritual gift in the outreach of the kingdom of God.

What do we have very often? When you have a dysfunctional Christian, he is engaged in activities in life which drain off the limited time and capacity which a person has in order to do what even the morally good unsaved (not the bad unsaved) person can do as well. The spiritually dead can bury their physical dead. The worldly service, however, is very heady stuff for some Christians. And the first thing they do is that their eyes are not on things above anymore. They're not on the things of the Lord. So, God's proclamation of doctrinal wisdom is silent. Luke 10:2 points this out to us, following this man's excuse. He was saying to the people about Him: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers unto His harvest."

What do you think we're doing here at Berean Church right now? We recognize the enormous harvest of the minds of children in Christian education that is waiting to be brought in. And what are we asking for? We're asking for harvesters (laborers) to go out and bring it in. And that includes the vast sums of money that it takes to do that job. That's what we're asking for. Some of us out there are on the front line, cutting the fields, but some of you are in the back line, providing the logistical support. But it can't be trivial. The job is too big, because the whole field is there. It's plentiful, and it's ready to come in. And we have the means; we have the people; we have the personnel; we have the experience; we have the curriculum; and, we have everything it takes. You couldn't have a better setup. Yet our hands are tied unless the harvesters are going to join together in doing the various things that they can do: some cutting; some carrying the water; and, some supplying the financial backing.

So, here's the picture of a dysfunctional Christian (a dysfunctional believer). He is caught up in that heady, exciting thing of being out there in some social activity of the world. And pretty soon, he has less and less time for proclaiming the Word of God. I'd be very careful the next time you're offered some distraction – something that might be exciting that someone would like you to do in society; and ask yourself: "If I do that, who will take my place in the Lord's work? But if I stay with the Lord's work, look at all these people of the world who can do that thing. Get a nice moral unbeliever, and he'll do a fine job. You don't need a Christian to do those things.

Another passage that Mrs. Danish mentioned to me is the one in 2 Timothy 2:3-4: "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who has enlisted him as a soldier." A Christian soldier is to have a single-minded purpose of serving his commander Jesus Christ in the angelic warfare. That's the only thing we're supposed to do as Christians – nothing else. We are soldiers. We're all automatically enlisted when we're born-again. And there's only one thing we're supposed to do – serve the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to share, therefore, the hardships that are imposed by the world's unbelievers on the soldiers of Jesus Christ.

However, a soldier cannot be in active duty if he is entangled with the affairs of society in the world. It is a distraction from God's work. They have to be very careful, when you know that you've signed up in God's army, that you entangle yourself in something that is part of the world's army. And justify it however you may, the Word of God says that a Christian who has entangled himself so that he is incapacitated to do his soldiering is dysfunctional. So don't compliment yourself, and don't try to justify it in your own eyes, because you're certainly not kidding God, and you're not kidding discerning Christians either. What a Christian soldier is called to is to share the hardships that are imposed for doing God's work.

Now, it is true that God may call a Christian to some social service for some reason, or some point in time, but it will not be a career call. It'll be a very short-term mission, and then you'll go back to spiritual harvest. It won't be a political career, such that all your life, this is what you do. It'll be a short-term "this," and then I go back to my soldiering business. I go back to my service for God with my spiritual gift. It would always be on a short-term, but if it goes on and on and on, you have the sign of dysfunctionality.

The Christian upon whom the Holy Spirit rests will be governed by the Word of God. Therefore, he will maintain his functional capacity by respecting the Word of God in such places as Matthew 6:33, which says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all the things you need in life will be added to you: "Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. And there's the doctrine principle that a Christian lives one day at a time. And each day is your day of mission. Each day is your functioning under the basis and the operation of the Spirit of God. Or we have the passage in Colossians 3:1-2, which emphasizes the same point: "I live by means of the Word of God:" "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth."

That's a very touchy position. How many Christians are focused on this earth? How many Christians are very excited over the heady relationships and power authority they may exercise on this earth? And the adulation that comes to them from others? God says, "Set your mind on the things above, because that's where the Commander wants you to be serving. Any earth relationship is short-term, and that has to be a special calling.

So, what this means is to strive to do your mission for God that He has for you, and to be intent upon the things of heaven. Seek the things above. That means strive to do God's mission. Set your mind on the things above. That means to be intent on the things of heaven. I guarantee you that you cannot be intent on the things of this world and the things of God at the same time. You cannot be engaged in a lot of associations in this human frame (this human scene), and be functional in a big way in the associations in the work of God. You make your choice.

The dead can bury the dead. But they cannot do what you can do for the kingdom of God. The soldier of the Lord can win great victories. He has great armor that has been provided for him that is enunciated for him in the book of Ephesians. And he will be a winner every time with that armor, but not if he gets entangled in serving in this world, and justifying it as the call of God. If it is the call of God, it won't be a call very long. It will be very short-term.

**Wisdom**

So, upon the basis of one's relationship to the Holy Spirit, the Isaiah 11:2 passage goes on and says that there are three functional sets of double virtues in the soul. And we've looked at these in detail. The first couplet was intellectual virtues. And you perhaps have already noticed that you can associate this with the mentality of the soul. These three sets of virtues have to deal with the soul: the mind; the emotions; and, the will. And this first one has to deal with the mind (the intellectual virtues). The first one is: ask God to give you wisdom – the ability from God to apply the pertinent doctrine to one's situation in life from the doctrine that you have stored in your human spirit reservoir. Daily asking God is the way to begin.

**Understanding**

Physically, there are certain ways you begin your day, among which you should, after you've brushed your teeth, is drink two glasses of water. That's always essential. That starts everything and I won't give you my doctrinal speech on water, but that's essential. Then the next thing you do is to say, "God, I need two things today about everything else. I need wisdom. I need to pop into my mind what I know about the principles from Scripture when I meet this guy; when I have to do this deal; and, when I have to deal with this situation. I need wisdom. I need to know what to apply at that point. Secondly: "I need understanding." That the other part of the intellectual couplet. This is the ability to discern the truth in a situation; grasp the reality; and, not to be fooled. And that's what I'm talking about. When you have understanding, you'll be a discerning person. You'll look at a human being, and you'll say, "This is a pig, and I will not open myself to a pig. This is a dog, and I'll not stand in the way of his vomit." That's what you're dealing with. You got it. This is the world system. It is sophisticated and glamorous, and it looks very snooty, but they're pigs and their dogs, and when you have understanding, boy will you ever be a discerning human being? You will see right through the con artists.

**Counsel**

The second set we've looked at are experiential virtues. This, of course, deals with the will of the soul. We are to expect counsel from God. That is receiving divine viewpoint advice from the indwelling Holy Spirit in making choices. And I remind you that He leads very gently. He'll pop into your mind an intuition; a thought; an instinct; or, whatever you call it. This is an alerting for you, moving you in a certain direction. Don't ignore that. You will find, in time, that you become very sensitive to the sudden direction of your thinking by the Spirit of God.

**Strength**

Then there is the capacity of strength. This is divine power to achieve spiritual victories in life instead of being defeated. This also refers to a good physical condition for service. God will give you strength spiritually to achieve. He will give you strength physically to get the job done. And you should not trivialize, and you should not prostitute your spiritual strength, nor your physical strength. You're not going to be here much longer. This is your day of opportunity. Do not ever wait for a better day to do what needs to be done, that you are able to do.

**Knowledge**

The third set of virtues I call attitudinal virtues. These are virtues that have to do with your attitude. And here we have the quality of emotions. The first was the spirit of knowledge. This is the grasp of Bible doctrine to be stored in one's human spirit. These are the principles of life – the mind of God. What a great thing it is to know that you can have the mind of God himself. And that's the guidance to emotions. What you have in your mind is what you will have in your emotions. That's why the Bible connects the two: "For with the heart (meaning the mind, and to us, that's the emotions), man believes unto righteousness." Believing is obviously not an emotional act. It's a mental act. But it is tied to how we feel about things, and to what we do. It is doctrine that guides us to how we feel about things.

Now, we come to the fact that therefore we cannot follow the new age principle of looking within ourselves for what to do. New Agers say, "Look within yourself for the information. Look within yourself for the truth, and you will know what to do."

Several years ago on a camp out down to north Padre Island, a ranger gave us a tour up and down the beach. And at one point, he stopped there at the end, and he gave us a little talk. And the more I listened to him, I saw Bob Short look across at me, and I looked at him, and we were both beginning to get a signal here. This ranger got off talking about the environment, and how we are to be related to this environment. And that there is great truth from the environment. And what we had done is that we had gone up and down the beach, picking up trash and throwing it into bags. And as he talked to us, and that was his point of connection. And he said, "And if you want to understand what I'm talking about (the connection), just look within yourself, and you'll know. Bingo – New Age doctrine! What we suspected was really it. But he just put it in so many words: "Just look within yourself, and you'll know what you should do." Nothing could be further from the truth. When you look in yourself, what do you look into? The old sin nature. And that certainly is not the place to look for what you should do.

So, the spirit of knowledge is a fantastically wonderful thing. But it comes from outside. It comes from sitting in these chairs, and being here when the instruction is given; and not coming with a spotty record of attendance, so that you have these big gaps and holes in your grasp and understanding, because I guarantee you that those are the holes through which the devil's going to come through and get you.

**Fear of the Lord**

Now we come to the last of the characteristics of the coming Messiah in Isaiah 11:2. And perhaps the most somber; the most significant; and, the most serious of them all. This is the Sunday to be here – the spirit of the fear of the Lord. Here is the basis of the problems that beset American society today, that are tearing up the lives of people. They do not have a fear of God. The Hebrew word is very sobering. What the Hebrew word means is best translated by the word "dread:" "The fear of the Lord" is "the dread of God."

Deuteronomy 2:25 uses the word: "This day, I will begin to put the dread and the fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you shall tremble, and be an anguish because of you." Here God is telling the Jews the word that he's going to get out about them to the nations, the whole of Canaan, that is the land that they're going to conquer now. And he said, "I'm going to send the word ahead of you, and there will be a dread in the hearts of the people you're going to face. They're going to be in trembling when they see your army approaching. It is a desperately fearful condition. Now, that's what we're talking about – downright scared of God.

Genesis 3:10, also uses this word: "And he said, I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was in dread (afraid) because I was naked, so I hid myself." Here is Adam after he listened to his newly developed feminist wife Eve, who decided she knew how to do things as well as her husband, and took off on her own. And he then followed her into the trap, and he said, "When I heard You (God) in the garden, I didn't come running out. Here it's evening – it's the cool of the day. And every day You come, and we go running to You: 'There's the Lord. It's Bible class time.'" And the Lord would sit down and say, "Now I'm going to give you some more instruction. I'm going to give you some more doctrinal principles. This is the way human beings are to live, and the way they function." And those were great classes. And they would go on day-after-day, and evening-after-evening.

However, this time there was no sound of footsteps running to the Lord. There was the sound of footsteps getting more quiet as they went off in the other direction. And when God asked him why he was hiding, he said, "Because I'm afraid of you. I have a dread of you."

This word is used in Psalm 119:120: "My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments:" "I'm shaking all over because of my dread of You."

Now, those Scriptures make it very clear that this is a feeling of dread, and it's a feeling of dread specifically toward God as the sovereign One: the person who is in charge; the person who makes all the rules; the person who makes all the decisions; and, the person who's not going to be monkeyed around with. That's the reason that, if you're a functional human being, you'll be downright afraid of the holiness of God, and a violation of His Word. If you're a fool, you'll go in the other direction. You'll have no fear of God. You'll act as if he's not here. You'll pretend that he's not around, and then you will do the most absolutely unbelievable evils, and the pursuits of human good, that you'll, later on, look back and say, "What possessed me?" Well, it was what did not possess you – your lack of the dread of the holiness of God. It is a dread of God's divine holiness and power that produces a reverential awe of the Lord.

And in these passages, when it refers to the fear of the Lord, it's: LORD (L O R D) (all capital letters), which is reference to the Hebrew word "Yahweh," the most sacred name of God that a Jew, to this day, will not even ever pronounce, because it is such a Holy name. And it is referring to the dread of this sovereign Creator God, Who is the One Who makes all the final decisions, and nothing is going to escape Him, and nothing is going to frustrate what He says: If you do this, I bless you. But if you do this, I'll take care of you the other way.

One example of that is Job 37:22-24: "Out of the north comes golden splendor. Around God is awesome majesty." This is one of the passages in the Scriptures that lead us to believe that the great throne room of God is off in the north. Scriptures connect the presence of God and His throne room in the north.

Verse 23: "The Almighty, we cannot find Him. He is exalted in power. He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. Therefore, men fear Him. He does not regard any who are wise of heart." Well, to all the smart-alec people (intellectuals of our day), God says, "I don't regard any of them. As we read in our passage in the last session, when they thought they became smart by ignoring the Word of God, He said, "They became fools." And all the people who are in positions of power today in our society, and whose hands are on the levers of power, are all going to the lake of fire, by and large. And they're fools. And all one has to do is listen to them, and watch the decisions and the choices that they make, and the ideas that they have, and you'll see how pathetically disoriented they are. They're dysfunctional human beings who are in charge of our lives.

That's what the millennium is going to change. The dread of the divine holiness and power of God results in a reverential awe. That's why it is not wrong to say that the fear of God means the reverential awe of God. That's perfectly right. And very often, we explain it in that way. That's exactly the idea. But what makes you act with such reverential law? Your fear of Him. Your fear of the consequences of spitting on His holiness – your consequences of giving God the back of your hand with your sin and your human good.

That's what gives you a reverential awe of God. Because of the fact that you know Who this is, you will not do this. And people treat you with a certain respect, commensurate with what you have demonstrated yourself to be. And they act accordingly. They have a certain image of you.

One of our lady counselors in summer camp was listening to some of the kids talking. I think it was a girls' group. And they were using words, and saying things in a very uncouth way. And she said, "Well, I've been listening to your conversation, and I'd like you to go and tell that to Dr. Danish." And she said, "They looked at me and said, 'Oh, we couldn't talk like that to him.' She said, 'Why not?'" Well, they didn't think that they should talk in uncouth ways in front of me. But there are other people around whom they feel perfectly comfortable with talking in an ugly uncouth (maybe even an obscene) way.

Now, that's just a human level. Now multiply that by infinity of a Holy God, and you'll get the idea that there are certain things that you don't do before God. There are certain things that you don't say. There are certain things you just don't think unless you are so jaded that, in your sin, you look over there, and you know He's there, and you say, "Hey God, how do you like this? Look at this sin that I'm doing." You should, because he's certainly there: "How do you like that thought Lord? How does that hang on You, because You told me that I can't think like that?"

This is the horrendous quality of a person who does not fear God. He is really out of whack. And I don't care how sophisticated he is; how much money he has; or, how glamorous he may dress and appear – he is out of whack.

So, the fear of the Lord here is an attitude of awe. Psalm 33:8: "Let all the earth fear the Lord (let all the earth fear 'Yahweh'). Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him." This is reverential awe. There we have it tied to its proper translation – the proper explanation of it.

I have a tape that somebody gave me. Somebody had recorded a TV program of a cult called the 'Yahweh' Cult. And the man who is the head of it, who put the cult together calls himself 'Yahweh.' And then he says, 'Ben Yahweh.' 'ben' is the Hebrew word for 'son of: 'Yahweh, ben Yahweh.' He introduces himself as 'Yahweh, ben Yahweh.' This is the most sacred name of God. And He says, "I have that sacred name." And he says, "I'm the son of that One. So, what's he saying? He's saying, "I'm Jesus Christ."

Louis Calypso Farrakhan also has put this in so many words. Sometime in a training union session, we'll run the tape for you, and let Louie stand up there and tell you that he is Jesus Christ. "The Christ that came 2000 years ago," Louie says, "was the prophetic (prefigured – the type)." But he said, "Today the type has been fulfilled in me. I am the Elijah – the one that Elijah predicted would come." I mean you stand there, and your hair roots stand up – to believe that someone stands and says this kind of blasphemy.

Well, as the TV program went on about the 'Yahweh' group became extremely wealthy. The devil supplies his people. It's only Christians who shortchange God. But the devil supplied hand-over-fist money. And they had wealth beyond what anybody could imagine, and properties, and incomes. And then they discovered the deceit; the income tax cheating; and, the whole bit. There were also the murders that were committed on people who left the group. And suddenly, 'Yahweh ben Yahweh' is a prisoner under federal indictment. It is no wonder that the world laughs at these religious groups, and they relate we Christians to idiots like that. But it was clear that 'Yahweh ben Yahweh' had no fear of God. He was not in dread of the Almighty, whatsoever. And only Satan can give you that kind of courage. Now, when you act in a way that demonstrates that you have no fear of God, it's the devil that's enabling you to have that courage. And when you do something that is absolutely clearly out of the moral code, or you do something that is out of the will of God for you in your particular use of your life, it is the devil that's taking away from you the fear of God, because when you're afraid of God, you don't counter His decisions. You don't counter what His Word says. You don't counter what He wants you to do with your life; your time; and, your treasures. The fear of the Lord, then, is indeed an attitude of great respect for God's uncompromising holiness as the basis of all his dealings with mankind.

Jonah 1:10-15 illustrates this principle. The fear of the Lord is an attitude of great respect for God's uncompromising holiness as a basis for all of His dealings with man. God is Holy. He will not compromise his integrity. And when you get downright afraid of challenging that holiness, you'll be on your way to being a functional human being. Jonah 1:10: "Then the men became extremely frightened" (of the storm raging about them)." Then in verse 11, Johan says to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land."

Now, Jonah, this dysfunctional man, was told to go and take a message, and he refused to do it. He does know that he has stepped out of the will of God, and he knows that he should have been afraid to do that. And he admits now: "I am scared stiff." This storm is horrendous. And sometimes, on ocean bodies, storms can become so violent as to be beyond human comprehension.

Reader's Digest recently had a summary of a book on a couple that went out in their yacht, and there were two low pressure areas against a high pressure in between. And what that set up was the most violent, atmospheric condition imaginable. And what it did, as they were out in the area of Australia, going to one of the islands, these masses collided, and the ocean churned itself into something that was beyond anything that they had ever dreamed in all their years of sailing together – this husband and wife team. It became so became so terrible that, at one point, the sailboat was actually lifted up and turned over, so that it was mast-down. And this man already been hurt, and he was in a bunk, tied down, and this water was swirling over him, and somehow, with all the violence, when the next wave came along, the boat came back up straight. And that was an amazing thing.

In summer camp, we sometimes have that. In fact, we teach the kids how to turn a sailboat over. We have them deliberately capsized. We have them deliberately sail it in such a way that the wind blows it over. But it only lies in the water. Then they hop out; get on the keel; bounce their weight back; and, bring the thing back up (unless it's Robert Nicholas). I was standing there one time watching him giving instruction. He turned it over, and he got out and he said, "Now here it is." The kids were out there, and I could hear them, and I got my movie camera. And he says, "Here's how you get back on." And he got on the keel, and dumped it, and it went back over the other way. So he got over; got back on the keel; and, pumped it, and it came up beautifully. He slapped it over the other way. And I thought he was kidding. He did it six times. But he finally stopped throwing all his husky muscle in so hard, so that it didn't go over. It's hard enough getting it back up, but when it goes all the way over, so that the mast is pointing down, that is a big problem. And we have had that happen. Then you do have some heaving to get that thing back out of the water.

So this is the horrendous dread here that now came on Jonah. He saw what he had done. This is that kind of a storm that generally a human being doesn't even see, let alone to be in part of. And he says to these men, "I'm admitting that I'm scared of God. I'm a Hebrew. I know doctrine, and I have a communication with God, and I know why I'm in this condition."

So, in Jonah 1:10-15, Jonah says, "Then the men became extremely frightened, and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord" ("LORD," right from 'Yahweh'), because he had told them so. He had actually said, "I'm running away from God. He wants me to go to those crazy guys there in Nineveh. Those slobs – I hate them. They're pagans, and I'm glad they're getting what they're getting. And He wants me to go talk to them. I don't even want to touch them. They're dogs, and they're are pigs. Bingo! So, they're all listening.

Now he says, "That's why this is happening." Jonah 1:10-15: "So they said to him, 'What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?' For the sea was becoming increasingly stormy." This was one of those atmosphere conditions brought about by God that made enormous high waves and valleys: "'And he said to them, pick me up, and throw me into the sea, and then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that, on account of me, this storm has come upon you.' However, the men rowed desperately to return to the land, but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them. Then they called on the Lord and said, 'We earnestly pray, O Lord, do not let us perish on account of this man's life, and do not put innocent blood on us. For You, O Lord, have done as You have pleased."

The sovereign God has brought this storm as the result of this man's failure to be afraid of God, so that he would disobey a clear direction. And they said, "God, we don't want it do anything to this man. We don't want to kill him. We don't want his blood on our hands. Please don't let that happen. Just stop the storm." So, they had no choice. In verse 15, they picked up, and Jonah threw him into the sea." And when Jonah hits the water, a miracle of miracles takes place. There's a shutter, and the waves just collapse, and the valleys in the water come up and there is a calm sea. Jonah hits the water, and the calm comes. When they saw that: "Then the men feared the Lord greatly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and they made vows.

It is too bad to be making your vows to do something for God when you suddenly find that your life is threatened in some way. Then you start making those stupid promises: "If you help me through this, I'll do this." But God doesn't make that kind of bribing deals. Nevertheless, these men, thanked God that their lives had been saved, and very properly they made a sacrifice. And their vows, whatever they were, were certainly in order at that point.

Because God has the power to enforce the righteous judgment of His holiness, He most certainly is to be respected. Early on, Moses tried to teach this to the people of Israel, when, in Exodus 14:31, he said, "And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses."

Now I guarantee you, if any of us had stood on that shore and seen that water open to allow them to go through dry land, we'd have a deep-seated fear of the Lord for the rest of our lives. But why do you have to see it when it's recorded in the Bible? He did do this. This is the way He acts. And this is the way he's going to deal with you and me when we step out of line with His moral codes; and worse yet, with His directives of the Spirit of God Who counsels us to do something which is the will of God for us. God has the power to enforce His righteousness. Man's smallness, and God's creation, then, draws forth in every rational functional mind, the creation of God. The power of God draws forth a reverential awe.

Psalm 8:1-4 gives us a beautiful statement on that: "Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name all in all the earth, Who has displayed Your splendor above the heavens. From the mouth of infants and nursing babes, You have established strength, because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. When I consider Your heavens; the work of Your fingers; the moon; and, the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You take thought of him, and the Son of Man that You care for him?"

Indeed, in the greatness of all that God has made, we realize that we should have a reverential all for Him and for His power.

So the basic characteristic of a functional human being is the fear of God, and the obedience that His commands deserve and demand. Deuteronomy 10:12, as we conclude: "And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God; to walk in all His ways and love Him; and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." It's very simple, isn't it? Israel: what does the Lord God require of you? The same as He requires of us Christians. To fear the Lord your God; to demonstrate your fear by walking in His ways and loving Him and to serve Him; and, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Next time, I will lead you through the steps and through the demonstration of the fear of the Lord that we have recorded everywhere in Scripture. This one characteristic alone, in your humanity, will preserve you from a lot of grief.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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