

“The Fear of the Lord”  
Sunday, March 8, 2009  
By Pastor Edward J. Thomas Jr.

Pastor Thomas began the message by giving us four scriptures to give us a starting point to understand the fear of the Lord.

**Psalms 111:10**

*The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do [his commandments]: his praise endureth for ever.*

**Psalms 112:1**

*Praise ye the LORD. Blessed [is] the man [that] feareth the LORD, [that] delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

**Ecclesiastes 8:11**

*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

**Romans 11:15-22**

*15. For if the casting away of them [be] the reconciling of the world, what [shall] the receiving [of them be], but life from the dead?*

*16. For if the firstfruit [be] holy, the lump [is] also [holy]: and if the root [be] holy, so [are] the branches.*

*17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;*

*18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

*19. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.*

*20. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:*

*21. For if God spared not the natural branches, [take heed] lest he also spare not thee.*

*22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

Our nation was founded on Christianity. There is proof of this in our Constitution, in the things the founding fathers said, in their writings, and the way they lived their lives. But in our society today, things are very different. America shows our lack of fear in God by our actions. Our morality is rapidly declining, our families are no longer a priority, and we have become desensitized to the sin around us. It is time to return to our roots and regain a healthy fear of the Lord.

God should be feared because of who he is. He is the one and only creator of the universe. In scripture, God said to Moses “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). Without anything else, God exists.

Pastor Thomas discussed the roots of the word fear. It is not only to be frightened of, but to revere, respect, and esteem. He used the story of how he felt about his own natural father to help us see how fear and respect coexist in harmony. He said

“When I was young, I loved my father. We had a relationship, and I wanted to make him proud, but if I did something that was wrong, I knew I should be afraid of my dad. He wouldn’t let me off the hook”.

Pastor Thomas knew without a doubt that his father loved him, but he also knew that he was going to be held to a high standard by his father. The same is true of our heavenly father. He loves us and wants to have a relationship with us, but if we do something that is clearly out of his will, there are consequences. God will judge us. He holds us to a high standard because he has created us to serve him.

Esther was in a situation where she experienced a very healthy fear. She had to go before the King without being summoned. In those days, to go before the king without an invitation could mean immediate death if he was not in the mood to see you. He had an executioner waiting at the door to his chambers just for that reason. But Esther needed to see the king. The fate of her people depended on it. Even though she was afraid and had great respect for the King, she prayed and moved forward. We must do the same.

#### Hebrews 12:28-29

*28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

*29. For our God [is] a consuming fire.*

Fire can be beautiful but it consumes without mercy. God is like this. He is warm, beautiful, and mysterious, but he can be consuming, destructive, and is not to be played with. God, like fire, is to be respected.

We should fear God because of his infinite power. Nahum teaches us this in Nahum 1:2-6.

*2. God [is] jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and [is] furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth [wrath] for his enemies.*

*3. The LORD [is] slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit [the wicked]: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds [are] the dust of his feet.*

*4. e rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.*

*5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

*6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.*

In Acts, we read the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. The couple sold something and told the apostles they were giving all the money from the sale to the church. This was not what they did. Instead, they held back part of the money for themselves. The scripture says they “tempt(ed) the Spirit of the Lord”. Each of them immediately died

and were buried that same afternoon. This story shows very clearly that God cannot be tempted, and he will not tolerate sin. The scriptures never say “they had to give all of the money”. It was about them choosing to lie to the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 5:1-10

- 1. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*
- 2. And kept back [part] of the price, his wife also being privy [to it], and brought a certain part, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.*
- 3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back [part] of the price of the land?*
- 4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*
- 5. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.*
- 6. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried [him] out, and buried [him].*
- 7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.*
- 8. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.*
- 9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband [are] at the door, and shall carry thee out.*
- 10. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying [her] forth, buried [her] by her husband.*

Pastor Thomas asked us to take some time and ask ourselves these questions:

1. Do I fear God?
2. Do I take God for granted?
3. Have I gotten so used to God's presence that I have grown disrespectful like Uza did in I Chronicles 13:9-10?
4. Do I think of God as omnipotent?
5. Based on the life I am living, will I be ready for judgement?

God teaches us that he will not always “strive with man”. He wants us to have a relationship with him, but also know that he hates sin. When we fear God we will start to see him for who he really is. We must respect and revere God to start to see his true character. We should not be afraid of God. We should fear him.