

Jacob Walker – Why We Should Fear The Lord

Good morning. Thank you, Henry, for reading that passage for us. We will actually come back and reference that scripture towards the end of the lesson at the very end, but I wanted to let him read that for us to get our minds kind of on the track we will be. I want to thank Kenny and the elders for the opportunity to speak this morning. My hope and prayer is that as we study God's Word that will grow together as brothers and sisters in Christ. And that's the goal of all of us being here, right to learn to grow, and be better today than we were yesterday. My title this morning, as Kenny mentioned Wednesday night is "why we should fear the Lord." Now, I know when he probably said that Wednesday night, you were probably wondering what in the world is he going to say? What is he going to talk about? There's a lot of things that we could do with this. And the sermon this morning is not meant to scare us in any type of way, but to help us all, be stronger, spiritually examine ourselves where we are with God in our life. The reason for this topic is it's really been on my mind for a couple of months for various reasons. And I think it's important because it seems in the denominational world, and even sometimes within the church, that this thought is going away. And we're getting away from this part of being a Christian. And so that's what we're going to look at this morning. And we're going to look at several passages of Scripture; most of them will be on the screen, we will turn in our Bibles four or five times the different passages, but I do have most of them on the screen. So, we can look at him together. These phrases in Scripture, fear of the Lord, feared the Lord, fear of God, Fear God, and feared God. This is all from the New King James Version. That's what I'll reference this morning. I know some of you may use a different version. But that's what I'll be using. 72 times we see these five phrases used in some form or fashion. That's a lot. That's a lot of times that we see the same type of phrase mentioned. And if I was to ask in a Bible class setting, where do we think about the fear of the Lord? Where do we go to, and we hear fear of the Lord? Most of you, or many of you would probably say, Proverbs. Proverbs talks a lot about the fear of the Lord. And we're going to look at several proverbs this morning. But there are many other places in the Scripture that talk about this. I have five points this morning that we'll look at. And number one, why we should fear the Lord. Because it causes us to stay away from evil. And this is probably the thought of, you know, as we're children, and as we become Christians, that the fear of the Lord is kind of what makes us make decisions. I believe that's true. And I think that it's absolutely right for us to think that. We see a couple of Proverbs here Proverbs chapter 8:13, it says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." And then proverbs 16, in verse six, says, "and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil." Can we say this line maybe, to kind of take a step off of these two verses? But, because we feared our parents as children, we stayed away from the bad things. Because we feared our parents, we stayed away from those things that they told us not to do. It wasn't because we always understood exactly what they were telling us, or why they were telling us not to do something. But we didn't do it because mom and dad or whoever told us not to, and if we did, we knew there would be consequences. We understood that there were consequences of our actions. I was trying to think of maybe an example because again, as we grow up, and we mature, you know, that understanding comes a little bit more and, and I hope this example fits here. But I remember when I turned 16, and you know, we start driving, and we feel like we're immortal. We are behind the wheel, we turned 16, we got our license, and we are - nothing bad can happen to us. And I remember thinking the only real fear that I had was a police officer given me a speeding ticket. Nothing else really matters that, you know, my parents might have told me something. But yeah, okay mom, dad, you know, but I feared getting that speeding ticket, I knew that that was a possibility. Well, at 34 years old have been driving for almost 20 years now and I now understand a lot more of what it means or why it's important

to drive carefully. To be a safe driver. To obey the laws. To drive the speed limit. To buckle up. Because it keeps me safer. It keeps my family safer, and it keeps everybody else that's on the road safer. There's a reason for the laws that we have. I understand that now a lot better than I did when I was 16. I've matured, I've gotten smarter. Right, I know that that's the case. But no matter what, if I leave today, and I'm driving down the road, and I'm going the absolute speed limit, and I crossed paths with a police officer, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to let my foot off the gas, and I'm going to look at the speedometer. Because that fear of getting a speeding ticket is still in my head a little bit. Even though I understand all of the things now about driving safe. The fear that I had when I was 16 is still in my head a little bit, even though I now have a better understanding. And I think that that's how we can be spiritually. I think it's okay for us to say that when we talk about the fear of the Lord. Yes, we understand if we're, you know, maturing in our spiritual life where we are with God. We understand more but we know that we need to stay away from those things that he tells us to stay away from. Fear is a motivator to stay away from evil. It's true as we begin our life as a Christian. And it's also true as we mature in our spiritual life. This one will kind of jumpstart to our second point Job 28 Verse 28, says, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." So, we see the fear of the Lord and departing from evil here together. And also, we see, there's wisdom and understanding here in the fear of the Lord. And that leads us to point number two, why we should fear the Lord and that is because it is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. Now, I'm going to spend a whole lot of time on this when I've got four proverbs that talk about this. And again, this is probably when we think about the fear of the Lord. This is probably what we think about the scriptures. Psalm 111 And verse 10. I said for Proverbs, one Psalm and three, Proverbs says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding of all those who do His commandments." And then proverbs one and verse seven, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and fools despise wisdom, and instruction." You see, we will be a fool according to that verse right there, we would be a fool not to say that we fear God. Based upon proverbs one in verse number seven, it's the beginning of that knowledge. But if we don't want that knowledge or wisdom and instruction, then we're a fool. Proverbs nine and verse number 10, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." And then proverbs one and 29, "because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." So, we can kind of see that point one and point two, go hand in hand together. We fear the Lord and we stay away from evil. And as we stay away from evil, we gain wisdom and understanding. And then as we gain wisdom and understanding, we know why we're staying away from the evil that we've stayed away from. You see, all of it comes together with this fear of the Lord. So points one and two, I told you won't stay long on that one because point number three is probably what we'll spend the most time on and, and so why we fear the Lord or why we should fear the Lord is because we see it in Scripture as a positive characteristic in many people and within the church. If you've ever been in a job interview, I know you probably have and one of the questions that we usually get asked maybe the first question is, tell me a little bit about yourself. You know, and so we practice answering that question in the on the drive to before we get there, and we talk about maybe our family. We talk about our previous jobs; we talk about our hobbies. We talk about our interests, we make ourselves sound as great as we can for this job, and for this person interviewing us, that's what we're supposed to do. Do we ever think about having this as a trait? Tell me a little bit about yourself, Jacob, well, I fear the Lord. I fear God, and then continuing on with whatever else that we want to say. Or maybe if someone was going to describe you, what would they say? What kind of characteristics would you have? I think it's important that we look, that it is a positive characteristic and

several that we'll look at here in just a second. This is our first and we're going to turn to if you will turn to Nehemiah chapter seven, please. Nehemiah chapter seven. And while you're turning there, a little bit of background, as we get to chapter seven. The walls of Jerusalem have been rebuilt. Nehemiah has, if you read through the first part of the book, you remember he has all of these people. They're doing all of these very specific jobs to rebuild the wall. They're watching, some of them are watching the enemies, they're taking shifts, they're building, building, building. They built it in 52 days, an amazing feat. So, you get to chapter seven here. And let's read the first couple of verses it says, "Then it was when the wall was built, and I had hung the doors when the gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites had been appointed." So, the walls built, they can take a deep breath, they've worked really hard. They've got it done, verse two, he says that "I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani and Hananiah the leader of the Citadel, for he was a faithful man, and feared God more than many." Now, I've got to think that if I'm going to pick someone to guard the wall, and to give charge over Jerusalem of what we've just worked so hard on, I'm going to find the biggest the strongest guy, the physical stature, someone that's scary. What characteristics do they have? Well, we don't really know anything else other than: faithful man who feared God, more than many. I take it from this verse, that that's a very positive characteristic that this man, or maybe both of these men had. A faithful man who feared God more than many. If someone described it to me that way, I would be smiling. That's a great characteristic for us to have as Christians. In Job chapter one, we have three times it basically says the same thing in the first two chapters in Job. Chapter one and verse one, chapter one and verse eight and chapter two and verse number three, says that Job was a "blameless and upright man, one who feared God, and shunned evil." All right, so positive, blameless, positive, upright, positive, shunned, evil positive, so feared God, positive. That's a good thing. And we know that it was good as we read through Job. It's a positive characteristic to say, I fear the Lord, I have the fear of God in me. Again, it's not to scare us in any way. But we see many times in Scripture that we should keep that in mind as we walk day to day with God. Acts chapter 10 And verse two. When we talk about Cornelius, we don't have to turn there, but remember, Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, gave alms generously and pray to God always. Positive characteristic in Cornelius. And then let's go to Hebrews chapter 11. Please, Hebrews chapter 11. Look at one more individual and then we'll look at a couple of scriptures that talk about the church, the characteristic of the church itself. Hebrews chapter 11, verse number seven you know, when you hear Hebrews chapter seven, what that is, it's what we usually refer to as the faith chapter, right? By faith, all of these different people and in verse seven, we see talking about Noah says, "By faith Noah being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear prepared an ark for the saving of his household by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Why didn't Noah build the ark? Well, he had faith, of course "By faith Noah," he had faith in God, he trusted God. He was divinely warned of these things that had not yet been seen. We know that that's basically what our faith is based upon. That we believe in God. But the next phrase, right, moved with godly fear, prepared and Ark. That was part of it. That was part of it. He was fearful. He feared God, he trusted God, He had faith in God, but he also was moved with that godly fear, to start building the ark, and putting that together. A positive characteristic that we see in these people in Scripture. Alright, two examples where we see the church. The Corinthian letter, second Corinthians chapter seven verse number one says, "Therefore having these promises, Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Now I know some of you use the ESV, that "perfecting holiness" part in the ESV says "bringing holiness to completion." I thought that was really good. When I looked at the different

version, I thought that was a good way of also saying "perfecting holiness." So how do we continue perfecting holiness? Well, I know that for me, that I'm still working on this right, I'm still working on perfecting holiness or bringing holiness to completion. And so, in order to continue doing that, I have the fear of God in me. Perfecting holiness - bringing holiness to completion. That's a positive characteristic for the church right there. That's not a negative thing when we see that verse. It's okay, it's good. It's necessary for us to say, I fear the Lord, I fear God. And then in Acts chapter nine and verse number 31. It said that the churches "throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, had peace, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." So, we see two things there: walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Brother McClister talked about this last week about the Holy Spirit and what that really means for us, and we are comforted by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. We fear God, but we gain comfort, we gain understanding. We've already looked at many passages about that. Through the word of God, Through the Holy Spirit, in the scriptures. Those two things go together. It's not fear God, or have comfort, right? It's "and," we do both. We fear the Lord and we gain comfort from the scriptures. When we read, that's why it's very important for us to study, right? To study and read God's word and be comforted by the things that we hear from it. So again, so that was a lot of things on point number three, but while we fear the LORD, right, because we see it as a positive characteristic in many places in Scripture, including the church itself. Number four, we know what God is capable of. Now, I said, this wasn't supposed to scare you. And, and I still will say that as we go through this point, but you know, there are some pretty scary things in Scripture. You're reading the Old Testament of some really, really scary events that happen. We'll talk about a couple in just a second. But I think the important thing is for us to realize the power of God, the power of God. I know going through Daniel, Brother Randy, he talked about the sovereignty of God, and we went through several things, talking about that. But knowing how powerful that God really is. Being in awe of that power, we know what he's capable of. I'll start with Genesis 19. You remember Lot's wife? Very, it seemed, innocent, right? Seemed like a very innocent thing. Hey, y'all get out of town. But don't look back when you leave. Okay? There's not many times in Scripture, there's an exclamation point at the end of verse, at the end of a sentence. And we know usually we read those a little bit differently than when there was a period. And I was looking in the New King James and Genesis 19 at that verse, and there's just a period. Don't look back when you leave the city. Now, I thought, Man, that should really be an exclamation point right there because it seemed like it may meant a little more than maybe she realized. Don't look back. She looked back. Gone. Second Samuel chapter six with Uzzah. How many of us would not have done the same thing Uzzah did? I probably would have, I'll just be honest with you. You remember, they're carrying the ark, the Bible says that the oxen stumbled. And when the oxen stumbled, the ark shifted a little bit, maybe Uzzah thought, uh-oh. A reaction to something that doesn't seem wrong. He thought he might have been doing right. But he was told not to touch it. And when he did - gone. I would have. How many of us, I mean, really, how many of us would not have been in the same situation? I'm so thankful that God is patient and long suffering with us and with me, because I would have been gone a long time ago, I would just be honest with you guys. If I was struck dead for something that God told me not to do, and I did it. I'm thankful that he's patient with us. Let's look at those next two. We won't go to Acts five in just a minute. But I want to look at Matthew 17. Little lengthy passage there one through seven. This is the transfiguration on the Mount. Matthew's account here in Matthew chapter 17. I'm going to read verses one through seven. "Now, after six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John, his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves and he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun

and his clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appear to them talking with him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here, if you wish, let us make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased. Hear him." And notice verse six. "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came in touched them and said, Arise, do not be afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only." Jesus is here with them. Right? They hear a great voice. And verse six says what? They were greatly afraid. They fell on their faces in fear. They were in the company of Jesus. These are the disciples. They were they were scared. They feared what they had just heard. And Jesus says, hey, calm down. Don't be fearful. It's okay. But they were afraid. We know what God is capable of how powerful he is, every breath that we take, as we're here this morning. Every breath is from God. We're not guaranteed that. Mark chapter four, please. Mark chapter 4:37 through 41. None of these passages I know are new to you. But I want to read through this really quickly. Mark 4, 37 through 41. "And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling, but he was in the stern asleep on a pillow and they awoke him and said to him Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Then he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still, and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. But he said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" You see, their fear quickly changed. Their fear was in perishing physically in the boat filling up with water, and the wind blowing crazy. And then their fear goes to Jesus, because he said three words, and it just stopped. You know, we've had some storms, pretty heavy lately. The other day, I was at work, and we had two doors literally blowing open from that wind that came through the other day. It's pretty scary. But you know what I couldn't do? I couldn't walk out there and say, Peace be still, and it stop. There's no way. Right? Jesus calmed the storm and they all - I can imagine their eyes. Who is this? Who can calm the wind and the sea obey Him. We know what God is capable of. We won't turn to Acts five, with Ananias and Sapphira. We remember what happened to them. They, they lied, and both of them within just a few verses are struck dead. But in that passage, when you read, it says that great fear came upon all the church after that happened. And again, a few of those are a little scary. But when we talk about God and how powerful he is, and what he's capable of, there are many things in the Bible that are scary. We read them, it's okay. They're there for our learning. So, we can remember what he's capable of. And then the last point this morning, why we should fear the Lord. It leads to eternal life. It leads to eternal life. Got two verses here, we'll go back to Proverbs, Proverbs 14 And verse 27. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death." Now, I know that we could talk about this physically, or spiritually, I believe. We stay away from the things that are harmful to our bodies, we have a better chance, not a guarantee, but a better chance that we're going to live a longer life physically here on Earth. I think that's safe to say there are a lot of things that we need to stay away from that are bad for our bodies physically. So, we have a lot of scriptures that talk about those things. And so, the fear of the Lord is the fountain of life, longer life physically, if that's what we're talking about. But more importantly, obviously, the fear of the Lord is spiritual life, and spiritual death. Turning one away from the snares of death. It all begins with that fear of the Lord, and it continues, as we get older, as we mature. That fear changes a little, but it's also in the back of our head where it all started. And then proverbs 23:17 and 18, "do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day, for surely there's a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off." I don't know if

any of you use the American Standard Version. But instead of "hereafter", the American Standard says "reward." And I like that a lot. "Be zealous for the fear of the Lord all day for surely there is a reward, and your hope will not be cut off." Be zealous. Bible talks about having zeal. We have zeal for the fear of the Lord, because we know there's a hereafter, there's a reward and that hope is in Jesus. Recap five points: causes us to stay away from evil, it's the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, we see it as a positive characteristic in several places in Scripture, we know what God is capable of, and it leads to eternal life. I told you we would come back to the scripture that Henry read. I've got two more here, including that one, or that one and one more. You remember how Ecclesiastes basically ends, right? "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments for this man's all." Fear God and keep His commandments. If we fear God, we're going to do our very best to keep those commandments, which include so much more than what I've talked about this morning. And then Philippians two, and verse number 12, "brethren, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." My fear is in God this morning. I fear disobeying him. I fear disappointing him. And I hope that you do, too. When we go out and evangelize in our personal lives, you don't have to start here. You don't have to start with this topic. But I do believe it's absolutely part of being a Christian, and our walk with God. I hope that this has been beneficial, meaningful for you. We're going to stand and sing as always. The Lord's invitation is open. But I'd like for you as, as we're singing this song to maybe examine yourself. Examine your life, examine your heart and just see where you are. You don't have to respond publicly, but just examine yourself. Do you have the fear of God in you? If you're not a Christian this morning, thinking about it, want to have a Bible study want to study together, whatever the case is, want to make the decision to be baptized for the remission of your sins. I know that that we can make that happen this morning. If you need anything, please come as we stand and sing.