

Strong Confidence for Year 2016

Sermon delivered on December 27th, 2015

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Scripture Reading:

Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. 27: The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Introduction

Here we are, about to enter a new year. New Year means new opportunities and new hopes but it also means new challenges and new concerns. Every time new year comes we cannot help but ask...

What is this new year going to bring to you and me? What lies ahead for you and me, in this year 2016?

There are many unknowns as we face 2016, and these unknowns cause us to fear, yes, even the mature among us. Because if we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that we are plagued with fear. We fear many things. We are people prone to fear. We are creatures prone to be afraid. So, the question we ask is, how do we, as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children face the new year with confidence? How do we face the new year with strength, security and success.

The Bible says in the last days fear will increase

Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26: **Men's hearts failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

People afraid of many things ...

Children afraid of ...

Vaccination, taking medicine, darkness, light, bees, shower, taking a bath, toothpaste, dentists, doctors, barbers, school, water, crossing the streets, cats, dogs, chickens, animals, etc.

Teenagers are afraid of ...

Responsibilities, making decisions, to think, failures, peers, friends, spiders, being alone, rejection (friends and family), work, books, girls, boys, falling in love or being in love, etc.

Adults/grown ups are afraid of ...

Children, teenagers, mother-in-law, staying single, getting married, becoming bald, growing old, gaining weight, snakes, blood, fire, flying, death or dying, church, sermons, unknown, fear, phobias, etc.

I - How can you and I overcome our fear?

The world's ways:

Should we whistle or sing our fears away? How about Teddy bear, night light? How about overcome your fear by positive thinking, yoga, or hypnosis? These things may for awhile help us forget our fears but they will not last and they are not solid. We need more solid remedies than these silly humanistic and childish things.

The Lord's solution:

So, how do we overcome fear? The answer is found in our text:

Proverbs 14:26 **In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence:** and his children shall have a place of refuge. 27: The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

The answer is FEAR!

Similia similibus curantur. Similar things take care of similar things.

We overcome fear by FEAR! Fear of the LORD! There is confidence that comes from fearing the LORD. Those who fear the LORD so as to obey and serve Him, **have a strong ground of confidence**, and will be preserved.

The fear of God **casts out all fear of man**, all despairing anticipations of possible evil, and makes the believer confident and bold.

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but **the righteous are bold as a lion.**

Isaiah 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and **let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.** 14: **And he shall be for a sanctuary;** but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin (trap) and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

There is no remedy to fear except **fear the One who is able to deliver us** from the thing we fear.

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2: When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3: Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. 4: One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. 5: For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

II - What is the fear of the Lord?

There are basically two kinds of fear, namely:

1. The fear of dread (alarm, fright, terror, apprehension, anxiety, perplexity and distrust)

This is the kind of fear that makes you want to **run away** and **have nothing to do with Him**.

2. The fear of awe (respect, love and reverence)

This is the kind of fear which **leads us closer to Him**, and **leaves us in awe over His greatness**.

This is the kind of fear that the Bible speaks of when it says that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When this fear sweeps over us, our faith increases, and **there is a holy respect for God and His ways**.

Psalm 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.**

Such a fear causes us **to run from and want nothing to do with sin in our lives**. This type of fear **changes** and **transforms** us into the image and likeness of Christ. This is the kind of fear that makes us bold as a lion. It gives us strong confidence. **This the kind of fear that will help us face 2016 with holy boldness and confidence.**

Proverbs 9:10 **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**

The **fear of the Lord** and the **knowledge of God** are equated here, they are parallel.

John 17:3 **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**

The fear of the Lord which delivers us from all fears, **starts by knowing God**. It starts by a personal knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.

Knowing about God is not the same as **knowing God**. Knowing about Jesus Christ is not the same as **knowing Jesus Christ**.

Children, young people and adults – You and I need God! **We cannot survive without God**. We will not make it. Only the few will survive. Only those who know Jesus Christ in a personal way will make it to the safe haven called Heaven!

III - How do we develop the fear of God?

1. Know for sure you are a child of God

Proverbs 14:26 **In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.**

The Bible says in ...

Romans 3:18 **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**

That is what you and I are by nature. **You and I by nature do not have a proper fear of God.** True, we may have the dread of God that makes us run away from Him, but you and I, by nature do not have that holy fear, that regard of God's character in the glory of His majesty and His goodness which draws our heart to Him in love and devotion and desire to please Him.

As long as you are unregenerated person, if you have never come to God through Christ in repentance and faith, pleading no grounds of approach but through the blood of Christ shed for sinners, then [Romans 3:18](#) will continue to be your experience until you die unless you repent.

If you don't have this basic fear of God then it is impossible for you to increase in this fear. [Jeremiah 32:40](#) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but **I will put my fear in their hearts**, that they shall not depart from me.

2. Remember all His benefits

[Psalm 103:1](#) Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and **forget not all his benefits**: 3: Who **forgiveth** all thine iniquities; who **healeth** all thy diseases; 4: Who **redeemeth** thy life from destruction; who **crowne**th thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

Do not get over the fact that God has forgiven all your sins.

Constantly meditate on how much you have been forgiven.

[Psalm 130:3](#) If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4: But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

If God would record every sins that you and I have done and would call us into His presence and give an account, who among us could stand before Him. We are in deep trouble. But praise God, there is forgiveness with God and He has truly forgiven us who have repented and believe the Gospel.

Contemplating on the way this great God has forgiven you and me, we cannot help but fear God with deepest and most tender fear and worship and adoration. As the Psalmist mind is **filled with the wonder of forgiveness** so his heart is **filled with the reality of the fear of God**.

Feed often upon the fact of forgiveness. And as we feed not only upon the fact of forgiveness but the way of forgiveness. So our fear of God will be deepened and increased.

Nothing breeds the fear of God like this tender sense of God's goodness and mercy in Jesus Christ.

[Psalm 34:8](#) O **taste and see that the LORD is good**: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. 9: O **fear the LORD**, ye his saints: **for there is no want to them that fear him**.

You cannot fear Him, as He ought to be feared except in the context of His gracious goodness and His condescending mercy in Jesus Christ.

3. Contemplate on the greatness of God.

Constantly contemplate on the greatness of God.

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4: **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.

As these beings contemplate on the attributes of God, great, marvelous, holy, mighty, righteous, King which describes the majesty of His greatness, he said that it is unthinkable that a rational creature would not fear such a God. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord? If they but know you as you are revealed they cannot help but fear you.

Do you want to grow in the fear of God? Then you must constantly feed your soul upon the majestic greatness of God. Be familiar with those portions of the Scriptures most calculated to set these concepts before you.

One practical way on feeding on the greatness of God is to read books which help you to think often upon His greatness. Most of the books written in our day are “*How to...*” books. It is hard to find books that focus on who God is and how great He is. **You will have to go 50-100 years back.** The writers of old times are men whose souls are permeated with these concepts of the majestic greatness of God.

4. Practice the presence of God

Seek to cultivate an awareness of His presence.

Psalm 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

In every situation, whether public or private setting, whether I am alone or with company, I will set the Lord before me, that is, **I will bring myself to an awareness of the continual presence of God.**

At home, in the school, at work, in the car, in the living room, at the mall, at the grocery store, in front of a laptop or i-pad, I will set the Lord before me. **I must cultivate the awareness of God's presence.**

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD **all the day long.**

If you would increase in the fear of God, **there must be an awareness that God is near and God is here.** You and I cannot fear a distant and forgotten God, He must be a near and a remembered God.

Live in the truth of Psalm 139

Psalm 139:1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2: Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3: Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4: For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. 5: Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. 6: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 7: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8: If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10: Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11: If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12: Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

May God help us then to cultivate the awareness of His presence.

May God say of us at GTBBC ...

Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and **walking in the fear of the Lord**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Please join me in praying that we would grow in the fear of the LORD. And as we grow in the fear of the LORD, may we face the new year without fear and with confidence.

Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. 27: The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and **delivered me from all my fears.**

Isaiah 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and **let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.** 14: **And he shall be for a sanctuary;** but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin (trap) and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

AMEN!