

# Bethel

## Prayer Meeting Addresses

### Number 127 The Fear of the Lord

**Text:** “*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*” (Psalm 89. 7).

This is a beautiful Psalm. Sometimes it is spoken of as *the Psalm of the covenant*. There is so much in it about the covenant of grace, “ordered in all things and sure.” But also it is a special Psalm on the faithfulness of God. There is so much concerning His faithfulness.

When we come to look at the verse that I have read, if it is a right expression, it seems as if it is sandwiched in between two very lovely words. The greatness of God: “Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?” As our thoughts this evening are so much on our friends with the operations, and one especially in so much pain, it is an easy thing for this great God in heaven to deal with these things. One little word surely we have proved together over the years: “Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.”

“For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?” That is what comes immediately before. And what comes immediately after? “O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? *Thou rulest*” – not Satan, not unbelief, not blind chance; it is the Lord.

“He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave TO BE.”

“*Thou rulest* the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them.” Of course, this looks forward to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when there was that great storm and the disciples were afraid, and one

word: “Peace, be still.... And there was a great calm.” If some of you this evening find that there are many storms in your little lives, it only needs the Lord to say, “Peace, be still,” and then there will be a great calm

But the verse that I have read speaks about a vital truth: *the fear of the Lord*. “God is greatly to be feared.” Now let us be very clear: the fear of the Lord does not mean being frightened of God. The old preachers used to talk about a *slavish* fear and a *filial* fear. I suppose we do not use those words so much today, but they are very suitable words. What is a slavish fear? The terror that a slave had of a cruel master, being scared by him, being thrashed by him. What is a filial fear? That tender, loving reverence that a little child has for a loving father. Now that is the fear of God.

There are so many exhortations in Scripture to be in the fear of the Lord. One scripture says, “Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” There are so many precious promises to those who possess the fear of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit. We cannot create it, but it is put in the sinner’s heart when the new birth takes place. Three times we have it: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning”; “The fear of the Lord is the beginning”; “The fear of the Lord is the beginning” – which if words mean anything at all, if we do not possess the fear of the Lord, then we have not yet begun in divine things. It is there right at the beginning, and sometimes it is stronger, and sometimes it is weaker, but a child of God can never altogether lose it, and it influences him. It influences him – the things he does, the way he behaves, his prayers, the choices that he makes.

The fear of the Lord is a very precious grace. It always takes the Lord’s side, and sometimes there will be things you are going to do, and the fear of the Lord says, No. It shows you that it is wrong. “So did not I, because of the fear of God.” Sometimes there will be things you do not want to do, you shrink from them, but when the fear of the Lord works, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

Now it can never be separated from the love of Christ. When I was a boy, there was a verse they used to quote a lot. I have never heard it quoted in recent years, nor have I heard it sung, though it is in our hymnbook:

“Fear is a grace which ever dwells  
With its fair partner, love;

Blending their beauties, both proclaim  
Their source is from above.”

So many things might be said concerning the fear of the Lord. Here, “God is *greatly to be feared*,” and He is “to be had in reverence,” because that is one of the special ingredients in the fear of the Lord. If we possess the fear of God, we shall be delivered from a light, careless spirit. There will be a serious spirit, a solemn spirit. It will be a spirit before the Lord of life and glory. It will be a spirit in the light of eternity. That fear of the Lord will teach us our weakness and our sin, and that fear of the Lord will draw us to Christ. You young ones, look at the numerous occasions, especially in the Old Testament, so often in the Psalms, so often in the Proverbs, these exhortations about this beautiful grace.

“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.” Now the fear of the Lord should affect, must affect a child of God at all times. But there is an emphasis here: especially “in the assembly of the saints.” “God is great to be feared” – yes, especially “in the assembly of the saints,” which obviously means,

“When to worship saints assemble,  
Let the song to Jesus flow.”

And there will be a spirit of reverence. May it be so even as we enter the doors. May it affect every part of the service – our singing, our reading, our hearing, our praying – that spirit of reverence before the Lord. It is very clear from Scripture: irreverence is not acceptable to a holy God, irreverence of His holy name. At our prayer meetings – “the assembly of the saints” – we have been favoured with this: the reverence the Lord has granted to us in prayer and those who hear it.

There is also this. Whenever we meet together, whatever be the occasion – if we have to have a special church meeting, whatever it is about – may that be the great point whenever we meet together, that each one should come in the fear of the Lord and under its influence. That will unite us together; that will cause us to be humble. Then we shall esteem others better than ourselves. And if decisions have to be taken, important or smaller, if we always think of things being decided in the fear of the Lord, that is, for the honour of His name, then we shall not be permitted to go far wrong.

And the few verses I read (1-15) have a good ending: “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.”

*This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Thursday, 21st July, 2022*

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Happy the men that fear the Lord;  
They from the paths of sin depart;  
Rejoice and tremble at His word,  
And hide it deep within their heart.

They in His mercy hope, through grace;  
Revere His judgments, not contemn;  
In pleasing Him their pleasure's placed,  
And His delight is placed in them.

This fear, a rich and endless store,  
Preserves the soul from poisonous pride;  
The heart that wants this fear is poor,  
Whatever it possess beside.

This treasure was by Christ possessed;  
In this His understanding stood;  
And every one that's with it blessed  
Has free redemption in His blood.

J. Hart