The Two Faces of Fear

Introduction: Fear is the focus of tonight’s message. Obviously we are living in a world that seems to be growing more dangerous by the minute. Threats of physical violence and the threat of offending people with our beliefs are a growing concern. So, at first thought you may think that tonight’s message will be negative, however I want us to look at two specific types of fear and contrast how they impact our lives.

**Focus Question: Is All Fear Bad?**

Before we answer this question we want to identify one of, if not the most destructive type of fear there is. That is the fear of man.

**Focus Text:**

***Proverbs 29:25 NKJV***

***The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.***

***Proverbs 29:25 MSG***

***The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in GOD protects you from that.***

Definition & Illustration of a Snare: A snare is a trap, usually for small animals, and using a noose. Snare can also mean to trap in general or any type of trap, like the snare of a TV cliffhanger that traps you into watching again. - Vocabulary.com

This fear of man or human opinion has successfully been used by the enemy of our souls to draw us away from the Will of God for our lives. We see examples of this in scripture where fear of man’s opinion caused men to compromise.

**Support Text:**

*Matthew 26:57-58 & 69-75 NLT*

*Then the people who had arrested Jesus led him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and the elders had gathered. [58] Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and came to the high priest’s courtyard. He went in and sat with the guards and waited to see how it would all end.*

*[69] Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, “You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean.” [70] But Peter denied it in front of everyone. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. [71] Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. ” [72] Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. “I don’t even know the man,” he said. [73] A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, “You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent.” [74] Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying— I don’t know the man!” And immediately the rooster crowed. [75] Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.” And he went away, weeping bitterly.*

(Peter was provoked to succumb to the fear of being connected to Jesus, after he declared his allegiance to him amongst the rest of the disciples)

*Galatians 2:11-16 NLT*

*But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. [12] When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. [13] As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. [14] When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions? [15] “You and I are Jews by birth, not ‘sinners’ like the Gentiles. [16] Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.”*

**The two examples in scripture of Peter succumbing to the fear of man, are an example for us to be aware of this pitfull. Peter was a very bold man who did things that the other apostles did not (i.e. walking on water, preaching at the day of Pentecost which lead to 3,000 being saved) therefore we are cautioned to be diligent to guard ourselves from the fear of man.**

Fear of man’s opinion can manifest itself in other ways, like when we hear about the latest illness that was discovered or the latest downward economic trend (Expound)

**So what is the key to being free from the fear of man….**

**The Fear of The Lord**

The next question that often comes is...I’m I to be afraid of God? This is not the type of relationship that God desires to have with His children. When we look at the phrase Fear of the Lord, in the New Testament it translates as (reverence) **worship**. We see this during Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness.

*Luke 4:8 KJV*

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

*Deuteronomy 6:13 KJV*

*Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.*

Here we see the Jesus quoting Deut. 6:13, but instead of the word fear being used the word worship is used.

*(Expound on what this looks like practically, what does it look like to Fear The Lord)*

*Psalm 138:2 KJVS*

*[2] I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*

*Hebrews 11:5-12 NLT*

*[5] It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying-"he disappeared, because God took him." For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God. [6] And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. [7] It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith. [8] It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. [9] And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith-for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. [10] Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God. [11] It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. [12] And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead-a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.*

Trusting the Lord and Fearing the Lord are synonymous. For me to truly Fear Him, is for me to consider His Word over my life above anything else...Without Faith it is impossible to please Him.

**Proverbs Explanation of what the Fear of The Lord Looks Like & It’s Benefits**

***Proverbs 1:7 NLT***

***Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.***

***Proverbs 8:13 NLT***

***All who fear the LORD will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech.***

***Proverbs 10:27 NLT***

***Fear of the LORD lengthens one’s life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.***

***Proverbs 14:26-27 NLT***

***Those who fear the LORD are secure; he will be a refuge for their children. [27] Fear of the LORD is a life-giving fountain; it offers escape from the snares of death.***

***Proverbs 19:23 - New Living Translation***

***Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.***

***Proverbs 22:4 - New Living Translation***

***True humility and fear of the LORD lead to riches, honor, and long life.***

**The ability to live a life Fearing The Lord is developed through a vibrant relationship with the Holy Spirit and God’s Word, this helps us to rest our minds when things around us look like they are going to destroy us.**

**Summary:** The remedy for the fear of man or any other type of fear is the Fear of The Lord. For me to Fear The Lord is to trust Him with every aspect of my life and trust His promises to care for me and never leave or forsake me.

**Impact Statement: You may not be able to fight fire with fire, but you most certainly can fight fear with Fear (The Fear of The Lord).**