

LIVING IN REVERENT FEAR

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 ESV // 1 Peter 1:17-23 ESV

MONDAY 4/24/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 //1 I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.

1 Peter 1:17-23 //17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile

REFLECTION Just recently our church has been addressing a common need of our members. The subject of “living in fear” continues to come up and has over the course of several meetings. This is a legitimate fear. The world around us has turned its back on God. However, we serve a God who does not cause fear for His children but whose loving comfort overcomes this worldly fear. This week's devotion and sermon will take a look at what it means to live in "reverent fear." Peter is talking to the obedient children of God who have accepted Christ as Savior. As Christ's children, we are to put on the character of God the Father himself. Peter tells us how to live in a relationship with one another, especially when people are surrounded by fear. He instructs that we are to offer those living with fear and anxiety God's grace and love. We start by looking at the heart of others, not at the outer image they may try to portray. Jeremiah 5:3 says, "They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent." Paul writes in Romans 2:5, "But because of your hard and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." However, this is not true for those who have confessed their sins and received God's gift of eternal life. As newborn children of Christ, God's wrath is no longer upon us. God is very pleased with us and gives us great comfort in times of uneasiness.

PRAYER Lord I need to remember your words, “fear not, for I am with you always”. In Jesus name, Amen

TUESDAY 4/25/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15/2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

1 Peter 1:17-23/18 -19 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

REFLECTION Any person who continues to reject the grace of God and despises His love will live in fear. Anyone who wants to lessen earthly fear is to have a *righteous* fear of God. Fearing God is about submitting to God's love. The arrogant and prideful refuse to submit to the will of God but as Christians, in order to rebuke fear, we gather for Communion and are bound up together by the blood of Christ. The physical act of giving and receiving Christ's blood exposes God's true love for us. It seems there are only two paths that people take. One is a fearful ruinous path to death, and the other the path to eternal life, made possible by having a righteous fear of the Lord. Please understand we are restored to new life because of God's will. We cannot pay this price of salvation, no matter how hard we try. Moses was commanded by God to demonstrate Christ's future sacrifice. Moses was the first to order a sacrifice of a perfect lamb, without blemish, to be chosen for the Passover. (See Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28.) In today's text Peter affirms that Christ sacrificed his blood for our faults. Jesus Christ is the perfect man without blemish who pacified the wrath of God for us chasing our fears away.

PRAYER Heavenly Father you have opened my ears to hear the truth about your Son. I will call on Him as long as I live. Praise you! In Jesus name, Amen

WEDNESDAY 4/26/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 // 3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.

1 Peter 1:17-23 // 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.

REFLECTION Peter taught on how Christ was destined to die and be resurrected to life even before the foundation of the world was laid. To understand this, we first must have a faith that accepts the God of Jesus Christ. Our God had a foreknowledge about the fate of human beings. Even before He created us in His image,

He foresaw that we would not stand very long in His integrity. Because of this, He gave the holy order that Christ, His only Son, would be our Redeemer. He was a perfect man born of flesh and Spirit, sent to earth to deliver the lost human race. He came to save us from a ruinous life and prevent us from self destruction. It is often hard to comprehend these thoughts about God's goodness. God redeems His creation based on His power to love us. When I first absorbed the Gospel message, I began by embracing God's grace. God's grace restores our lives to its full intent. God's intent for us is to love God with all our heart, mind and soul.

PRAYER Praise you Lord God, for freeing me from the snare of death. The pangs of Sheol are less in my mind as I now look upward to my new heavenly home. In Jesus name, Amen



THURSDAY 4/27/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 // 4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!"

1 Peter 1:17-23 // 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

REFLECTION St. Augustine once wrote, "God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until we find rest in Him," (Augustine of Hippo, Confessions). When your heart is anxious with fear, take a moment and lift your mind upwards to our Father in heaven. When the Gospel shines a light of truth upon Christ, this is not at random. We are chosen and Christ is exposed, even if we have the slightest of faith. We begin to have hope in the God of creation. Our spiritual quest with God is so incomprehensible, it often amazes us. If it were not for Christ, we could not stand in the presence of God. He is the Mediator of our faith who lifts up our souls into the heavenly realm. Never overlook the power of Christ when you feel the tension of fear. As one who wandered around in a state of spiritual blindness, I was skeptical about God. Then Christ touched my soul and lifted me up out of the darkness. Today, I live with a lot less anxiety and with much more confidence in my future.

PRAYER Today, O' Lord Jesus I call upon your name for you have raised me up from the dead. I praise your name and say thank you for delivering me from the insecurities that fear of gives us! In Jesus Name Amen.

FRIDAY 4/28/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 // 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, 14 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

1 Peter 1:17-23 // 22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

REFLECTION Proverbs 3:7 says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil." When we accept the purification of our souls by Christ, it results in a desire to obey and serve God. As this desire grows, we learn how God's love casts out our fears. We are not to be afraid to love others as we love ourselves. This mutual love is a righteous love, not of our human capability. It is a sacrificial love, showing respect and honor to those created in the image of God. Our souls are not capable of receiving God's grace until we are purified by Christ's blood. 1 Peter 1:22 says, "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love." Christ takes away our filth by his Spirit. Our souls need to be cleansed from the pollution of our flesh. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." This not just a outward actions to be corrected, but our very hearts are thoroughly reformed.

PRAYER God of glory, I lift up my mind and remember you have blessed me with the cup of salvation. I will continue to praise you in the presence of all your people. In Jesus name, Amen

SATURDAY 4/29/23

Psalm 116 :1-4,13-15 // 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

1 Peter 1:17-23 // 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

REFLECTION As born again Christians, we have been granted an imperishable seed of faith. This happened by hearing and responding to the Word of God; a "living word" residing in our souls. As we read it, our faith is strengthened a little more each time. As our "imperishable seed of faith" grows deep within us, we learn His love overcomes our fear. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." Being made new in Christ unites us to God, so that we may have full access to Him. Christ is also our Mediator who came to deliver us from our fears. Before Christ came, we were filled with dread and sorrow. Then, one day we start to believe we can approach God and face His justice. That because of what Christ has done for us, so the first step towards God is accepting Christ as our Savior. Only Christ can "tranquillize our consciences", so that we may dare to come with confidence to God. Jesus raises us up from the dead in order that our faith, hope, and love become the foundation to which we live our earthly lives.

PRAYER You leave me your peace and I pray for the tranquility of your love to overshadow my fear. Thank you Lord. In Jesus name, Amen



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