

Fear God – Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

As we wrap up Ecclesiastes, we are told that fearing God lies at the very core of how we should live life. This is a prominent theme throughout scripture, but it can be a confusing one.

- 1) **When you hear the command to “fear God” what comes to mind? What have you been taught about in the past? What questions do you have about it?**

Understanding what this fear is exactly can be a little bit confusing. As prominently as fearing God is in scripture, the call to not be afraid is just as prominent– sometimes together in the same sentence. See Exodus 20:20: *Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” (emphasis added)* Since we can trust God’s word does not contradict itself, it seems clear there are two different kinds of fear we are dealing with: one we should have, and one we are called to avoid.

Sinful Fear (Gen 3:10, Lk. 19:21, Jam. 2:19)

- 2) **What are some examples of this kind of fear from scripture?**
- 3) **Where does the fear we should avoid find its roots?**
- 4) **How does this kind of fear see and respond to God?**

Right Fear (Is. 11:1-13, Jer. 33:8-9, Jer. 32:38-40, Hos. 3:5)

- 5) **What are some characteristics of this fear?**
- 6) **Where does this fear come from?**
- 7) **How does this fear see and respond to God?**

This right fear of God lies at the core of how we should live as Christians; it touches almost everything.

- 8) **What means of grace has God given to build this fear in us?**
- 9) **How does this fear affect the way we fight sin? The way we encourage each other? The way we handle other fears?**
- 10) **What other implications does this have for our life as a church?**

PRAYER

As we pray for each other, let’s pray that we would be filled with the right fear of God; that we would be a church that is overwhelmed by the glory AND goodness of God to us in Christ.

As you pray more specifically for each other, consider these areas:

- How have you seen the Lord’s care for you? (so we can see and praise his goodness)
- What burden and cares are weighing on you? (so we can pray for provision and mercy)
- Can you confess how you currently are beset with sin and temptation? (so that we can pray the Lord’s grace on you)