Sermon Notes
10/25/26

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

— Matthew 6:19-34 (ESV)

## Introduction

- Last Monday night, the men’s bible study discussed King Saul’s visit to the medium at Endor (1 Samuel 28).
- Saul’s eye was not healthy. It was full of darkness, so the place he went to was a place of darkness.
- Zach Dixon/Barry Anderson DARE T-shirt.

- According to the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) Study 2021, the age-standardized disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) rate of anxiety disorders increased by 16.7% for anxiety disorders between 2010 and 2021[1].
- Barna conducted a survey of different generations. They asked about uncertainty regarding the future, anxiety about important decisions, loneliness, and isolation from others. Gen Z reported the highest rates of each category[2].
- It is October after all, so today we're discussing fear. Particularly the fear of the Lord and what impact it ought to have on us.

## Fear in the OT

- יָרֵא (yārēʾ). vb. to fear, be afraid. Refers commonly to experiencing an emotional reaction of fear, terror, or apprehension.
- יִרְאָה (yirʾâ). n. fem. fear, terror. Refers to the emotion or feeling or state of being afraid, terrified, or in awe[3].
- yirʾâ appears in Proverbs 1:17, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction."
    - The ability to understand things correctly, to comprehend what happens to you in life, begins with fearing the Lord.
    - Your thinking doesn't work correctly if you do not fear the Lord.
    - This doesn't mean you're unintelligent or incompetent.
    - It does mean that because your understanding is out of alignment, your inner and outer life will also be out of alignment.
    - This term is not concerned with the acceptance of a set of propositions relating to metaphysical realities, but with proper religious and social behaviour. "Fear of the god" is tangible in acts of human kindness and in dutiful observance of the cultic worship of the gods. It is the safeguard of

[1] Zhou, Jiali and Li, Shuting and Song, Yuan and Ying, Jiayao and Luo, Zeyu and Shan, Shiyi and Zhou, Liying and Zha, Jindian and Wang, Xin and Yang, Jianzhong and Song, Peige, Global, Regional, and National Trends in the Burden of Anxiety Disorders from 1992 to 2021: An Age-Period-Cohort Analysis Based on the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4987862 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4987862

[2] https://www.barna.com/trends/gen-z-emotions/

[3] Miles Custis, "Fear," in Lexham Theological Wordbook, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

social decency: as soon as people forget their gods they start using uncivilized language. “Fear of the god” is not belief (belief being tacitly taken for granted) but the manifestation of an attitude of reverence for the gods and love of one’s fellow human beings.”[4]

## Fear in the NT

- 5828 φοβέομαι (phobeomai): vb.; ≡ DBLHebr 3707; Str 5399; TDNT 9.189—1. LN 25.252 be afraid, state of fear, be alarmed (Mt 10:28; 17:6; Ac 5:26); 2. LN 87.14 respect, show reverence for (Lk 18:2); 3. LN 53.58 worship, profound reverence (Lk 1:50; Ac 13:16)[5]
- 5832 φόβος (phobos), ou (ou), ὁ (ho): n.masc.; ≡ Str 5401; TDNT 9.189—1. LN 25.251 fear, state of terror (Mt 28:8; 2Co 7:5); 2. LN 25.254 source or occasion of fear (Ro 13:3); 3. LN 53.59 reverence, a worshiping respect (Ac 9:31; 2Co 5:11)
    - To fear the Lord in Rome, meant to place His name above Caesar’s.
    - Many of the Caesars wanted to be recognized as Dominus and Deus. Lord and God.
    - To say Jesus was “my Lord and my God” was therefore to deny allegiance to Caesar as divine.
    - Martyrdom of Polycarp (2nd Century AD)
        - Polycarp was a disciple of John the Apostle
        - Died 155 AD by burning at the stake
            - Proconsul: “Take the oath and curse Christ.”
            - Polycarp: “86 years I have served him and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme the King who saved me?”
            - Proconsul threatens to have Polycarp eaten by wild beasts
            - Polycarp: "Call them. For repentance from the better to the worse is not permitted us; but it is noble to change from what is evil to what is righteous."
            - Proconsul threatens to burn Polycarp alive
            - Polycarp: "The fire you threaten burns but an hour and is quenched after a little; for you do not know the fire of the coming judgment and everlasting punishment that is laid up

[4] Van der Toorn, Karel Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel 106–7
[5] James Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

for the impious. But why do you delay? Come, do what you will."

## Fear, Anxiety, and the Fear of the Lord

- You might say, “that sounds great. I appreciate the language lesson and the history. But what the heck does this have to do with me, right now, today, in 2026?”
- EVERYTHING
- These definitions for fear in both the OT and NT include concepts like terror and dread but also,worship, reverence, awe, and respect
- What are we to make of this twofold definition?
- We began our discussion with statistics on anxiety. Anxiety disorders on the rise. And general anxiety about the future, loneliness, and the like.
- The definitions of “fear” in Scripture contain these two parts because:
    - What you fear points to what you worship.
    - Fear identifies what masters you.
- Jesus said that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
    - When anxiety and fear pulses through your heart, they will tell you what your treasure is.
    - Are people talking about you? Your treasure is your *ego*.
    - Are you scared to try something new because you’ll fail? Your treasure is *ease*.
    - Do you hesitate to let someone else handle your task? Your treasure is *control*.
    - Do you gossip around a person who has wronged you (real or perceived)? Your treasure is the *praise of people*.
    - Do you feel a need to punish people through passive aggressive comments or by withholding your presence from them? Your treasure is *acceptance*.
- What about anxiety?
    - Whereas fear concerns a threat that is real, present, and imminent, anxiety concerns a threat that could be real, but is neither present nor imminent
    - Fear: You’re at the gas station and a man with a gun approaches and demands your money
    - Anxiety: I don’t go to gas stations because of the time when the man with the gun approached and demanded my money

    - Our bodies and minds react to events that have not happened yet, may not ever happen, and if they do probably won't be nearly as bad as we expect
    - "A happened, then B will happen, then C, and D is inevitable"
    - Jesus asks us how we can add hours to our lives through worry
    - When we do this, we are letting the light in us become darkness by proclaiming a future that we do not have the authority or ability to create
    - When I worry about problems for future me, I'm *assuming* there will be a future me for those things to happen to
    - Who am I, in all of my limited capacity, to make judgments about what *must* happen?

## Altar Call

- Why do I worship desired outcomes? Why do I fear other people? Why do I honor other things, pursuits, pleasures, over the Lord?
- I tremble at other things because I do not spend time trembling before Him. If I surrender and tremble before Him, I will be less likely to tremble before other things.