



FIRST BAPTIST
— CHURCH —
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 7: The Whole Duty of Man

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.* (ESV)

DEVOTIONAL

Ecclesiastes is the record of a brilliant man turned troubled soul as Solomon tries everything — pleasure, wealth, work, wisdom, and projects only to come up empty each time. He concludes in his attempt to find peace, contentment and lasting satisfaction, he was only chasing what he called "vanity," a vapor you cannot hold. Then, after twelve chapters of restless searching, he sets down his conclusion; the only real solution to man's longings is "Fear God and keep his commandments."

There is a hidden weight in that word "end." Solomon has heard it all, tried it all, and now draws the final line. His answer is not complicated. It doesn't require genius or wealth. It requires reverence. The Hebrew word does not include "duty", it is implied; so literally, "*this is the whole of man.*" The fear of the Lord is not one department of a well-rounded life; it is the life. It is what a human being is for.

Solomon gathers into that single command everything we have seen this week: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the clean thing that purifies the hidden rooms, the power that turns our feet away from evil, the fountain that runs fresh every morning, the treasure that no one can plunder. Solomon is not adding one more item to a list. He is telling us the list was always one thing.

But there is a second and real side to the fear of the Lord. He adds, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing." The fear of the Lord is not only a fountain we drink from and a treasure we carry; it is a posture we take before the holy God who will one day judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42). Nothing is hidden. The secret thought, the private habit, the concealed motive we're

certain no one will discover — God sees it, and it will come to light. For the believer that should never bring panic; our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus. But it ought to sober us, and shape how we live and the things we meditate on when we think no one is watching.

James presses this from a startling angle: "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" (2:19). The Greek is *phrissō* — to bristle, to have the hair stand on end. The demons hold accurate theology and sense genuine terror. What they do not have is worship. They tremble and flee; they never bow. Terror alone drove Adam into the bushes, but reverence draws us near. If demons can quake before God's holiness and remain demons, how much more should our trembling rise into deep worship? We come as children whose debt is paid so our awe bends the knee instead of turning our hearts away. This is why fearing God and keeping His commandments arrive in one breath. They are not two assignments; obedience is simply the fear of the Lord walking around on two feet. May the Lord grant us hearts that tremble at His voice and daily presence in our lives.

TAKE AWAY

The demons have accurate theology that produces real terror — what they lack is worship. They tremble and flee; a child of God trembles and draws near. Let your awe of His holiness bend your knees today.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to grant you a heart that trembles at His voice — not the terror of a demon, but the trembling awe of a child that rises into worship.