



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 3: The Fear of the Lord Is Clean

Psalm 19:9 *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

The Psalmist has been compiling a list describing the Word of God: it is perfect, sure, right, and pure. He then adds a phrase that may initially seem out of place: “the fear of the Lord is clean.” The previous list, David is speaking about various attributes of God’s word (Law, Testimony, Precepts, Commandments, Rules) and now suddenly shifts to “fear”. He elevates the “fear” of the Lord to be something as cherished and guarded as closely as the Word of God. Additionally, where we might have expected “fear” to be wise or good, he says “it is clean”. What does purity have to do with fear?

The Hebrew word for clean is *tahor*, the language of the temple meaning what is morally pure, undefiled, spotless, or fit to come into God’s presence. Genuine fear of the Lord is not a shadowed or superstitious thing; it is spotlessly clean, and for those who walk in it, it makes them clean as well. In the same way obedience to the ‘perfect law’ does. The difference is that the ‘fear of the Lord’ deals with all the unspoken rules and laws of God. The fear of the Lord deals with our heart and attitude, which is what makes all the others ‘clean’. This is the hinge of everything we are pursuing. Holiness is not produced by rules alone or by trying harder to be good. It is the fruit of a heart that fears the Lord. Where reverence takes root, cleanness follows.

Consider how this works. Sin nearly always begins in the private places where we assume no one is watching — the unguarded web-surfing, the whispered gossip, the resentment cultivated in secret. What purifies those hidden areas are the settled awareness that the Lord is watching, and that He is holy. A.W. Tozer opened his great book on God’s attributes with a sentence worth memorizing: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” A low view of God breeds a

careless life. A high, holy view of God (fear) cleanses us from the inside out, because we begin to see our sin the way He sees it.

David adds that this clean fear is “enduring forever.” Unlike our fleeting moods and short-lived resolutions, the fear of the Lord does not wear off like a New Years resolution. It is a permanent orientation of the redeemed heart, and it will still be ours in glory, when we worship in perfect, unashamed purity. Therefore, for anyone who longs to be clean but feels defeated by the same old patterns: you cannot begin with the sin. You begin with God. Draw near to the Holy One, let reverent fear fill your vision, and the clean fear of the Lord will do its quiet work — washing your thoughts and guarding your steps. (See also James 4:7)

TAKE AWAY

You cannot scrub yourself clean by staring at your sin. Draw near to the holy God, and reverence will do from the inside out what willpower never could.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to cleanse a hidden area of your thoughts today by filling it with a clean, reverent fear of Him.