



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
— CHURCH —  
FAIR OAKS RANCH

**Day 8: The Fear of the Lord is to be Praised**

**Acts 9:31** *"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." Proverbs 31:30*  
*"Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (ESV).*

**DEVOTIONAL**

For seven days we've held the fear of the Lord up one verse at a time — the beginning of wisdom, the clean thing, the power to turn from evil, the fountain running fresh, the treasure no one can plunder, the whole of man. Today we watch it lived out by His people. Here is the early church at its healthiest, and at the center of Luke's description is the phrase that gives our forty days their name: they were "walking in the fear of the Lord."

That word "walking" is worth pausing over. Luke doesn't say they felt this fear in a moment of worship or discussed it in their teaching. They walked in it. In Scripture, walking pictures an entire way of life: steady, ordinary, one step after another. They did not walk alone: alongside that holy fear came "the comfort of the Holy Spirit," the Greek *paraklesis*, from the name Jesus gave the Spirit. This is what keeps the fear of the Lord from ever devolving into rote religion. A church that fears God rightly is not a fearful church; it is a comforted one.

Proverbs lands its final word in the same place. The book opened with the fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge (1:7), and after thirty-one chapters it closes with a portrait of a *bride* whose crowning picture is that same holy fear: "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Everything Proverbs has to teach us is bookended by reverence.

Look closely at what Solomon dismisses. Charm is *sheqer* — a lie, a false front, and "beauty is vain" is *hevel* — the vapor he chased through all of Ecclesiastes. Not that charm and beauty are evil; they

simply cannot bear weight. Reach for them and your hand closes on mist. Only one thing in the whole portrait refuses to evaporate. The Church is the symbolic bride of Christ in this picture. The betrothed as a pure virgin to one husband (2 Corinthians 11:2), loved and washed by Him "that he might present the church to himself in splendor... holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). So when Proverbs hands us a closing picture of a bride whose defining mark is the fear of the Lord, we should hopefully see ourselves. A *church* who fears the Lord is to be praised.

The temptation of the bride in every age is to be praised for her charm instead: her relevance, her polish, her numbers, her good name in the gates. John MacArthur warned the church for decades that when she courted the world's approval, she forfeits the very holiness that made her worth noticing.

So here is this segment's end and our journey's beginning. Where this bride walked in the fear of the Lord, three things followed: she had peace, she was built up, she multiplied. That is still the pattern for our church family. Let us take up the FEAR of the Lord one letter at a time.

#### **TAKE AWAY**

Everything the world would praise in a bride: her charm, beauty, and polish are vapor. The question is not whether our church is admired but the masses, but whether we are walking in the FEAR of the Lord.

#### **PRAYER PROMPT**

Ask the Lord to make our church a bride who walks in the fear of the Lord — praised not for charm, but for holy reverence.