

A Series of devotions on Psalm 33

FEAR THE LORD---BE IN AWE OF HIM

Psalm 33:8-9 "Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm."

Words can have more than one meaning. Some words can actually have opposite meanings. Fear, as used in the Bible, is one of those words. Fear can mean to be afraid of Yahweh. After all, He knows all and is almighty. He demands His laws are obeyed and promises to punish those who disobey them. E.g., "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Fear, is also used in the Bible to mean, be in awe, to have reverence, to hold with high regard or esteem. In giving His followers the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught how to reverence, show awe and hold God in high esteem when His opening words of address are "Our Father, who art in heaven. . ." A believer can confidently approach their heavenly Father rather than be afraid of Him.

The context for the Psalmist exhortation to "fear (be afraid of) the Lord," here in verse 8, is the previous two verses that speak of God creating the universe. Verse 9 makes this abundantly clear when the Psalmist wrote, "For He spoke, and it (the universe and all God created) came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm."

In these two verses the Psalmist's words give the reason to be afraid of God. He is the one who through His simple, spoken almighty word created everything that exists. Think then, if you misbehave and are disobedient what He can do to you. On the other hand, The Psalmist's words also refer to God's mighty creating work who by His Word created all things. Knowing this causes we who have faith in His Son, not to be afraid of Him, but to be in awe, in utter amazement, to honor and praise Him for all He has made, including ourselves.

To those who take God's laws with a grain of salt, the words of the Psalmist are a warning. God's word is powerful. He can do what He says so when He says the "soul of the sinner will die," He means it. His word is not to be scoffed at. On the other hand, God has also said it is His will that all sinners will repent of their sins. He promises whoever believes in His Son Jesus Christ, receives His pardon and promise of heaven. Again, God's word is powerful. He can do what He says, so when He says "whoever believes in His Son will not perish but have everlasting

life," whoever believes in His Son Jesus can be certain they will have everlasting life.

Prayer: O Lord, send Your Holy Spirit to work faith in my heart to believe Your Good News word of forgiveness, life and salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Law of God is good and wise And sets His will before our eyes
Shows us the way of righteousness, And dooms to death when we
transgress.

But those who scornfully disdain God's Law shall then in sin remain;
Its terror in their ear resounds And keeps their wickedness in bounds.

The Law is good; but since the fall Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die And has no pow'r to justify.
(LSB 570)

The Gospel shows the Father's grace, Who sent His Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died That we might thus be justified.

It brings the Savior's righteousness To robe our souls in royal dress;
From all our guilt it brings release And gives the troubled conscience peace.

It bears to all the tidings glad And bids their hearts no more be sad;
The weary, burdened souls it cheers And banishes their guilty fears.
(LSB 580)