



13 – 19 Jan, 2019

Fear of the Lord

**‘They shall be My people, and I will be their God;
then I will give them one heart and one way,
that they may fear Me forever,
for the good of them and their children after them.
And I will make an everlasting covenant with them,
that I will not turn away from doing them good;
but I will put My fear in their hearts
so that they will not depart from Me’ Jeremiah 32:38:40**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Fear of the Lord

***‘The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and fortitude,
The Spirit of knowledge and piety,
Spirit of the fear of God shall fill him (Isa 11:2-3)***

Why talk about the fear of the Lord at the time when the Gospels tell us that God is a father in all that this word entails?

- † The fear of the Lord, which is holy fear, always goes hand in hand with the love for God (*Deu 6:2,5*)**
- † Fear of the Lord is a gift from God from the very beginning and is a pillar in our relationship with Him**
- † To fear God, one has to know Him first then to love Him**

Knowing Who God is

- † God is holy**
 - His holiness leads us to long to be pure and to try to overcome sin and temptation**
 - God’s holiness and not the fear of His punishment of our disobedience**
 - Saint Augustine, in his Confessions, clarified the difference between fearing God so as not to go to hell and fearing Him so that He will not forsake us! The first one is not chaste fear because it does not come from our love for God but stems from our fear of punishment. The second comes from our longing to be always in His presence and therefore is acceptable to God and is ‘chaste’**

- † Only God knows what is best for us
 - He is our reference in all decisions
 - He is the source of all that is in existence
- † God's will gives purpose and meaning to all that we go through in our life
 - In this sense, the fear of the Lord is a reverential awe and wonder at His work in our personal life and in all of His creation
- † God's mercy which is beyond limits
 - His mercy does not deny His anger with His people, an anger that He exercised many times out of His will to discipline and to redress His beloved children
 - God's firmness is the same as that of parents who seek to help their child to avoid their own destruction. God always disciplines us because He *'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth'* (1 Tim 2:4)

Loving God

- † Love is in no way in contradiction with the fear of the Lord
- † Paul instructed the converts to Christianity to perfect their holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), called them 'beloved' and asked them to keep striving for their own salvation with fear of the Lord (Phi 2:12)

The fear of the Lord can be a way to save others (Jude v 22-23)

- † What happened to Ananias and Sapphira was a lesson to the early church because they lied to the Holy Spirit and had no fear of the Lord (Act 5:1-11)
 - Some people see in this incident the wrath and punishment of God. However, both could have died because they realized the seriousness of their sin and its gravity on other believers
- † At the Cross, the repentant thief rebuked the other thief about not fearing God even at that terrible moment

References about the fear of the Lord from the Book of Psalms, if we think of David and all that he went through we can see the endless fruits of this gift of holy fear (Psa: 33:18; 34:7; 85:9; 103:11,13; 25:12)

The fear of the Lord in action (Dan 3)

- † The three young men did not worship a creation. They worshipped the Creator
- † They are attached to the King of kings, which made the king's serious anger to rise higher
- † They did not doubt, nor resent, nor become afraid
- † On the contrary, they kept being a witness for the Truth by not compromising

- † They did not find it enough not to bow down to the image, but, felt obliged to stand up against it and proclaim God to all, or else, they will be seeking their own glory
- † They needed no time to deliberate concerning the matter of their answer; it was a matter of life and death, and yet they did not in the least hesitate whether they should comply or no
- † Their trust in the Living God puts all things into perspective. *‘What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?’ Rom 8:38*
 - It was clear to them to put away Satan (*Mat 4:10*)
 - By that faith they chose rather to suffer than to sin
- † They are not ashamed of their belief; they declared it publicly
- † Nothing can harm a God fearer
- † Their fear of the Lord led to glory
 - Their Lord protected them
 - The Lord was with them in the middle of their sufferings
 - The king and his kingdom converted

Bibliography

1. *Saint Augustine. The Complete Works of Saint Augustine: The Confessions, On Grace and Free Will, The City of God, On Christian Doctrine, Expositions on the Book Of Psalms, ...*(2013), Kindle Edition.
2. John Chrysostom. *The Complete Works of Saint John* (Kindle Edition)
3. *The Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World* (For the Old Testament text copyright of St Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, 2008 and for the New Testament text the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson, 1982), Kindle Edition, 2008
4. Father Sami Hallaq. *Sabe' Hibat mina al-Rouh al-Qoudus* (Beirut: Dar Al-Mashreq, 2001) second Edition
5. Pope Shenouda. *Fear of God* (Cairo, 1994)

Legend

 Refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

‘The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil’ Proverbs 19:23

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon
2. for CrossTalk to find a locale
3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim
4. to become more of saints and less of sinners
5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think
6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth
7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him

8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor
9. to all the sick
10. to all those in prison
11. to the unity of the Christians
12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity
13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management
14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them
15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights
16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region

During this coming week, we will lift the Greek Catholic Church in prayer

<p>الصلاة الربانية أبانا الذي في السموات ليتقدس إسمك ليأت ملكوتك ليتك مشيئتك كما في السماء كذلك على الأرض أعطنا خبزنا كفاف يومنا واغفر لنا خطايانا كما تغفر نحن لمن أساء إلينا ولا تدخلنا في التجارب لكن نجنا من الشرير أمين</p>	<p>قانون الايمان أومن بآله واحد أب ضابط الكل خالق السماء والأرض كل ما يرى وما لا يرى وبرب واحد يسوع المسيح ابن الله الوحيد المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور نور من نور، إله حق من إله حق مولود غير مخلوق مساو للأب في الجوهر الذي به كان كل شيء الذي من أجلنا نحن البشر ومن أجل خلاصنا نزل من السماء وتجسد من الروح القدس ومن مريم العذراء وتأنس وصلب عنا على عهد بيلاطس البنطي وتألم وقبر وقام في اليوم الثالث كما في الكتب وصعد إلى السماء وجلس عن يمين الأب وأيضا يأتي بمجد عظيم ليدين الأحياء والأموات الذي لا فناء لملكه وبالروح القدس الرب المحيي المنبثق من الأب الذي هو مع الأب والإبن مسجود له وممجّد الناطق بالأنبياء وبكنيسة واحدة، جامعة، مقدسة، رسوليّة وأعترف بعموديّة واحدة لمغفرة الخطايا وأترجى قيامة الموتى والحياة في الدهر الآتي أمين</p>
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