



Luke 12:4-10

4 “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell.[a] Yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?[b] And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. 8 “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, 9 but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

As we allow God to fully renovate our heart, we begin to realize two very important and profound truths:

- 1) God’s presence is our greatest need and**
- 2) Our presence is God’s greatest desire**

- Bill Elliff

Jesus focused this teaching on his disciples in the midst of a large and growing crowd. The fanfare, optimism, and favor Jesus and the disciples are experiencing in this moment are not the ultimate reality the disciples would encounter as they march toward Jerusalem. Jesus takes the time in the middle of this crowd to call up His disciples and encourages them to have no fear but the fear of the Lord.

Getting Started

- Define fear? Is it positive or negative?
- What does it mean to fear God?
- How does Jesus use the moment with the large crowd to teach his disciples about fear?
- What contrast is highlighted between the disciples' current experience and the ultimate reality they will face as they march toward Jerusalem?

Digging Deeper

Stephen mentioned there are 3 calls to action Jesus is calling us to take in these 9 verses.

1. Fear God: (Luke 12:4-7)
2. Proclaim Jesus: (Luke 12:8-10)
3. Trust the Spirit (Luke 12:11-12)
 - What does it mean to have no fear but of the Lord? Why is this important?
 - How does the passage illustrate the value of individuals in God's eyes?
 - What are the consequences mentioned for acknowledging or denying the Son of Man before others?

Merriam-Webster defines fear as:

- 1) ...an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by **anticipation** or **awareness** of danger
- 2) anxious concern
- 3) profound reverence and awe especially toward God

Stephen explained that because of our default tendency and understanding of fear, it can be difficult to fully understand verses 4-5, but it was a point of emphasis for Jesus. The definition that applies here is the profound reverence and awe, especially toward God. Do not fear the person who can only kill; rather, fear the one who is able to cast you to hell after you are dead. This concept would be familiar to the disciples because the fear of the Lord is a constant theme in the OT. In Is. 57, God calls out Israel for its idolatry and lack of reverence and awe for Him:

***¹¹ Whom did you dread and fear,
so that you lied,
and did not remember me,
did not lay it to heart?***

***Have I not held my peace, even for a long time,
and you do not fear me?***

***¹² I will declare your righteousness and your deeds,
but they will not profit you.***

***¹³ When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you!
The wind will carry them all off,
a breath will take them away.***

***But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land
and shall inherit my holy mountain***

- Why might it be challenging to understand the concept of fear as profound reverence and awe toward God?
- How does the passage from Isaiah 57 illustrate Israel's lack of reverence and awe for God?

- What is the significance of fearing the one who can cast into hell rather than those who can only kill the body?

The importance of fearing God is more explicit in Psalms and Proverbs. In fact, the whole point of Proverbs is an invitation to wisdom from God. In Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10 respectively:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

The stability of the foundation of our heart rests on this admonition from Jesus → Fear God.

- What does it mean that the beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord?
- Why is the placement of fear important for the foundation of our heart?
- How can various fears compete for the foundation of our spiritual house, and what are the potential consequences of this?

Proclaim Jesus (Luke 12:8-10)

Jesus goes on to explain that a proper fear of God will embolden us to stand up and proclaim Jesus. But it is not without challenge:

⁸“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

- Why is the practice of acknowledging Jesus before others sometimes difficult?
- What is significant about being acknowledged before the angels?
- What examples from the lives of Peter and Paul illustrate God's ability to forgive the rejection of Jesus?
- Why might some people be concerned about committing the unpardonable sin mentioned in the passage?
- How does the text suggest believers should respond to moments of doubt regarding their faith and relationship with God?

Proclaiming Jesus reinforces our fear of God and strengthens the spiritual foundation of our heart.