

This is a weekend that celebrates fear.

Halloween facts.

Estimated €41 Million spent on halloween sweets, costumes and parties this weekend across Ireland.

We live in a time that has a lot to be afraid of.

Global Terrorism

Ebola

Poisonous spiders that are beginning to appear in Irish houses.

(experts say that the amount of spiders in Irish houses is on the rise; especially the dangerous “false widow spider”)

There are many lists out there that compile the fears of regular people. But these fears don't usually top the various “top ten lists” that I found in my research.

The number one fear of many people polled is public speaking.

Death is number two.

Many people are more afraid of giving a speech in front of people than dying!

Jerry Seinfeld jokes about this, that according to this data, at a funeral most people would rather be in the coffin than be the one giving the eulogy!

This is an appropriate time to look at something that we should be familiar with, but perhaps are completely unaware of; the Biblical teaching on the fear of God.

Psalms 119 sermon mentioned the fear of God,

“Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared.” (Psalm 119:38, ESV)

and this is something that people really resonated within community groups and in the Deeper study. The question came up: **What does it mean to fear God?**

This sermon is an attempt to answer that great question.

It is not a small topic; the Bible speaks about fearing God not *occasionally* but frequently. More than 150 times in the OT and NT.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

“It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve.” (Deuteronomy 6:13)

“so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.” (Joshua 4:24)

“Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.” (1 Samuel 12:24, ESV)

“Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!” (Psalm 31:19, ESV)

It came up in the past sermons of the Mix Tape series:

Many will see and fear - Psalm 40:3

“Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him!”

(Psalm 33:8)

The Bible offers great blessings to those who “fear God” -

(Psalm 33 , slide will com up again)

and great warnings to those who don't.

[Examples]

What does fear mean?

Before we go about talking about what fear is: we should first talk about what it isn't. Fear is often in our mind associated with cowardice or timidity. In this day and age we might associate it with frightening cruel people, terror, abuse, intimidation, a violation of rights and a desire to flee for safety.

Martin Luther, a flawed man that God nonetheless used greatly in the events known as the reformation which he inadvertently started 497 years and three days ago, made an important distinction concerning the fear of God. He distinguished between **servile fear** and **filial fear**. He described servile fear as that kind of fear a prisoner has for his torturer. Filial fear is the fear of a son who loves his father and does not want to offend him or let him down. It is a fear born of respect. When the Bible calls us to fear God, it is issuing a call to a fear born of reverence, awe, and adoration. It is a respect of the highest magnitude.

The Hebrew word is Yirah (and its variants) and it is used 330 times in the OT. It has various shades of meanings. It basically means to be afraid of something or someone.

Jacob is said to have been "afraid" (Yirah) of his angry hairy twin Esau in Genesis 32.

People fear natural phenomenon (wind and waves)

Enemy troops

And it says that animals are afraid of mankind.

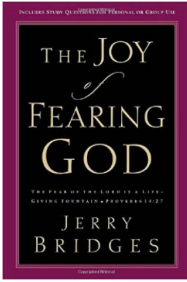
But the same word is also used to describe a different kind of emotional reaction. When it speaks about a person in an exalted position it connotes to "stand in awe" This isn't just a simple fear, but a reverence, where a person recognizes the power and position of the revered One and renders Him proper respect.



This is the feeling that we might have in the presence of a mighty athlete, a political leader, the CEO of the company you work for, your parents.

A reverential awe.

- we use the word "awesome" very loosely today. But we should use it for our mighty God.



Awe is an emotion in which dread, adoration and wonder are intermingled. - Jerry Bridges.



Like a Tornado : It is powerful, bigger than you, it is beautiful but possibly destructive.

Like a lion: we understand the power that it possesses, it can destroy us. So we are fearful of lions, we treat them with respect.

Like a surfer has a reverential fear / awe of the ocean.
(Nathan understands what the ocean can do.)

Why should we fear the Lord?

Because it is right.
Because it is honouring to Him.
Because it is reverent and holy and proper.

AND

Because God rewards those who fear Him:
([click in one by one](#))

God's great goodness is stored up for those who fear Him (Ps. 31:19);

His eyes are on those who fear him (Ps. 33:18);

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and He delivers them (Ps. 34:7);

His saints are to fear Him - those who fear Him lack nothing (Ps. 34:9);

Salvation is near those who fear God (Ps. 85:9);
God has love for those who fear him as high as the
heavens are above the earth (Ps. 103:11);
His love is with those who fear him (Ps. 103:17);
The Lord has compassion on those who fear him
(Ps. 103:13);
He will bless those who fear him (Ps. 115:13);
God fulfills the desires of those who fear him; He
hears their cry and saves them (Ps. 145:19);
He delights in those who fear him (Ps. 147:11);



Is C.S. Lewis's most famous Narnia chronicle, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, the children -- Peter, Susan, Lucy, and Edmund -- enter Narnia through a wardrobe in their uncle's home. Edmund has already given allegiance to the witch and sneaks off to join ranks with her. The other three children go to the house of the Beavers, a wary but hospitable pair, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver tell the children that they will take them to see the King, Aslan.

"Is - is he a man?" asked Lucy

"Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion, *the* Lion, the great Lion."

"Ooh," said Susan, "I thought he was a man. Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and make no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the king I tell you."



Safe? Don't you hear what I'm saying? Who said anything about safe? 'Course He's not safe. But He's good.

What happens if we don't fear the Lord?
(we will fear other lesser things)

FIGHT FEAR

with

FEAR OF THE LORD

In 1 Samuel Saul is shown over and over to be someone who feared the people rather than fear God. He is willing to make sacrifices and compromises in order to please the true object of his fear: his subjects. 1 Samuel 15:24

David is a man who only fears God. Only wants to please Him. Looks to Him and Him alone for validation.

The pharisees are described as people who feared man, rather than God.
Matthew 14, Matt 21 & 27.

Whenever you feel a fear rising up within you, remind yourself. I fear God.
I fear God, so I don't need to fear anything else!

How do we fear the Lord?

Its grace that taught my heart to fear

And grace my fears relieved.

There is that terror of the Lord, that perfect love casts out, we don't live in fear of God, but we boldly approach Him with the confidence that an adopted son or daughter is able to have with their awesome mighty Father.

Grace teaches us the right kind of fear, grace relieves us of the wrong kind of fear.

Hebrews 12

We worship God with reverence and fear