



奧克蘭華人長老會 AUCKLAND CHINESE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sermon Summary - 11 April 2021

Fearing God - Acts 5:1-11 (Robert O'Callahan)

Robert posed some questions at the beginning, including: Were Ananias and Sapphira obliged to seek their property and give it to the church? What was their sin, was it that they didn't give the full price of the property to the church, or that they lied about it?

But the main focus of this message is found in verse 11:

[After Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead], great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

Does God want us to fear him? These verses suggest that we should:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

'Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.' Genesis 22:12

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, Deuteronomy 10:12

And in the New Testament:

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. 2 Corinthians 5:12a

'I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Luke 12:4-5

But there is another side to Fear in the Bible:

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

For I am convinced that ... [nothing] else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:28-29

Confused?

Reconciling Fearing with not Fearing

We can either conclude that the Bible is inconsistent or seek to reconcile the various passages.

1. Fear what God would do to us if we are apart from Jesus. But see Matthew 7:21-23 - we can be deceived about our relationship with Jesus
2. Fear God as a Christian - Luke 12:4-7, 1 Peter 2:17, 2 Cor. 5:1, 1 Cor. 3:13-15. There are degrees of reward - don't be the one escaping through the flames. Live in awe of God. Check out the night sky! He is not tame. The Book of Revelation reveals God's judgement and wrath.

3. Love Jesus and have no reason to fear the Day of Judgement 1 John 4:16-18. Run towards the source of our fear rather than away from it.

Concluding questions

- Do you fear God?
- If you answer No, Do you accept you are a sinner? Do you accept the possibility of Go's judgement?
- If you answer Yes, Do you fear him for the right reasons? Do you need to put more trust in Jesus?
- So ... Do you need to change your attitude? Ask God to change your attitude!

Questions

1. Read Acts 5:1--11. Why do you think Ananias and Sapphira died? Why were their words so worthy of judgement? What was the impact of these events (11)?
2. Compare Barnabas (4:36-37) with Ananias and Sapphira. What was the difference in their behaviour?
3. Read Genesis 22:12, Genesis 22:12, Deuteronomy 10:12, 2 Corinthians 5:12 and Luke 12:4-5. What do you learn about fearing God?
4. Read 1 John 4:18 and Romans 8:28-29. Why do we not fear?
5. Read 1 Cor. 3:10-15. How does the concept of rewards motivate us to live in awe of God?
6. Ask the concluding questions above. Do you need to change your attitude to God?