

# THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 7 November 2021

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

## Introduction

In this present season of Bible studies, we have been considering the process of being *born from above*, and then coming to *maturity* as sons of God in Christ.

We began with a twenty-point overview. Then, we considered the beginning of the gospel, which is that *God is light*, and in Him is no darkness. Then, for the past two sessions, we have been considering the work of the *messengers of God*.

## Messengers who go before the face of Christ

The first messenger is the one who is sent *before the face of Christ*, to prepare the hearts of their hearers to receive Christ, who is the second messenger, and He is described by Malachi as the *messenger of the Covenant*.

These messengers who go before the face of Christ proceed from *the fellowship of a presbytery*, and minister in *the spirit and power of Elijah*.

Having been born of God, and joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, as a member of His body, a messenger bears witness to *the Son who is the light of the world*.

So, it begins with a presbytery, and they are proclaiming the word. Then, as we are receiving that word and joined to that fellowship, we are joined to that same administration of proclaiming to those to whom the Lord is coming.

## We are joined to a fellowship bearing witness to the Son

How do we bear witness to the Son, who is the light of the world? We do this through *testimony*, according to the grace that belongs to our *sanctification* as a son of God and a member of His body.

That is, through our *conversation* and our *conduct*, springing from our fellowship in the light of the word, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among our hearers, or among those with whom we interact.

This *fellowship of light* that we are proceeding from is the *agape* meal at the tree of life.

The *fellowship of light* is the nature of *God's love*, which is like a *vehement flame*, and that context of love is where *the tree of life* is.

As we eat and drink, or participate in the fellowship of that meal, we are proceeding from there to bear witness of the light, of which we are born and participate in.

## The spirit of Elijah is the spirit of grace and supplication

A key point that we have come to understand is that the spirit and power of Elijah is the *spirit of grace and supplication*, proceeding from the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

We have always made the point that the spirit of grace and supplication is coming from Christ's side. Those. If we are part of this fellowship, we are eating and drinking of the tree of life, which is His body and blood, and have entered into the most holy place, through the veil of His flesh.

As we are proceeding from Him, through testimony, the words that we are proclaiming in the spirit and power of Elijah, is the spirit of grace and supplication that is coming to our hearers. This is an amazing point.

This ministry, which is the spirit and power of Elijah, and the spirit of grace and supplication, causes a hearer to turn and look upon Christ, whom they have pierced.

'And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they will look on Me whom they pierced.' Zec 12:10.

## Preparing the hearts of those who hear the message to receive Christ

So, the work of messengers in the spirit and power of Elijah is to *bear witness* to, and to prepare the hearts of those who hear the message, to receive Christ. The spirit of grace and supplication causes a person to look on Christ, whom they have pierced.

The spirit and power of Elijah, that is bearing witness to Christ, is the spirit of grace and

supplication that causes them to look on Him whom they have pierced.

This is an amazing point and participation that we have in this ministry! Now, it is still coming from Christ, but it is coming from Christ because we are part of the fellowship of His body, and we are proceeding from Him.

Accompanying the word of the cross - which is the word that is in our mouth and we are exemplifying through our speech and our conduct - is the word from the beginning, that God is light and in Him is no darkness. The messengers who prepare the way before Christ exhort their hearers to fear the Lord.

So, the first block that we have looked at is the beginning point, which is the gospel - God is light, in Him is no darkness.

### **The messenger exhorts the hearer to fear the Lord**

The second block that we have looked at is the work of messengers to prepare the way of the Lord, and to proclaim Him coming to a hearer, and the second block associated with this work of a messenger is to *exhort their hearers to fear the Lord*.

Why is this exhortation, to *fear the Lord*, an element of this ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah? What is the relationship between encouraging a hearer to fear the Lord, and the proclamation of the spirit and power of Elijah, which is causing a person to look on Jesus whom they pierced?

There are two key reasons, and probably more, but we are going to look at two, today, for this ministry. First, is that the fear of the Lord motivates a person to *draw near* to the Lord when their heart is exposed by His eyes.

As we have considered in the past, that can be a confronting experience, but the fear of the Lord motivates a person to draw near, and not to draw back at this point.

The second reason why a messenger going before the face of Christ is exhorting their hearers to fear the Lord, is because the fear of the Lord is necessary for receiving, and then participating in, *the mystery of God*.

We are going to talk about both these today. Let us begin with the first implication of the fear of the Lord.

### **The fear of the Lord motivates a person to draw near**

Inherent in the message proclaimed by those who are speaking the word of the cross, ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah, and exemplifying it in their life, is the revelation of God's judgement upon the world, which is the kingdom of darkness, under the rulership of Satan.

The point is that in bearing witness to the light - the message is 'God is light' - they are also proclaiming that in God, there is no darkness at all.

'God is light' is the primary focus of the message, but inherent in this message is that there is no place for darkness in God. It is being completely taken out and destroyed. That is, it is being judged, condemned, and finished.

You can see that, in the proclamation of the fellowship of Yahweh, which is God is light, comes the other edge of the sword, which is the judgement of God on everything that is not part of that fellowship.

We note this in the content of the words of the believing thief, who was on the cross with Christ. Two thieves were crucified on the day that Jesus died. This connection between the necessity to fear God, because of the condemnation, or judgement, on the world, as a consequence of Christ's offering, was captured in the words of this thief.

### **We fear the Lord when we confess the lordship of Christ**

'Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us".' Luk 23:39.

You can see that a person who does not fear the Lord will speak in a self-centred manner like this. This is the speech that is motivated by the fear of death. We are either going to be driven by, and our perception will be framed by the fear of death, or we are going to see and speak by a different principle, which is to be the fear of the Lord, which we have to learn.

'If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' We can see in that speech that he is saying, 'The word that has been proclaimed to me is only true if it is engaging my life in a way that I expect it to.'

‘But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?”’ Luk 23:40.

I love this, that on the cross, and we expect that they were probably friends, came this comment, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?’ It could be said this way: ‘You should really fear God because you are already condemned.’ That is the same as, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?’

‘You should really fear God, because you are already condemned, and the light of fellowship that Jesus embodies is bearing witness against you.’ That is what he is saying to this thief. And this really should be the way that we answer one another, when we are engaged by this complaint, or the speech motivated by the fear of death.

In true friendship, we should be rebuking one another, and saying, ‘Look, do not speak motivated by the fear of death. Do you not fear God, seeing as you are speaking this way, because you are under condemnation?’ That is how true friendship would speak.

“And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom”.’ Luk 23:41-42.

The evidence that this man feared the Lord was *his confession* of the lordship of Christ, and his understanding that there was a name, or a place for him in Christ’s kingdom.

**To look on Christ pierced is to see that He was pierced as a consequence of my rebellion**

Through the word of the cross, ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah, a hearer is caused to look on Christ, whom they have pierced.

What does that look like? It is not that we are going to, as a result of someone being descriptive about the cross, have a vision of Christ on the cross. That is not what it means to look on Him, whom we have pierced.

The experience of looking on Christ in this manner is the realisation in our heart, and in our consciousness, that He was pierced as a consequence of our rebellion and our sin. It dawns

on us, and we realise, and are aware of the impact of our rebellion and sin on Christ, and on all those who are in Christ.

The other thing that we understand at this point, is that, because of our rebellion and sin, our predestination as a son of God has been lost.

‘We will mourn as one mourns for a firstborn.’ This is not just that we are mourning for what we have done to Christ, it is that we are also mourning for the loss of our sonship in the firstborn. It is both these.

We are mourning, or we are cut to the heart, because of our realisation of the impact of our rebellion and sin, and we are also cut to the heart because we are understanding and recognising that something precious and eternal has been lost because of that.

The effect is that we are cut to the heart, and the important thing about being cut to the heart is that it *opens the heart*. It exposes our heart to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account. We are looking on Jesus, whom we have pierced. Our heart is being pierced and exposed, to the one who we are looking at.

His eyes, which are a fiery flame, the same flame as the lamp light that is coming to us in the word, is exposing and revealing the condition of our heart. We are cut to the heart, exposing our heart to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

In the first instance, the fiery eyes of the Lord reveal *His wrath and judgement* upon a hearer because of their sin. This is the first experience of the jealous love of God.

We are interfacing with the eyes of the Lord. It is a fiery expression, revealing the jealous love of God, which will not abide anything that is not part of the light. Our heart has darkness in it, and we are feeling the effect, or the unacceptability of that darkness in our heart.

**Do not draw back in unbelief**

This is where the fear of the Lord is critical. Feeling exposed, they will want to cover themselves up, assure themselves of their acceptability by drawing back from the word that is revealing the condition of their heart.

Unless a person receives a fear of the Lord, they will be motivated by the *shame* associated with the *fear of death*, to *draw back* from His gaze and from the *fellowship of light* through which they can obtain salvation.

By drawing back in unbelief, they will be cut off from the Lord, forever!

So, this point of coming near – we have been talking about the effect of the word – every time we draw back as the word of the cross is coming to us, it is polarising, or making substantial in our lives, what He has finished for us, either in blessing, or in judgement.

If we draw back as the word is coming, it is causing us to harden our heart and to be taken out.

We note this warning in the words of Jesus. Jesus is exhorting everyone to fear the Lord, because of this very point.

‘Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’ Mat 10:28.

Jesus is saying there is a judgement and there is a condemnation, so fear the Lord. Do not draw back when His word is exposing the condition of our heart.

### **We cannot believe unless we receive the fear of the Lord**

A person who resists the grace of God, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit at this point, does not receive the fear of the Lord. Consequently, they are unable to believe the word of the messenger.

Drawing back in unbelief is not necessarily, or only, a physical withdrawal. It is the fact that we will not receive and cannot believe the word that is being proclaimed to us. That is what it means to draw back in unbelief.

We are unable to believe the word of the messenger, because, a person who does this turns their eyes away from the Lord. When we are turning our eyes away from the Lord, we are turning them away from His fiery eyes, which are being communicated to us through *lamp light*.

The lamp light is the fiery eyes of the Lord. It is the ministry of the word from His hand, which are stars in His right hand, which is the lamp, or presbytery of a lampstand church.

So, if we are drawing back from the eyes of the Lord, it means we are drawing back from that word. This is because we turn our eyes away from the Lord when our heart is pierced by the word, and our iniquity, or rebellion, or self-righteousness, self-centredness, all these terms, is revealed to us.

When a person turns away from the word as the source of truth, all that they are left with is the darkness of their own way as the truth.

### **The word comes to reveal the condition of our heart**

Instead of being able to believe the word, which would bring salvation, what they believe in is the sight of their own eyes and the understanding of their own heart. This is what King David noted. It is particularly important that we understand what David is saying here.

‘An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes.’ Psa 36:1.

Where we are looking, and how we are interfacing with the word, is revealing whether we fear death or fear the Lord.

This is concerning the wicked. ‘There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes.’ That means he believes in the integrity of his own heart and his own goodness.

‘He flatters himself in his own eyes, when he finds out his iniquity and when he hates.’ Psa 36:2.

You can see that a person who is flattering themselves in their eyes is denying that what the word is revealing is true. The word is coming, and revealing the condition of a person’s heart, and they say, ‘No, that is not true. I am actually better, or my condition is much more righteous than that.’

‘He flatters himself in his own eyes [when the word comes to reveal his iniquity] and when he hates.’

‘The words of his mouth [this is going to be the expression of his life] are wickedness and deceit.’

The deceit is an outcome of a delusion on this person’s eyes, because there is no fear of God before them. When one turns to the Lord, the veil of deceit is removed. So, when we are turning away from the Lord, that veil of deceit is going on, and

we can do nothing but wickedness, because we are walking in the sight other than what the word is defining.

‘The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good [or to do the works of his sonship]. He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil.’ Psa 36:3-4.

A person who does not abhor evil is not a person who thinks bad things are good. It is a person who cannot distinguish, or see, the difference between what is evil and good. So, the most self-righteous behaviour appears to be true and right, when, actually, it is over and against the true light, which is revealed in the cross.

### **We receive the capacity to fear the Lord when we receive the messenger**

In summary, only a person who fears the Lord is able to confess, by faith, that Jesus is Lord, and demonstrate the true repentance that leads to salvation.

The fear of the Lord is not a capacity that is inherent within us. It is a capacity that we have to receive when we receive the messenger who is exhorting us to fear the Lord. We have to keep receiving the messenger, who is proclaiming this to us, so that we will not draw back from Christ when He comes to us.

Unless a hearer learns the fear of the Lord, they will reject the gospel of sonship, and those who have been sent to proclaim it to them. It is not just the rejection of the word; it is the rejection of those who are bringing the word. They are coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. So, if we are rejecting them, we are rejecting the spirit of grace and supplication, which would cause us to turn to Christ and find our salvation.

In doing so, by rejecting that word and rejecting those messengers who are inviting us to have fellowship with them, we will fail to obtain the hidden riches of sonship, which belong to *the secret of the Lord*.

### **The treasure of the divine nature is the secret of the Lord**

The hidden riches are going to be *the treasure of divine nature*. It belongs to the secret of the Lord, and that secret of the Lord is *the mystery of God*.

This is the second point about the fear of the Lord.

The first point is that the fear of the Lord causes us to draw near when we are interfacing with the word that is making a breach on our life. That is because, when we receive the fear of the Lord, it enables us to receive the mystery of God, and to join it.

### **When we fear the Lord, it enables us to participate in the mystery of God**

This is our next key implication of the fear of the Lord. It is a person’s capacity to receive and participate in the mystery of God.

The apostle John said that the beginning of the message is God is light and in Him is no darkness. Paul described this message in his letters as ‘the mystery of God’. Paul said that the gospel proclaiming light is a mystery.

‘To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given.’ So, he had a grace, which is the beginning point, or the basis from which he is proclaiming the message.

‘This grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable riches* of Christ.’ I love that term ‘the unsearchable’ - you cannot find it unless someone reveals it to you.

‘And to make all see what is the *fellowship* of the mystery.’ How beautiful is that!

‘Which from the beginning.’ The apostle John said, ‘This is the word from the beginning. God is light and in Him is no darkness.’ Paul called this word ‘a fellowship in the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.’ Eph 3:8-9.

This is a mystery that is being made known to us through a messenger administration. The Scriptures also refer to this mystery as a *secret*. It is not difficult to find the association between mystery and secret.

‘Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He [the Lord] teach in the way that He [the Lord] chooses. He himself [this is the man who fears the

Lord] shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth.'

This is a person who is entering the rest, promised by God in the Son, as the inheritance of the unsearchable riches.

Paul is speaking about the unsearchable riches of Christ, which is known in the fellowship of the mystery.

In this prophetic psalm of David, he said that the one who fears the Lord is going to be taught in the pathway that the Son has chosen for him, and will dwell, or enter into rest, which is the prosperity of those who inherit the earth. This is those who are born of God, and are obtaining the riches that belong to sons of God in Christ.

'This secret [the secret of the Lord] is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.' Psa 25:12-14.

This mystery is only known by those who fear the Lord, and are being shown that covenant by Christ, who is the messenger of the covenant.

We have to receive the fear of the Lord from those who are coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, so we can receive Jesus, who is the messenger of the covenant, and He is revealing this fellowship, and our place in it.

The fear of the Lord is the expression of our deep *appreciation and respect* for who Yahweh is. It is demonstrated by the confession of His lordship over our life.

The one who is proclaiming the fear of the Lord described Jesus as his Lord. It is demonstrated by the confession of His lordship over our life. We noted this in response to the response of the repentant thief on the cross.

When a person receives the fear of the Lord, they are receiving in a *prevenient measure*. The fear of the Lord is to become *our possession*. But, at this point, it is coming as a grace to this person. When a person receives the fear of the Lord, they are receiving, in a prevenient measure, the capacity of the Lord Himself to come to Him. The fear of the Lord is saying, 'Don't draw back from Him.'

When you receive the fear of the Lord, it is motivating you to draw near, because it is of the Lord's own Spirit. This is an amazing thing, that

we receive in the prevenient grace of God. This element of Yahweh's own Spirit joins us in One Spirit to His fellowship.

When a person receives the fear of the Lord, they are receiving, in a prevenient measure, the capacity of the Lord Himself to come to him. That is, the fear of the Lord is an aspect of the One Spirit of the Lord's own fellowship.

### **One Spirit, seven spirits, Eternal Spirit**

Isaiah chapter 11 reveals that the One Spirit of Yahweh has multiple expressions, summarised as seven spirits. 'Seven' represents the fullness of expression of One Spirit. Yahweh is One Spirit, and all the diversity of expression of the Spirit is called 'seven spirits', and it is given to the Lord, or exercised in relation to the fulfilment of Their Everlasting Covenant, when it is received as Eternal Spirit.

One Spirit, seven spirits, and Eternal Spirit are talking about the same capacity of Yahweh, but it is in relation to a specific expression. The One Spirit is the oneness of their fellowship. Seven spirits is the expression proceeding from that fellowship. And Eternal Spirit is the capacity that belongs to each person, to offer in relation to that covenant purpose.

'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots [this is Jesus]. The Spirit of the Lord [One Spirit] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' Isa 11:1-2.

The fear of the Lord is one of the seven aspects of One Spirit. So, if we are receiving the fear of the Lord, we are actually receiving a dimension of the One Spirit of Yahweh, drawing us into Their fellowship. That is just such a great mercy!

In this fellowship, we can receive the Lord's purifying initiative toward us, so that we can be delivered from the sin and self-centredness that we have seen in His eyes. We can receive the word of truth, which defines our participation as a son of God, in that fellowship. We are not stuck with our darkened condition. We are being joined to the very fellowship where that purging is happening.

Then, we are receiving the word of our name. We can put up our hand and say, 'Here I am. Send me.' How awesome is that! That is a person who fears the Lord.

It is evident that we fear the Lord because we obtain the rest that belongs to our inheritance, and we are being delivered from all the agitation and striving that marks a person under the fear of death.

### **If we are of another spirit, we are under the fear of death**

If there is grumbling, complaining, agitation, cynicism; all those are not of God. They are not of the One Spirit of Yahweh. They are of another spirit. Let it be an indicator to us that we are under the fear of death, and present ourselves to the very fellowship where we can obtain that same spirit and begin to speak in a different manner.

We can meet and receive one another in truth when we receive the fear of the Lord. Relational engagement with others, in spirit and truth, is a key implication of the fear of the Lord. It is not just that we are coming and accepting that there is a judgement happening in relation to our rebellion and sin. It is that we are being joined to a fellowship, which we are participating in, in One Spirit, and the fear of the Lord is fundamental in how we engage in that conversation.

Relational engagement with others, in spirit and truth, is a key implication of the fear of the Lord. We demonstrate that we have received the fear of the Lord, and are entering Christ's rest, because of how we relate with one another. Our interactions with one another are going to demonstrate whether we are fighting for our life, or if we are fearing the Lord.

### **We are to be filled with the Spirit, receiving the love of God**

This is what Paul said about this.

'And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation.' We have done a number of sessions talking about not engaging in a 'mixed wine' conversation, and that is what Paul is saying here. Of course, he is saying not to get drunk by drinking too much alcohol. But the issue for us is about the nature of our fellowship. He is saying, 'Don't get caught in that conversation.' That would be a conversation like, 'If you are Christ, or if this is the

word, it should be said this way, and having this effect upon us.' Do not become caught in that conversation, because that is dissipation.

But what did he say? 'But instead, be filled with the Spirit.' Why is that? Because the Spirit is filling your heart with love, which is the capacity of Eternal Spirit for offering. So, there is going to be a conversation called 'mixed wine' that is not offering – it is all motivated by the fear of death. But we are to be 'filled with the Spirit', receiving the love of God, so that we can participate in an *agape* meal. See the point? It becomes a different mode of relating.

'Speaking to one another [conversing, conducting yourselves] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father.' So, you can see, there is no room for complaining and grumbling in the fear of the Lord.

'Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is not saying to use His name as a thing you swear by, he is saying, 'in the fellowship of His name'. 'Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in [the fellowship of] the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.' Eph 5:18-21.

### **Submit to one another in the fear of the Lord**

If there is no submission to one another, which looks like this capacity for worship, it means there is no fear of the Lord. Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord is submitting to others in the One Spirit fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is not accommodating everyone's views, as if everyone's views should be submitted to. That is a load of rubbish!

There is only the fellowship of Yahweh, which is One Spirit, and if you have received the fear of the Lord, your submission to one another is submission to the name and sanctification of others. For what purpose? To reveal them. It is not about one over the other. It is about the motivation of love, with which we have been filled, driven by the fear of the Lord, to reveal another.

That is how we operate in the *agape* meal. Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord, is submitting to others in the One Spirit fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are joined

to this fellowship by receiving the word that precedes from the fellowship of the presbytery. That should be very obvious now.

One Spirit is the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The apostle John said we join that fellowship when we receive the word that is proclaimed to us, because *our* fellowship is *that* fellowship. It is with the Father and His Son.

If we violate this fellowship, we have no fear of the Lord, and will not obtain the promised and perfected inheritance of our sonship in Christ.

This is what the apostle Peter had to say. 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgement.' Can you see the two sides of the sword of the word of the cross, here? On one side, the deliverance of the godly out of temptations. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

The other side, or the other edge of the sword is 'to reserve the unjust under punishment, for the day of judgement, and especially those [there is an 'especially those' who are hitting this edge of the sword] who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness [uncleanness has to do with how we respond to the word] and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.'

This is not just speaking about the Prime Minister. This is talking about those who have been set over the house to feed it in due season. Solomon called them the under-shepherds, who are the 'masters of assemblies'.

'Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.' 2Pe 2:9-11. That is amazing. So, if the angels do not do that, we had better be careful, in relation to how we are speaking. Our speech is revealing the spirit of which we are a partaker.

### **Thomas had to learn to fear the Lord**

Thomas, who had been a disciple with Jesus for three-and-a-half years, was at risk of losing his salvation, because he had no fear of the Lord. The evidence that he did not fear the Lord was that he would not believe those messengers who came to him, and said, 'We have seen Christ risen.'

These are messengers, who bear witness to resurrection life. They are exemplifying it because Christ is being publicly portrayed as crucified by them.

So, the disciple Thomas was at risk of failing to obtain the salvation of the Lord. He refused to receive the testimony of his brethren, who declared, 'We have seen the Lord.' That is a witness. Thomas said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand in His side, I will not believe.'

Thomas was saying, 'I want to know that the figure that is before me, is the one that died. I need to know that to be convinced.' Before Thomas was able to believe the gospel, and then be born from above as a son of God, he needed to learn the fear of the Lord, and he learned this fear when Jesus Himself confronted him with the very wounds he said he needed to see. This is amazing.

Thomas thought he needed to see it to identify Jesus as the one who was from the dead. But Jesus came and said, 'You had better come and touch My hand, and touch My side. You have to know that that iniquitous heart of yours, Thomas, did this!' Can you see, he had to fear the Lord at this point, and accept his contribution to these injuries.

### **To fear the Lord is to submit to the lordship of Christ**

Jesus made Thomas touch and look at His pierced hands, and put his hands into His pierced side, saying - there is a word here, 'Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' In this encounter, Thomas drew near to the Lord. He did not draw back at this point. You can imagine that this was very confronting. Thomas had now realised that he had called his brethren *liars* because they said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' And, he said, 'I don't believe you.'

It is not just that Jesus was there with these injuries. It is that Thomas had realised he was a liar, or he had called his brethren liars. Now he had to engage with that iniquity, which he saw in the body of Jesus. He had to draw near, draw so near that he could touch it. He had to embrace it and accept it.

In this encounter, Thomas drew near to the Lord by touching His pierced hands and His side. He was able to appreciate the effect of his sin and



disbelief on the Lord, as well as the salvation that the Lord had finished for him. It is beautiful!

In this interaction, Thomas was first seeing the fiery eyes of the Lord, in the fact that his own heart was being revealed as he drew near.

But, at the same time, he saw that there was a finished sonship for him, that he could have as he embraced the Lord, joined this fellowship that Jesus' body was revealing to him.

By this means, Thomas learned the fear of the Lord. Furthermore, he was able to believe for resurrection life, by the faith he received as he heard Jesus speak to him. Jesus said, 'Don't be unbelieving, but be believing.' Having received faith, 'I believed and therefore I spoke'.

Thomas received faith in this, and he demonstrated that, with that faith, he had now received the fear of the Lord, because he said, 'My Lord and my God.' Someone who fears the Lord is submitting to the lordship of Christ as He comes to them.