



MORE FEAR

Pleasing God more means loving God most

SUMMARY

We have become a very goal-oriented society, and, while that isn't a bad thing, we often fail to make the greatest purpose our greatest pursuit. With a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get distracted by and begin to drift towards things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they interfere with or take the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God. This year, let's determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly takes great delight in.

REVIEW

We began this series by establishing the theme for our church this year: **MORE AND MORE - DETERMINED TO PLEASE THE LORD MORE IN 2024.**

We want to abound and increase in the things that God takes great delight in. It's a journey marked by **INTENSITY, INTEGRITY, INTERACTION** (with the Father and the family of God), and **INVESTMENT**.

We've found that it is possible for God to be pleased, for us to know what pleases God, and for us to please God with our life.

With that foundation, we began to consider some key elements that need to be in our life if we are going to please God more.

The first element is **MORE TRUST**. Pleasing God more begins with trusting God most.

The second element is **MORE DISCERNMENT**. Pleasing God more means living right in a world that is wrong.

Last week, we found that the third element is **MORE OBEDIENCE**. Our key statement was this: **PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS OBEYING GOD FIRST**.

After the flood, we found that it did not take long for mankind to once again allow pride...

To impact their **WALK** (wrong **METHODS**)

To impact their **WORK** (wrong **MEANS**)

To impact their **WORSHIP** (wrong **MOTIVES**)

To impact their **WANTS** (wrong **MATTERS**)

It was into that environment that God called Abraham to separate himself from the world and unto the Lord. God called him out of a life of **EVER-INCREASING WICKEDNESS** and into a life of **ETERNAL WORTHINESS**. It is a life that requires **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE**.

We found that obedience is faith in action. Abraham had to learn to move beyond half-hearted faith and obedience to whole-hearted faith and obedience because that is what pleases God.

MESSAGE

Up to this point, as we have simply followed along with the narrative of Scripture, we have highlighted a few major events:

Mankind (who was created by God to **WALK** with Him, to **WORSHIP** Him, and to **WORK** before Him) quickly chose to disobey God's Word and to plunge this world into sin.

God then chose to destroy the world by flood because of the wickedness of the hearts, minds, and lives of all mankind with the exception of one man (Noah) who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

It wasn't long after the flood until mankind returned to his same old fallen, sinful ways. So much so, that God confounded their language and scattered them across the face of the earth.

God then called a man name Abram out of the world and out of wickedness and into a day-to-day walk Him.

Now, while the narrative of Scriptures continues to follow Abraham and his descendants, there is another man that is highlighted during the same period of time – a man by the name of Job.

Most, if not all, of us are familiar with at least a portion of Job's life. We know Job as a man who suffered greatly, who demonstrated great patience, who had some really bad friends, and who never really received an answer as to why he had been allowed to suffer so much. While all of those are true about the book and the life of Job, I submit that we often miss the greater point. You see, the book of Job isn't primarily a book about **SUFFERING**; the book of Job is primarily a book about **STRENGTH** and **STRENGTHENING**.

We highlight Job's suffering, because we most closely relate to that part of Job's life. The reality is that we all are familiar with how quickly our days, our life, can go from seasons where everything is good to seasons where everything seems to be falling apart.

One moment the skies are blue, the birds are singing, and the roses look and smell wonderful and the very next moment the storm clouds have rolled in, the birds have flown away, and the roses have withered and the petals have fallen to the ground.

One moment there is a song in our heart, a smile on our face and a pep in our step and the very next moment hurt has filled our heart, robbed us of our smile, and slowed our steps way down. Sometimes it even feels like we're moving backwards.

Life can be tough. We all have experienced **DIFFICULT DAYS**, **DISAPPOINTING SITUATIONS**, and **DEVASTATING CIRCUMSTANCES** far more often than we would like to. For Job, there was a lot that happened in just a week.

His oxen, his donkeys, and his camels were all stolen,

His sheep were all consumed by fire that fell from heaven,

His servants, all but a handful anyway, had been killed,

He had to bury his ten children,

He has had large boils come up all over his body,

His wife blamed God for their problems, and

His "friends" accused him of secret, unconfessed sin and a lack of faith.

In Job 3:24-26, Job describes this season of his life this way, *"For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came."*

It's as if Job is looking at his present situation and he's comparing with it with his prior conditions and he's saying, "life wasn't easy before, but now life seems unbearable." The

pain isn't going away, the pressures aren't getting any easier, and the problems aren't getting any better. Job can't think right, Job can't talk right, and Job can't function right. All of us understand and all of us relate to at least some of what Job went through, but the focus of the book isn't primarily focused on what Job went through; the book of Job is focused...

On **WHY** Job went through what he went through,

On **HOW** Job went through what he went through, and

On **HOW** Job came out better and stronger on the other side of what he went through.

Job 1:1-12 says, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD."

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention back to three key statements that are found in the passage that we read:

Verse 1 says, *"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."*

Verse 8 says, *"And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"*

Verse 9 says, *"...Doth Job fear God for nought?"*

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **MORE FEAR - PLEASING GOD
MORE MEANS LOVING GOD MOST.**

While most of us relate to the **PAIN**, to the **PRESSURE**, and to the **PROBLEMS** of Job, we have to focus on those elements because, if we're honest, we don't relate to the **PASSION** of Job as we ought to. You see, the problems of Job's life were allowed to peel back the layers of Job's life to reveal his love for God and his desire to please God. Together, those passions are summed up in two statements that are really inseparable – Job feared God and Job eschewed (turned off) evil.

In a day when very few were **LOOKING** for the Lord, when very few were **LISTENING** to the Lord, and when very few were **LIVING** for the Lord. Here was a man who loved God above anyone and above everything else. The truth of the matter is that there is a right type of fear and there is a wrong type of fear.

The wrong type of fear will create within us the feeling of **INSECURITY**, will cause us to think **IRRATIONALLY**, and will cause us to react **IMPULSIVELY** and **INCORRECTLY**.

The right type of fear will create within us the **LOVE THAT IS STRONG** and a **LIFE THAT IS RIGHT**.

In Job 28:28, Job says it this way, *"...Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."*

1) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **SOLID FOUNDATION** upon which to **STAND**

Job 1:20-21 says, *"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."*

Job's fear of God and Job's faith in God enabled Job to take his eyes off of his situation and look beyond the circumstances around us to the only One Who has the ability to **CONTROL** our circumstances and Who has the ability to **CARRY US THROUGH** our circumstances.

When we look to the Lord, we will find that God alone can bring balance into our life when life seems to keep beating us down.

When we look to the Lord, we will find that God alone can calm the storms in our life when the winds are blowing strong and when the waves are raging high.

When we look to the Lord, we will find that God alone can help lift the burdens in our life when we're being crushed under the load of our life.

I think Edward Mote said it best when he wrote, "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand."

2) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** that will make us **STRONGER**

Job 2:7-10 says, *“So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”*

Fearing God is more than just giving Him control of my situation and my current set of circumstances; fearing God is giving Him full control of me. It is me saying, “Lord, I will respond to and through my situation the way that you want me to respond. And along the way, I will determine to learn how I can look more like you and bring you the greatest honor and glory with my life.” W.E. Vine said it this way: “To sanctify the Lord is to live so that He has absolute authority and control over the heart and will, over every activity of the life...dreading to displease Him [with my life].” And that leads us into our next thought.

- 3) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **STRONG MOTIVATION** that will cause us to **STAY** faithful to God

Job 42:1-6 says, *“Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*

Faith is not the removal of all our fears; faith is a correct response to the right fear that is in our life. It was Adrian Rodgers who wrote the following:

“Do you know what's wrong in America today? We have a generation of people who don't fear God...Friend, I want to tell you when a generation, a world ceases to fear God, that generation, that world, that nation, that community is on its last legs.”

When we consider the life of Job, we find that God is worthy of our love and of our worship regardless of the blessings that we think we need in this life and regardless of the difficulties that are allowed to come into our life.