**When Fear is a Bad Thing**

**(Proverbs 29:25-26)**

**Yearly Theme: *“Joy is…”***

**Series Title: *“The Joy of Wisdom”***

**June 21st, 2020**

***Something to think about:***

Among many other things, the fear of man leads to hypocrisy.

We’ve been talking about two different types of fear this month. Last week we talked about what it means to “Fear the LORD” (Proverbs 1:7). This week we explore what it means to “Fear Man.” Our verse of scripture comes from Proverbs today, and it reads…

***Proverbs 29:25-26 (ESV), 25  The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.* 26  Many seek the face of a ruler, *but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice.***

The Hebrew word for “fear” in this verse is not the same word for fear with regard to GOD. As I mentioned last week, the Hebrew word for the “fear” of GOD is “Yare,” which means to be “awestruck” or to “stand in awe and wonder.” This type of fear is attractive and has a way of drawing people to it. However, the word for fear in Proverbs 29:25 in Hebrew is: *“Charada.”* Charada means anxiety, quaking, or trembling.

Now, there are times when people stand before God with this type of fear in Scripture, but what often comes from God is a calming voice saying, “fear not’; do not quake or tremble in fear before Me; I mean you no harm.

It’s the fear of man that oftentimes leads us to this type of fear due to the abuse of power within this broken and fallen world in which we live. The structures of the world are driven by this type of control fostered by “*Charada*.”

The point I want to make this morning is this:

**Key Point*: “The wise person does not fear people because they know that God is with them.”***

There two specific scenes from Peter’s life that illustrate this well:

* **Scene 1: *Peter in Antioch***

*Galatians 2:11-13 (NIV), 11  When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face,**because he was clearly in the wrong. 12  Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13  The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.*

* **Scene 2: *Peter in Jerusalem***

*Acts 4:12-22 (NIV), 12  Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

*13  When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14  But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15  So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16  "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. 17  But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."*

*18  Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19  But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20  For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

*21  After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22  For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.*

***Something to take home:***

The world desires to force us into submission by fear, but God desires to lead us into freedom by love. The fear of men turns us into hypocrites, but the fear of God grows integrity.

So, what part on the world stage are you playing? Are you taking your cues from the dominant voices in this world that try to pattern you into the best the world has to offer, or are you taking your cues from God who created you complete and unique for purposes beyond what this world has to offer?

The great 19th century American novelist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, once proclaimed that, “No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the truth.”

It’s time to stand up and stand out for the right reasons, and for God’s purposes. It’s time to take off the mask of hypocrisy and stand against the tide of popular opinion. It’s time to stand for God amidst the push-back, ridicule, and mockery of the world. Don’t be afraid of what people can do, rather stand in awe of the Holy God who loves you!