

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Sunday 6/29/2025

Father, thank You so much for Your Son, Jesus Christ, Lord. We just thank You for today. Thank You for this time that You allow us to come here and just glorify You, Lord, and just get into Your Word and get around people that believe it and love You, and that we may love each other and encourage each other, Lord. This place is so special to me and so special to all of us, and a lot of people around the world, too.

I just pray that You just bless our time this morning, bless the song service to prepare our hearts and minds, and pray You just bless the service and the preaching this morning, that it may have free course in our hearts, Lord, that we may be able to not only be hearers of the Word, Lord, but doers of that Word and apply it to our lives where You deem it to be fit.

I just pray that You just watch over the Alexander and the Kennicott family as they are out of town and they are coming back at some point. Pray You just protect them and watch over them and just give us a good time this morning as they are gone. And like I said, glorify You in all the things that we say and do today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

All right, stand and we are going to turn to 496, "Victory in Jesus." 496.

I heard about His groaning, Of His precious blood atoning. Then I repented of my sin, And He plunged me to victory Beneath the cleansing flood.

And I heard about His healing, Of His cleansing power revealing. How He made the lame to walk again, And caused the blind to see. And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, Come and heal my broken spirit." And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.

Victory, victory in Jesus, My Savior forever. He sought me and bought me With His redeeming blood. He left me there, I knew Him, And all my love is to Him. He plunged me to victory Beneath the cleansing flood. Amen.

447, "The Lily of the Valley," 447.

I have found and found in Jesus, He's everything to me. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. The Lily of the Valley, In Him alone I see. All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole. In sorrow He's my comfort, In trouble He's my stay. He tells me every care I need to roll. He's the Lily of the Valley, The Bright and Morning Star. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

He all my griefs had taken, And all my sorrows borne. In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower. I am all for Him forsaken, And all my idols torn. From my heart and now He keeps me by His power. Oh, all the world forsake me, And take and tempt me sore. Through Jesus I shall safely reach. Amen.

He's the Lily of the Valley, The Bright and Morning Star. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. He will never, never leave me, Nor yet forsake me here. While I live by faith and do His blessed will. Oh, all the fire about me, I've nothing now to fear. With His manna He my hungry soul shall fill. And sweeping up to glory, I'll see His blessed face. Where rivers of the light shall

ever roll. He's the Lily of the Valley, The Bright and Morning Star. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. Amen.

224. 224. "I Know Whom I Have Believed." Have you believed in today? Do you know that today?

I know that I'm weak man. I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made known. Nor why unworthy Christ in love Redeemed me for His own. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded that He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.

I know not how His saving faith To me He did impart. Nor how believing in His Word Brought peace within my heart. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded that He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.

I know not how the Spirit moves Convincing men of sin. Revealing Jesus through the Word, Creating faith in Him. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded that He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.

I know not what of good or ill May be reserved for me, Of weary ways or dolent days, Before His face I see. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded that He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.

I know not when my Lord may come, At night or noon day fair. Nor if I walk the vale with Him, Or meet Him in the air. But I know whom I have believed, And am persuaded that He is able To keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day. Amen.

Have a seat.

All right. Good morning. I've got a few announcements and then we'll go ahead and get on with the time of the Bible this morning. So nothing too new for you guys. A Bible study at seven o'clock on Thursday. So plan to be there with your questions and get some answers out of your book. So we'll do that on Thursday night.

And then we'll go ahead and keep in mind next Friday. No, I'm sorry, not next Friday, the Friday after, July 11th, is the all camp workers meeting. So if you're going in any way, shape or form, if you're a helper, a counselor, somebody in the kitchen, regardless, you need to be there at six o'clock. That's when we'll be eating and then seven o'clock will be the meeting. So go ahead and be there for that. And also if you want to be a camp sponsor, go and see Bob when he gets back. I'm sure after today you guys can give him a call or, you know, when they get back on Tuesday, you can go and get in contact with him. It's one hundred dollars if you want to sponsor somebody to go to camp.

Fourth of July. That'll be this upcoming Friday. So Fourth of July. Sign up today. Today is pretty much the last day to sign up after the service today. I've got to take a picture and send it over to Danny. So that way they have a head count. So if you're coming to that, bring a side dish, bring a dessert, and bring drinks for yourself and then lawn chairs for yourself. But obviously the main meal will be provided. But bring a side dish and dessert just to share with everybody. So if you're

coming to that, I need you to sign up today so that way we can send that over and just so we can have the proper head count on that.

Also Justin's cleaning crew will be starting this upcoming Thursday the third. And then softball will be starting Saturday the fifth. So obviously things are getting pretty busy. But if you're on a softball team, your first games will be this upcoming Saturday the fifth. And captains, you guys should have reached out and gotten a hold of everybody that's on your team as well.

And then also the Jeffrey sign up. Obviously you guys know Jeffrey and Cheryl, they had to move to Lee's Summit for work. So if you guys could just sign up down here for giving them rides to and from church, that would be really helpful.

But besides that, I've got no other announcements for you guys. I really just have just the visitor list here. I don't have any visitors this morning. Did we miss anybody coming in? No. Okay. For birthdays, I've got four. I've got Lauren Hensley, I've got Cody Willis, Connor Brown, and then Chloe. So yes, spiritual birthdays. Anybody have a spiritual birthday? Yes. Oh, Zach. Happy birthday to Zach, two spiritual birthdays. Do we have any spiritual birthdays that we missed? I got saved. That was actually my... See, now you're lucky Bob's not here because he would have gotten mad because I actually had that down as an honorable mention. You stole my thunder on that one. So yeah, spiritual birthday, obviously Thomas got saved. So congratulations on that.

How about anniversaries? Anybody get married here recently? No. I could have sworn somebody told me somebody had one. Yeah. Kinsey and Jared have an anniversary. There we go. I knew somebody had one. Sarah Taylor too. There we go. Congratulations you guys too. So we did have two. But with that, I don't have any other announcements for you guys. And we'll go ahead and we'll sing our welcome song here and then we will get back into some singing and then get back into the Bible. So I don't have anybody to call up this morning. So I got to do this by myself. So if you want to go ahead and just stand up and we'll sing our welcome song here.

All right. Get the new look from the old book. Get the new look from the Bible. Get the new look from the old book. Get the new look from God's Word. The inward look. The outward look. The upward look from the authorized book. Get the new look from the old book. Get the new look from God's Word. All right. Shake hands. All right. Head on back to your seats. Head on back to your seats and get a hymnal out. Stand up. It's that red book that you had earlier. Stand up. 452. Why are we sitting down? 452. This guy. 452. "My Savior's Love."

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus and as a ream. And wonder how He could love me. A sinner condemned unclean. How marvelous. How wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous. How wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

For me it was in the garden. He prayed not my will but thine. He had no tears for His own griefs. But sweat drops of blood. Amen. How marvelous. How wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous. How wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

And pity angels beheld Him. And came from the world of life. To comfort Him in the sorrows. He bore for my soul at night. How wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous. How wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

He took my sins and my sorrows. He made them His very own. He bore the burden to Calvary And suffered and died alone. How marvelous. How wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous. How wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

When with the ransomed glory His face I last shall see. 'Twill be my joy through the ages To sing of His love for me. Oh, how marvelous. How wonderful. And my song shall ever be. How marvelous. How wonderful is my Savior's love for me. Amen.

221. We have a Savior's love and we should thank Him for it every single day, right? Amen. 221.

Some thank the Lord for friends and home, For mercy sure and sweet. But I would praise Him for His grace, In prayer I would repeat. Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You, Lord, for making me whole. Thank You, Lord, for giving to me. Thy grace salvation so rich and free.

Some thank Him for the flowers that grow, And for the stars that shine. My heart is filled with joy and praise, Because I know He's mine. Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You, Lord, for making me whole. Thank You, Lord, for giving to me. Thy grace salvation so rich and free.

I trust in Him from day to day. I prove His saving grace. I'll sing this song of praise to Him, Until I see His face. Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You, Lord, for making me whole. Thank You, Lord, for giving to me. Thy grace salvation so rich.

One more time without the piano. Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You, Lord, for making me whole. Thank You, Lord, for giving to me. Thy grace salvation so rich and free. And all God's people said, Amen.

Have a seat.

I did forget to mention, if you were one of the people who had a birthday or honorable mention or anything, or if you're just a guest and we didn't know you were here today, please, after the service, go over to the bookstore and just take something out of there for yourself. I know we like to do that just to let you know that it's important to us that you guys were here today. Please go over there after church and grab something just from us to you and hopefully it'll just be a blessing to you just in your own personal study and whatnot.

With that, ushers, you guys can go ahead and come on forward. I'm just going to read our prayer requests this morning and just keep this before the Lord in prayer and just in your own personal prayer time with Him and just keep bringing these things up and holding these people up in our church in prayer.

The first one here is going to be our world map. Just keep all the pins on our map in prayer. Those are people that are just affected and they get a blessing out of our ministry here. Keep the world map in prayer. Taylor and Abishai over in Vietnam. I think Shannon, you're leaving today, correct? Wednesday. Okay. Shannon will be leaving Wednesday to go over there. I think Bob told me you were going over obviously to see your daughter, but you were going to take some pictures and stuff like that just so we all have a good idea. They got the ministry. Yes. And after church today, after we get done with the message, Bob would like you to come up front and we'll go ahead and pray for you just before you end up getting sent out as well. So I'll make sure to

remind you guys of that at the end here. But yeah, please be praying for Taylor and Abishai and then Shannon as she heads off to Vietnam on Wednesday and has a safe flight.

Be praying for our silent missionary as well and everything that they're going through over there. Keep them held up. And then pray for Mike Beach and Mike Fernandez. Not only just them personally. We all know Mike Beach. We had the accident on the bike a few months ago and he lost his leg. So just keep him in prayer. And then Mike Fernandez will be coming out in about a month to preach for us. So keep him in prayer also just that he can keep developing his sermons and getting what he needs to get out of that. And just be praying for their churches as well. Just let the Lord continue to bless them and their ministries that they have.

Be praying for Adam and Becca over in England and just keep them safe and just their travels over to the United States for camp and whatnot and their flights and whatnot. Chris Myers and then keep Miles in prayer. I know it's been a pretty hot topic with the Costa Rica trip. So keep him in prayer and just that he can have everything nice and organized out and be able to get something done down in Costa Rica whenever our team goes down.

And then Nicole's mom. I know Nicole's mom's been in the hospital for I think a little over a week now from what I've heard. So two weeks. Okay. Yeah. So just keep her in prayer as well. And hopefully, you know, the doctors can just get some answers and help her out with what she's going through. And then Kristin in Las Vegas, Gary in St. Louis, Tim in Melissa, and then be praying for Bob's cousin Darlene and his sister Sharon as well. I know he said a few weeks ago she was having some pretty bad back pain and whatnot. So just be praying for her and hopefully that she can recover. And then along with Mike Beach, the co-pastor in New York, be praying for Pat Dean. We all know he had some medical issues come up a few months ago as well. And then Steve Weston and then Herb Kuntz. I think he made a mention about that another like two weeks ago that Herb was having some issues just with, you know, memory and whatnot. So be praying for Herb as well.

But with that, I don't really have anything else. Just give unto God as God's blessed you. Obviously if you're a visitor here, we don't expect you to put anything in the offering this morning. You know, us giving is just more or less a responsibility for the members of this church. So if you're a visitor, please don't feel inclined to do that. And then if you're a member here and you feel the need to give above and beyond to the Mars program, please make it out to Old Path Baptist. Don't make it out to Mars. The planet is not going to do anything with it. I promise. So it's just going to go there. Elon's probably going to take it. So it's all right. But yeah, with that, I'll go ahead and I'll sit down for a second and we'll pray for the offering. Logan, can you pray? And we'll get into the message.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the state of the world? For Adam's helpless race. Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God, just die for me? Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God, just die for me?

No condemnation, no I dread. I am my Lord's and He is mine. Alive in Him my living head And clothed in righteousness divine. Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God, just die for me? Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God, just die for me?

Alrighty, thank you. If you have a Bible, go ahead and just have it out and have it ready. I don't have an exact spot yet that you guys are going to have to turn to.

I. Introduction to the Sermon Topic

This has absolutely nothing to do with the sermon, but I was sitting there thinking that that was literally my first time I ever had to lead the whole "Get the New Look" thing. I was sitting there thinking, I realized that there's a lot of people here who have come in over the last five years or whatever, and you guys don't understand the evolution that that thing has taken over time and how it's developed. The reason why you see some of the people who've been around here for a little while, like the Powers, or Kelly and Woody, or me, the reason you see us, if a birthday is coming up or my anniversary, why we just crouch down in our seat is because at one point, if you had one of those events, you had to come up here and stand during that whole thing.

Now, unfortunately, well, I mean, it's fortunate for you, Macy's a good example of Jesus Christ because she has to bear that burden every single week. She has to come up here and stand and take your burden of coming up here. But the reason why people like me will just crouch down is a medical condition. We have PTSD and we just crouch as far down in the seat as we can because we don't want to be seen. So that has nothing to do with what I'm talking about, but I was sitting there thinking, yeah, there's a lot of people here who don't even realize they would have had to suffer like that back in the day.

So yeah, if you have a Bible, just have it out and have it ready. I don't have an exact verse or a passage or a story. Honestly, I don't even know what I'm going to talk about. Scott comes up and he asks me, he's like, "What are you preaching on?" I'm like, "Just put my name down, dude. Just put that down."

Over the last two months, when I got asked to preach, every time I'd sit down to read my Bible and pray, I'd ask the Lord, "Hey, what do You want me to talk about?" Because I understand, you're not going to just wake up and it's not going to be on your wall. It's not going to be painted there. It's not going to be in the clouds as an airplane crashes or something like that and it writes out what you're supposed to preach on. It's going to be in the Word of God. As you sit down and read, that's how He shows you what you're supposed to talk about or what He wants you to talk about. It works that way for preaching. It works that way for devotion. It works that way for if you're dealing with people, whatever.

For like two months, I would sit down and I'd say, "Okay, Lord, show me what You want me to talk about." And I'd open my Bible up and just start reading, nothing any more complicated than that, just start reading. There was one consistent thing that just kept coming up. I liked it for a personal study for myself. I really liked it. It was good and it caught my attention. I would talk about it to Sarah and tell her about it and what I was getting out of it and stuff. But for a topic of preaching, I really struggled with actually doing it. I kind of sat there and I was like, "I don't know if this is my place to talk about this. I don't know if this is something that the Lord wants me to talk about. Maybe these people, I think everybody already has a pretty good idea of this on its own."

But I didn't really know what I was going to talk about. The thing that just kept coming up every time I would read, and just examples would pop out and little details about it would pop out, and I never noticed it before, is just simply the topic or rather a command from your Creator. Just as a person, I won't even say Savior, but just as a person, if you're a human being, it's a command from your Creator to fear the Lord. The thing that kept coming out to me was the concept or the topic of fearing the Lord.

II. Reasons for the Loss of Emphasis on Fearing the Lord

I think the reason it was coming out and I kept seeing it and it was so obvious to me was the fact that I can at least speak for myself: I think that the fear of the Lord is just another one of those things that has kind of lost its gravity and its emphasis amongst God's people or amongst people in general. It turns into one of those things like prayer. Prayer is a really big thing when you first get saved and it seems so simple and it seems so obvious. But then you get 10 years into it and prayer seems to be something that you do before you eat, or maybe before you go to sleep, or if you're really in a bad spot. It doesn't become something that you're just supposed to do. You don't see the emphasis or the gravity of it anymore. Or something like the simple excitement after salvation. It seems so simple. It seems so obvious. But after a year or two years goes by and you start having some troubles, that excitement kind of seems to dim a little bit.

I feel like the fear of the Lord is kind of the same thing where when you first get saved and you first grasp it and you understand it completely, as time goes on, the grace and everything that you're shown, you kind of forget a lot about it and you forget what the Lord says about it. It's crazy because it's in there a lot. You read through your Bible, it's in there and talked about a lot. I think it just becomes one of these things where you read it and you just pass over. It becomes one of these things where the Lord will say 20,000 people fell in this battle and you don't think about the fact that was 20,000 people who died. He's talking about it, and it just becomes one of those things that you read over.

I'm sure there's multiple reasons for why it loses its gravity, why it loses its emphasis. Everybody in here could probably come up with a huge handful of what it would be. But I can really only think of two main reasons, if you're going to just put them at the top and everything else kind of tree branches out of it. I can only think of really two reasons for why people don't fear the Lord and why it has lost its emphasis and its gravity.

The first one is going to be just because of the simple fact that we just won't read. We just won't do it. We refuse to open up God's Word and actually read what it has to say. If you did that, then you would actually have some basic understanding of what the fear of the Lord is, or at least you would acknowledge it. So you open your Bible up and you start reading right off the bat, and we know the first book and there's Genesis. I'll be honest with you, it's kind of mild right off the bat. You get into Genesis and you really come across the topic of fear in the Lord like three times. You get one mention pretty early on in the beginning where they're talking about a city and they basically mention that there's no fear of God in that city. So you're kind of reading and you think to yourself, okay, yeah, I understand that's just a talking point. So you move on past that.

The second mention is a little bit more intense because you have Isaac and Abraham, and Abraham who's going to sacrifice Isaac like the Lord told him to do. Right at the last second before he does it, the Lord intervenes and He stops and He says, "Hey, don't do this. I get it, you fear the Lord, it's okay." If you're reading through your Bible and you notice something like that, you probably say, "Okay, that's a little odd. I don't know why He did that. I don't know what He had to do this to prove the fact that he feared the Lord for, but whatever." So you may read on past it.

Then you get to the end of the book and you have Joseph, and Joseph is kind of like the last person that makes any mentions of this because he basically, he's holding on to Benjamin. You all know the story. He basically sends his brothers back to get Jacob and bring him back to Egypt so he can see him. They don't know who he is yet, but he holds on to Benjamin and he tells them, "Hey, you go get your dad and bring him here. I'm going to hold on to your brother so that way you have a reason to come back." Well, they're concerned because they're thinking, "Well, this guy's going to kill him." And he's like, "Hey, to basically seal the deal and seal his word," he says, "Hey, I fear God. I won't kill him. It's okay." He uses the Lord and fearing the Lord as a reason to validate his words and what he's saying. He's saying, "I'm scared of the repercussions God would put on me, so I fear the Lord. I won't do this."

You really just, that's really the only few mentions that you get of it in Genesis, but right when you get to the book of Exodus, things get real really fast. You start seeing different things about fearing the Lord and how the Lord talks about it that kind of gives you some insight on it.

Come over to Exodus chapter 9 and I'll show you one of the first times that you see this in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 9:19-21

19 Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

20 He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

So you get into the book of Exodus and you start reading, and obviously, we know plagues and stuff like that start coming up in the book of Exodus, and those plagues are pretty good reason to fear the Lord. Some of the stuff that happened in there, it would make me scared if it started happening today. But one of the things you see right off the bat here is the Lord gives pretty simple instruction to these group of people. He says, "Hey, if you have servants or cattle or whatever you have, if it's out there in the field, I suggest you bring it in because if you don't bring it in, hail is going to come down, it's going to kill everything out there, and it's up to you what you want to do."

What that shows me right off the bat is you really only have two choices and you have two groups of people. You don't have three, you don't have four, you don't have six or twelve or whatever it is. Throughout life, you only have really two choices. That first choice is going to be people who fear the Lord's words, and then the second is going to be people who simply just disregard His words. It's not people who fear the Lord's words and then people who are too lazy to get into their Bible and read what the Lord's words are. It's not people who are too ignorant. It's not people who are too simple and maybe they can't understand it. It's not people who are maybe less advantaged or whatever, they are lower on the social status or whatever. It's none of those things. We like to complicate it and we like to act like there's a bunch of different other options and a bunch of other different choices for why people don't fear the Lord's words and don't fear the Lord, and it really is only two. You either fear the Lord's words or you disregard His words. It's only two options right there.

If you don't take any time to sit down and simply let the Lord come in and show you things in His Word, then you're not going to fear Him. You won't. You go through and you read your Bible, and seriously, if you go through and pay attention after this and just see the amount of times that He talks about this person feared me or fear me because of this reason or whatnot, you'll figure out some things about Him that will make you want to fear Him. But you're not ever going to do that if you're not reading.

We get a funny idea, and I can speak from personal experience, we get a funny idea that coming to church is enough or going to social events is just enough. We think that if we go to the Fourth of July or if we go to camp or if we go to just any of these little gatherings we do, or if you're here on Thursdays and Sundays, that that's enough to give you a good, healthy, biblical fear of the Lord, and it's simply not. That's not how the Lord designed it to be. He may have given you those things for good reason. It's great to go in fellowship with other people and be close with them. I love it. I hang out with everybody in here more than I do literally anybody else in the entire world. I don't hang out with other people outside this church really. I don't. But those things are not enough to make me have a healthy fear of Him. Coming to church on Sunday and Thursday, that's not enough. You were designed by your Creator to read this thing, and this thing is what was going to give you that healthy fear of the Lord. If you're not doing it, then really honestly, the only other option is disregard.

You not reading shows that you have a complete and utter disregard for fearing the Lord. It's just you saying, "Yeah, I understand that there's a bunch of stuff in there that's important for me to get. I understand there's a bunch of stuff in there that I need to understand and understand about my Savior and my Creator, but I don't care. I'm just going to do what I want to do." It's funny because that stuff wouldn't fly at work. That stuff wouldn't fly at school. If I go into work tomorrow and my boss says, "Hey, I want you to go over here and you're going to be working on Stormpipe today, get the tools out and start working." If I just go over there and stand around or if I go hide, I'm probably going to get fired. I'm just disregarding what he told me to do. I'm disregarding any fear that I should have for my employer because I'm just saying to myself, "Okay, well, yeah, it doesn't matter. He's not going to do anything to me. I can do whatever I want because there's no repercussions." It doesn't work like that in school. You don't just go into

school and your professor says, "Hey, I need this essay with this many words in it and it needs to be in this font and it needs to be this size and everything else." All these other things that they put along with it, you don't go in and just simply disregard that and say, "Yeah, it'll be fine. I don't care." You go in with a fear that, "Hey, I'm going to fail this class if I don't listen to what this person is telling me to do." When you go in there and you actively don't fear it and you just do what you want to do, it's not you being lazy. It's not you misunderstanding the instructions. It's not you being incompetent or maybe ignorant to what's going on. It's you just disregarding it. That's it. There's no other option. You either fear the Lord's words or you disregard the Lord's words.

You see the repercussions of it over here in Exodus 9. You had a clear instruction here of the Lord said, "If something's in the field, take it out and if you don't take it out, it's going to die." It tells you that the only thing that these two people did is they could either fear what He said or they could disregard what He said. That's it. That's the first thing I notice is I think one of the reasons why we don't have any emphasis or any gravity on the fear of the Lord is because we just simply won't read. You won't pick this thing up and read it. This thing, I would venture to say, and I can say it because of the fact that there was a time in my life where it was like this, that thing sometimes it got put in the bag on Sunday afternoon and it did not come out until Thursday. Sometimes it would get put in the bag on Thursday night and it would not come out until Sunday. And I'd really sit right where you're sitting and I'd think everything's cool because I showed up to the things on Saturday and Friday. I showed up to church this morning. I was here early. Matter of fact, I was in prayer group. I would tell myself that stuff, but not opening that thing up any other day of the week and reading it is utter, it's nothing more than utter disregard for fearing the Lord and taking seriously what He has to say because He gave it to you for a reason. He didn't give me a slideshow or a movie or a comic book or anything else like that. I don't know why, but this is how He gave it to me. If you're not reading the thing, you're just disregarding it and you have no intention of ever fearing the Lord. So that would be the first one is not reading.

The second reason I see why people just, there's no emphasis, there's no gravity in fearing the Lord and actually taking Him seriously, is the fact that churches and pastors won't tell people. Now, this one could be a little less personal, right? But not really, right? Because we're part of that. We should be telling people, right? People should be fearing the Lord based off of our life and the things we say. What I'm about to say could, I'm sure people in here could kind of gasp and you'll probably leave and you'll be like, "I can't believe AJ would say that," but I know what I'm saying. I know my personality and I know I have the right motive for what I'm saying.

I've told my wife several times, I'm 26 years old. If I didn't have the privilege of having grown up in this church and heard the preaching from this thing two times a week or more than that for pretty much my whole life, if I didn't have that privilege, I know my personality and I know that I probably would not be saved right now. But if I was growing up and I was looking at other churches out there, I would want nothing to do at all with church. I think that's just a personality thing, but I think that a lot of people could relate to that. I don't know what it is. I've got some weird, maybe this is normal, maybe this makes me weird, I don't know. I've always had a weird, not obsession, but I've been drawn to wanting to do. I could be peer pressured basically into

doing anything that would make me be perceived to be manly, easily, no problem, very simple example.

I like coffee. I like it now. I did not like it in my earlier, by earlier I mean like 17, so that doesn't matter. But I like coffee. You want to know how I started liking coffee? Honestly, God, this is a real story. A lot of you guys know me and Gary, we used to go duck hunt a lot, especially when I was like 16 or 17. One morning, duck hunting is really nice because in deer hunting, you kind of have to sneak eat stuff. You have to almost be sneaky about it, which is so dumb because you can probably get away with a lot more. But I always thought that these deer are just like, "This moron's eating a Cliff Bar," and you can't get a record of it. So the duck hunting is great though, because you can bring out like a griddle and you can make eggs, bacon, pancake, you can do it all. We were too lazy to do any of that, but you can do that. So what we would do, it would be like two in the morning and we would stop at like a gas station and get honey buns, cookies, muffins, coffee, all this other stuff. All the good stuff.

I remember, because also a man has to have that Stanley Green thermos, right? So I remember at like 16 or 17, we go into this gas station and I go over with my thermos that the day before I was thrown in gravel and hitting with a ball bat and stuff to get dents and stuff on it to make it look like it was used. The sucker's like four days old, but I'm sitting here making it look like it's not. And I go in and I go over to this, so you know, it's in a Casey's. So they've got this deal full of hot chocolate and I'm filling this 40 ounce thing up with hot chocolate. And I'm excited. I'm like, "Oh, this is going to be delicious. It's going to be so good." And I'm filling it up. And so Gary comes over and he's filling his up with coffee and it's worn down. It's actually dented from like years of use and stuff like that. And he's pouring this like motor oil black coffee into this thing. Steam is rolling out. It smells so good. And I'm filling it up just, you know, excited and whatever. And I'm not even joking. He looks at me and he goes, "What are you doing?" He looks me up and down. "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm getting my drink. What do you think I'm doing?" He goes, "What is that?" And it's just like, you know, it's just that really light, light brown, hot chocolate. And I was like, "It's hot chocolate." And he goes, I'm not even joking. He looks me up and down. He goes, "You're going to drink that? That's what you're getting?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "Yeah, that's what I'm getting." And this is the worst part. He goes, "Okay. Okay." And then he just walks up to the register. Dude, I felt like that big. I felt like a little, I didn't want it anymore. I sat there and just stared at the stupid. I didn't drink it. I didn't. I just left it. Because what was I going to do? Pour it out and be like, "No, I was actually just warming up the inside so that way I could get coffee." So I just, you know, I left it in there and I just was upset and didn't drink it at all. It didn't want nothing to do with it. And from that day forward, I was like, "I'm never, I'm never having it ever again." In fact, it's so bad that this last winter we were at the house and Sarah, I don't know why Sarah was just kind of craving hot chocolate. And she's like, "Do you want some?" And I was just like, "Yeah, I want some. Yeah." And she made it and I had it and I was just like, she's like, "Is it good?" I'm like, "It's fine. Yeah, it's all right." It's just like not what it admit how good it actually was.

And that translated over to like when we started dating, like the first place we went to on a date, we went to like a coffee shop and I was, I felt cool, you know, because I was like, this, she's

going to be impressed. I'm going to drink, you know, because I don't put it in the coffee shop. You know, because I don't put cream or any of that stuff in there because I can't get the ratio right. So we go in and I'm like, "Hey, get what you want." So she gets tea. They're like, "What do you want?" And I was like, "Just let me get a black coffee." And they're like, "We have drip coffee." I had no idea. I was just like, "What is drip coffee?" Like, "I just want a black coffee." So and then I got it and it was terrible. It was the worst cup I've ever had. I don't even want to go back to that place anymore because it was so bad. And you know, but I had to sit there and I had to force myself to drink it right because I was wanting to look impressive. And you know, I've always had that wrong with me and stuff.

But I think a lot of men are kind of the same way. Like another thing about me is the fact that I've always, I feel like I've always been able to kind of search out and tell when somebody's lying to me or something's phony. I'm sure I think a lot of people are like that. That's not unique to me. But I feel like I've always had that too. Like if somebody tells me something, I can just kind of be like, "Yeah, whatever. You're pulling my leg. You're trying to get something out of me." A great example of this, I think like a week ago, because I'm in construction, so safety is like the big thing in construction. And they had like the vice president come out and he was standing there with us. And we, I think we've gone like 60 days or whatever without somebody, like an accident, like somebody dropped something or whatever. And he comes out and he's talking to us and he's saying how he was in a meeting. And there was like a time where it was like no more than like eight days and somebody dropped something and we'd all get in trouble. And I guess in this meeting he goes, "Are we satisfied with this?" And he's like, "And you all listen to me because I said, am I satisfied with this?" I'm like, "No, stupid. We're not getting hurt because I don't want to go home hurt. I want to keep all my hands, my hands and my fingers and my toes and stuff. I'm not getting, you know, I'm not staying safe because I want to make you look good. Like I just don't want to get hurt." Phony things like that. I feel like I got a pretty good idea if I can sense those things out.

But when it comes to churches and stuff, I feel like I've had that too. I remember when I was a kid, I think it was before we had our camps here. So this was a long time, this was like way back before 2014. And I had to go to a camp that a family member of mine, they wanted me to go to. I kind of just had to suck it up and I had to do it. And it was crazy. It was insane. It was on this massive campus. They had all these outbuildings there. They had like full grown adults. Like I know we have adults there working too. These were like their jobs. Like they were there working like at like a burger shack serving like 11 year olds. I can't even comprehend doing that. But they were like, you know, just serving these kids. It was crazy. There would be kids sit outside the burger shop like fist fighting each other at camp. Like no counselors around. Nothing. Just fighting and being crazy. And it was a weird experience. And I remember the whole time, even as like a little kid, I was thinking, "Man, there's just something not right. Like something is just something's off about this place.

I remember there was one night where they had like the closest that they could have like an invitation service. Not like an altar call, but like the camp was kind of broke at that moment. And they had a guy come in and I'm not going to lie to you. I think he did a pretty good job.

Everybody was pretty emotional. Everybody was like in a good spot. And what he said they were going to do was there was like a building across the street. And he said, "What we're going to do is we're going to get up. And over there in this building, there's a bunch of crosses made out of four by fours." Really big ones, like from here down to the floor or whatever. He goes, "And there's all these crosses in there made out of four by fours and there's paper in there and there's pen and there's a hammer and nail in there." He goes, "And I want you guys to go in there and as a picture of what Jesus Christ did for you, write down any burdens, anything you're struggling with or whatever on that paper and nail it to the cross."

I thought that was a good idea as a kid. Like he got me. I was kind of let up on my skepticalness a little bit. And I was like, "Okay, yeah, like this guy, maybe this is kind of turning the right way." So we go over and me being kind of skeptical and stuff like that. I'm kind of in the back of the line and I'm watching and all these people are going through and it's like low lit and there's candles and people are crying and there's some music playing and stuff like that. And so I go through and I'm really feeling I'm like, "Okay, wow, like maybe this place really to turn around." So I go up, I write my thing down, nail it on the cross, feel this like relief come over me. I'm like, "Man, that was actually a great idea. Like what we just did. That was good."

So I leave and we had to wear these like lanyards around with like I think like our identification on there because there were like thousands of kids there. So I left. I don't know why I left my lanyard in there, though. So I was like, "Okay, well, I don't want to disturb anybody who's in there, you know, still doing their thing. So I'll just come in real quiet." So I come back in and I go through these double doors and you know what I saw when I walked in there? I'm not lying. This is a hundred percent true story. I walked back in there at like probably 11 years old, 11 or 12 years old or whatever I was. And I seen counselors, full grown adult counselors in there had these crosses all laying on a table ripping pieces of paper off those things and reading the things on there and laughing about it. I was sitting there laughing like, "Oh, look at this. This kid's getting bullied at school. This kid struggles watching pornography. Oh, this kid right here, you know, he's got problems. His dad's beating him at home." Sitting there laughing at stuff like that. And I remember thinking as a kid, it made me mad. But think about it now. I'm like, I thank God that I was the one that had to see that because if I was an unsaved kid, if I was just some random kid at that camp and I would have walked in there and seen something like that, you want to have caught me in church, man. Never again. I want to have gone back. I'm not playing around with the phoniness of doing something like that, telling a bunch of kids to write down some of the most insecure parts about themselves or some burdens they have on something and then ripping them off and laughing at them. No way, man. No way at all.

But I think a lot of people are like that. I think a lot of people have the same thing going on with them where they can look at churches and they can look at stuff and they can just see something's just not right about it, something's just kind of phony about it. I can't speak for women, but I think a lot of men are like that. I think that's the reason why I think a lot of men don't come to church is because they look at it and they just say, "This doesn't add up." They look around and they see everything in their life requires some level of structure. It requires some level of leadership. There's an authority thing. The leader in there has authority and everybody

underneath that leader at their job, they fear and they reverence that guy. And then they come to church and they're told none of that stuff is supposed to be there at all. And it's confusing, right? Why would you think that church is the only thing in life that it doesn't work like that? And the reason why is I think that they expect something different when they come here. They expect it to not have any of that authority and structure and leadership because they're simply, they're told not to. They're told, "No, that stuff is supposed to exist here.

I went ahead and just for curiosity standpoint, because like I said, I've only really been here at this church my whole life, so I don't really have that big of a, I'm not exposed, right, to all these other churches and stuff. I went ahead and looked up just off of the Reform Theological Seminary's website. I looked up simply, "What is the fear of the Lord?" And this is what this guy had to say, this jerk named Dr. Michael Allen, this is what he had to say. He said, "And so the fear of the Lord, that is the beginning of wisdom, is that God-centered focus wherever we may be, whatever circumstances we may be living, whether it be happy or sad, whether it be life or death, that we would be mindful of God and His presence and that we would be attentive to His words and His promises, that we would remember that He is always the most interesting character in the context. That is what it means to fear the Lord and to have begun on the path of holy wisdom."

What did He just say there? That didn't sound like anything. That just sounded like a bunch of mush mouth just spitting words out that everybody likes to hear, right? But that didn't tell you anything. You know what the Bible has to say about what the fear of the Lord is? It's very simple. Come over here to Proverbs chapter 8. Proverbs chapter 8 defines the fear of the Lord in a very, very simple term. Not that huge and massive two-paragraph long explanation that that guy just gave you.

Proverbs 8:13

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

That's what the Bible says the fear of the Lord is. It says the fear of the Lord is simply just to hate evil. Not this God-centered focus, not being mindful of His presence or remembering that He's the most interesting character in the context. You already know all that. Everybody out there already knows God's the most interesting character in the context, whatever that may mean. Everybody knows that God's on the center of everybody's mind, at least every single person on this planet wakes up and two times in that day they're going to think about God, before they think about anything else. We already know all that stuff. What you need to know is what God's Word has to say about the fear of the Lord, which is that it's simply to hate evil. That's it.

If you understand that, you'll understand that there's something wrong with you, before salvation. If you understand that fear in the Lord requires some level of hatred towards evil, you'll realize I'm kind of evil. There might be something wrong with me and that'll lead you to make some decisions. But when people don't have churches and pastors telling them that, then really why would they fear the Lord? What reason do they have? If you're coming in and being told everything's fine, everything's great, there's nothing wrong with you, don't be afraid of the Lord

at all. Don't have any seriousness or any reverence for the Man. You know, He's just that thing up there that you'll deal with one day, but don't worry about Him right now. Why would you? What reason would you have to fear the Lord? And the answer is you just won't.

Listen, we know that the Bible is incredibly simple. A verse that everybody in here is probably familiar with is Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. You know what that thing says?

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

That thing says that your only job is to fear God and keep His commandments. It says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." That means everything. That means let us hear the conclusion of your plans for retirement, your life, who you want to marry, what you want to do for a career, your kids, everything, your friendships, everything. The conclusion of every single thing in your life is simply to fear God and to keep His commandments. And you know what it says after that? It says, "for this is the whole duty of man." Your job, if you walk around on two feet and you can understand what I'm saying to you this morning as a human being, your simple only job according to your Creator, it's your duty to fear Him and to keep His commandments. It's not His suggestion. It's not His advice for you. It is your duty to fear His commandments.

You know the reason why He tells you that? Because this is the great thing about the Lord. He always gives you a reason for why He tells you something. He doesn't just tell you, "Hey, stupid, fear me and keep my commandments," and then end the thing. He tells you because everything, good and evil, will be coming out in judgment. He tells you, "You'd be better off if you feared me. You'd be better off if you followed all my commandments and you did your duty as a person and did all that stuff because one day it's all coming out. One day every good thing you did is coming out and one day everything that you did that was bad is coming out. And I'm going to handle it and I'm going to judge it. So if you had any sense at all, you'd pay attention to me and you'd fear me and you'd keep my commandments because it is your duty as a person." So when you don't have churches and you don't have pastors and you don't have us telling people that, why would they? Why would anybody think that? Why would Christians sitting in church today have any concept or any seriousness about fearing their Creator and their Savior? They wouldn't. They just wouldn't.

III. Aspects of Fearing the Lord

Today I don't have a bunch of points. I don't have an outline. I don't have any of that. I'm just going to talk about some simple aspects about fearing the Lord that I've come across in just my study as I've been looking at this and studying this out. And hopefully it's able to bring back some level of gravity and emphasis that the Lord puts on it and seeing why God says you should fear Him, why He says that there's results good and bad of fearing Him, why He gives you

examples of fearing Him, all those different things. That's all I'm going to be talking about today. Not a bunch of points, not an outline, just simple aspects that I've come across in my study of fearing the Lord.

The first thing I've noticed and that really kind of came across and that jumped out to me on this topic of fearing the Lord is found in Deuteronomy chapter 10.

- It is Required of You to Fear the Lord
- Fearing the Lord is a Choice
- A Special Closeness with the Lord
- He's Not Like You

IV. Closing Prayer and Missionary Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for today for allowing me to have the privilege to get up and speak at Your pulpit and Your church, Lord. I pray everybody got a blessing out of it and I hope that I did not portray You, Lord, as a mean or angry person, Lord, but rather somebody who has the right and deserves to be respected and feared by not only just people in general, but Your people, Lord, and that we can understand who You are, Lord, and maybe take You a little bit more seriously. And that maybe hopefully we can see more of a need to get into Your book and to read it and see who You really are and understand things about who Your character is. And I pray You just give all of our friends and family just a safe trip back home from Ohio and help them just to remain safe, Lord, and just give all these good people a good afternoon this afternoon as well. And we pray this all in Your Son's precious name. Amen.

All right, Shannon. All right. Yeah, you guys can come up here. All righty. We're going to go ahead and pray for them. You guys just pray for them as well. Just on their trip, it's Wednesday, correct? Okay. Yeah, on their trip on Wednesday, just going out to Vietnam and hopefully they're able to bring back good pictures and a good understanding of the ministry going on there, so that way we can just have more of an excitement and understanding for what's going on in Vietnam with them.

So I'll go ahead and pray. Dear Lord, thank You for today and just giving us just these two people, Lord, and just their daughter over in Vietnam and the ministry they have going over there. And I just pray that You just give them a safe trip over and keep their daughters safe and help them just to do a good job of just documenting everything we have going on out in that field, Lord, and help us just all to have a burden, the same burden that her daughter and they have over the field of Vietnam and help us all just to have a good understanding of that and help them just to remain safe on their flight there, back, and while they're there as well, Lord. And we pray this all in Your Son's precious name. Amen.

All right. Thank you. You guys are dismissed. Thank you. Thanks, guys.