

Text: 1 Pt 1.17

Proposition: The fear of God reflects the beauty of our new relation to God.

This afternoon, I would like you to turn to 1 Peter 1.

I want to go back to our text from last Wednesday night. After I delivered the message, I felt that the message was too much like a commentary and not enough like a sermon.

We will call today's message a "do-over."

Our title:

Conduct Yourselves in Fear (2)

To start with, then, I'd like to pose a question.

Why do you think Christianity is generally unpopular in our world?

That Christianity is generally unpopular is undeniable.

Certain forms of Christianity (loosely speaking) are tolerable to the world; certainly, though, Bible believing Christianity is unpopular and undesirable.

What makes it so?

When you consider the glory and beauty of salvation in Jesus Christ, what's not to like?

In today's message, we will consider a command that contributes to Christianity's unpopularity and to the peculiarity that marks Christians out as different from the world.

The point of our message, though, is to obey the command. I don't want you to think of this command as something that puts a troublesome burden on you, but one which puts you into a blessed relationship with our God who saved us from our sins.

To understand the point of the message, we need to look at the whole chapter from the beginning to our text, so let's **read first of all 1 Pt 1.3-12**

Proposition: The fear of God reflects the beauty of our new relation to God.

I. The glory and beauty of our salvation (3-12)

A. Salvation cause the new birth to a living hope (3)

B. Salvation grants us an indestructible inheritance in heaven (4)

- C. Salvation secures our future deliverance through faith by the power of God (5)
- D. Salvation enables great jubilation despite present tribulation (6-7)
- E. Salvation produces intense love for Jesus Christ and the ultimate salvation of our whole being (8-9)
- F. Salvation is the fascination of the prophets and angels, who desire to understand all the hope that is preached to us (10-12)

Now let's read 1 Pt 1.13-17

II. The consequential commands of our salvation (13-16)

- A. Fix your hope completely on coming grace (13)
 1. After clearing your minds for action (gird up the loins of your mind)
 2. While keeping sober in spirit
- B. Be holy in all your behaviour (15)
 1. While not conforming yourselves to your former lusts (14)

The point of these commands is that they are the natural consequences of our salvation — v. 13 begins with “therefore.”

- The glorious salvation we have right now is just the beginning, the best is yet to come: therefore, *fix your hope* on the future salvation.
- The glorious salvation we have right now calls us by its source to present holiness: therefore, *be holy as he is holy*.

Forward look, separated lifestyle.

- C. Which brings us to the last imperative, the one in our text: conduct yourselves in fear
 1. The command addresses our motivation
 2. The command addresses our transformation

I'm going to expand these points momentarily, but here I want you to see that fixing our hope, committing to holiness, and conducting ourselves in fear all flow as consequences of the great and glorious salvation Peter describes in vv. 3-12

III. The privilege of serving God in fear since he is our Father (17)

We will reverse the textual order as we consider our privilege.

A. Our conduct in the world is at odds with the world

1. How this seems on the surface

- a. Demotivating, not motivating
- b. Disconcerting in the face of worldly pressure

2. The reason why the call seems negative to us

a. Salvation changes our spirits

- 1) We don't love the things the world loves
- 2) We don't value the things the world values
- 3) The world values conformity, hates misfits

b. Consequently, we feel like we don't fit in

- 1) The truth is, we don't
- 2) The word used in the text is "the time of your stay" (KJV: "time of your sojourning")
- 3) A sojourner is "on the outside looking in"

When you travel to another country, you know you don't fit in, even if you look like most of the people around you.

- Customs are different
- Food is different
- Everything is different

You might see some things that are attractive, might even seem better than your way at home, but you are conscious you don't belong.

c. Salvation makes us "sojourners" when we were "citizens"

- 1) It's not that we traveled somewhere else
- 2) Rather, something else came into us, and made us different

3) *We no longer* fit in

This transformation is a big reason the average lost person doesn't want our God or His salvation: they sense that we belong to a different world than them.

The difference is true, even when Christians don't conduct themselves in fear as much as they should: they are still conscious that they are different and they should be living differently — and though they desire to conform, they can't quite go all the way with the world...

People like this might have salvation, but with misery

3. The transformation is real, and our spirits are fitted to heaven more and more as we walk with God

B. Our conduct before God in fear is privileged by our new relationship

1. God is a judge

a. God is impartial

b. God is just

2. God is our Father

a. The statement is conditional, conditioned on our new relationship

b. It assumes the truth of our new relationship

c. It calls us to conduct ourselves in fear because of our new relationship (and the nature of the one with whom we are now related)

So, yes, there is a call to reverential, respectful, worshipful conduct every day.

The call is to conduct ourselves this way before our impartial and just judge — who is also our father.

The question for Christians is, will you conduct yourself the way God calls you to?

Conclusion:

Proposition: The fear of God reflects the beauty of our new relation to God.

If you are one who addresses God as Father, you possess the glorious salvation Peter extols as he opens the epistle.

So, live like it — you have a family relationship with the most powerful, impartial, just, holy person in the universe.

Your fear is your worship; your fear is your privilege.