

Sermon Outline – Sunday, October 6, 2013

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. - Mal. 3:16

Beloved, we are not bound by blood, as many perceive themselves to be. Nor by age. Nor by taste. Nor by manmade ideology. We are bound together in the love and reverent fear of the Lord our God. The shared fear of the Lord is our leaping off place together – and it is the leaping off place of all that we do and know.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. - Pr. 1:7

Gill says (in part): *By "the fear of the Lord" is not meant a servile fear, a fear of punishment, of hell, wrath, and damnation, which is the effect of the first work of the law upon the conscience; but a filial fear, or one due from a son or daughter, and supposes knowledge of God as a father, of his love and grace in Christ, particularly of his forgiving love, from whence it arises. It is a holy, humble, fiducial, or trusting fear of God; a reverential affection for him, and devotion to him; it includes the whole of religious worship, both internal and external - this is the first of all sciences to be learned, and it is the principal one; it is the basis and foundation of all the rest, on which they depend; and it is the head, the fountain, the root an source, from whence they spring; and unless a man knows God, knows God in Christ, and worships him in his fear, in spirit and in truth, according to his revealed will, he knows nothing as he ought to know; and all his knowledge will be of no avail and profit to him; this is the first and chief thing in spiritual and evangelical knowledge, and without which all natural knowledge will signify nothing.*

That fear of the Lord is a reverent fear, imbued by God - it is the beginning of knowledge - and it is a knowledge that the world shuns – it is a knowledge that we should constantly drink and constantly ask the Lord to give us more of. We are encouraged, after the beginning of knowledge, to make it our life's work to get more knowledge. While we know that the Lord blesses us with light on a matter in His time and in His way, we are provoked by His holy word to be proactive in our approach to get fresh, deepened understanding of His word.

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; - Col 1:10

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; - 2Pet. 1:5

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. - Pr 4:5

Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. - Ps. 1:2

The scripture is a blueprint for our lives – we are ultimately not left in a lurch concerning any condition of life – any situation, and the most profound impediment to getting to the right answer is our intermittent insistence on leaning unto our own understanding – which I humbly submit, means, at

times, that we think we already know what the scriptural answer is, based upon stale understanding, or even pride.

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. - Ps 37:5
It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. - Ps 118:8

That means carnal reasoning – the best carnal reasoning; the logic that man devises to cloak his folly ; the logic that man uses to turn sin into not sin.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. - Gen. 3:1-6:

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. - Pr 3:5

Looking at the scriptures, afresh, and asking the Lord for fresh, crisp, accurate notions of His attributes and how it is that we should walk in light of that is the subject of this talk. It is our duty, our joy, the rejoicing of our heart, to get knowledge of God, and to ask knowledge of God. We cannot live the lives we profess and encourage others to live without it.

BENEFITS OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WORD:

1. ALLOWS FOR OUR OBEDIENCE
2. ALLOWS FOR RESISTING IN TEMPTATION OR TESTING
3. ARMS US TO GIVE AN ANSWER
4. ENABLES US TO TEACH ONE ANOTHER
5. ENABLES US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE
6. ENABLES US TO RIGHTLY PRAISE AND GLORIFY HIS NAME

1. ALLOWS FOR OUR OBEDIENCE

We, who fear the Lord, have a supernaturally-imbued desire to obey Him. And the Lord gives us plenteous light on what to do in the situations we find ourselves in. But it is impossible to keep the commandments of God if we don’t know what they are. The Holy Spirit, though Solomon, who was the wisest man who ever lived (and still committed abundant folly in his wisdom, when he strayed from knowledge which is from above), wrote:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. - Eccl. 12:13

If the whole duty of man, or the purpose of a person's life, is to fear God and keep his commandments, then knowing what those commandments are should be of paramount importance. Again, the reverent fear of God is the beginning of knowledge, and we are exhorted, encouraged, admonished and provoked by the very word of God that we are to have knowledge of to get in there and learn some stuff. And not just on a coarse level. We can't obey what we don't know to obey.

Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments. - Ps 119:73

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; - 2Co 10:5

Every part of that commandment implies a thoughtful way to know what imaginations (or carnal reasonings) are, and to know which things exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and what things are the knowledge of God, and what thoughts need brought into captivity, and what thoughts are already there. Our obedience craves knowledge.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD KEEPS OUR FEET ON HIS OLD PATHS, ALLOWING US TO RESIST EVIL.

The Lord Jesus Christ, himself, gave us the paradigmatic example of how it is to resist the devil, putting on the whole armor of God, and trusting fully in the Lord's remedies:

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, if thou be the son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, IT IS WRITTEN, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, all this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, get thee behind me, Satan: FOR IT IS WRITTEN, thou shalt worship the lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. – Luke 4:1-18

Satan is a vile velociraptor – always looking for a new way to push in – to solve the puzzle. He is more subtle than any beast of the field, and goes to and fro and up and down in the earth, getting understanding, or a detailed, crisp, worldly understanding of how things work – how the human mind and heart works – how he can play upon them. So after two passes, and constantly adapting – like virus mutating to corrupt and destroy - he's even gonna try to use a cheap, mimicked version of the lord's methodology, citing the scripture him own self.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, IT IS SAID (OR WRITTEN), thou shalt not tempt

the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. – Luke 4:9-13

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. - Jas 4:7

There is no using scripture to get God's people to do wrong, if they know the scripture. It is only effective for someone to use scripture to knock you off your game if you don't know scripture. That, young people (and old), is a proactive mission that we ought to be on every day. That's part of what meditating on His law both day and night, and delighting in it, means.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. – Ps. 1:1-2

Gill, in part, says of verse 2: ***This is to be understood of a diligent reading and serious consideration of it; and of the employment of the thoughts, and of deep study upon it, in order to find out the sense and meaning of it; and which is to be done constantly, every day, as often as there is leisure and opportunity for it; and that prosperity spoken of in verse 3, unlike the whole pastors' bastardization of that blessed verse, means not so much in things temporal, for in these the good man does not always succeed, but in things spiritual (don't forget Lazarus or Job): whatever he does in faith, from love, to the glory of God, and in the name of Christ, prospers; yea, those things in which he is concerned, that are adverse, and seem for the present to be against him, in the issue work for good to him: in short, such a man is blessed with grace here, and glory hereafter; and therefore must needs be an happy man.***

3. KNOWLEDGE ARMS US WITH THE ABILITY TO GIVE AN ANSWER, WHICH WE ARE CALLED TO DO OF GOD:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: - 1Pe 3:15

To sanctify is to declare as holy in our hearts – an internal sanctification of him, which is enabled and augmented by the reading of his word and contemplating his attributes in light of it. And saints should be always "ready to" give and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; (Gill): ***for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases. Otherwise, there is no 'being ready.'*** and we are exhorted by the scripture to provide answers.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. - Prov. 26:4

Not answering in the manner in which the question was asked, but showing, or underscoring, the folly in the giving of the appropriate scriptural response, thereby keeping the fool from thinking that his own, base, vain wisdom ever trumps the wisdom of God.

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. - Tit. 1:9

These are two distinct operations that this elder, and all of us, is exhorted to: first – exhorting (or comforting) his brothers and sisters in Christ, and second – to convince the gainsayers. The members of the body all have the privilege, duty and honor, and most specifically the elder, of ‘exhorting or comforting’ one another – the word here is also rendered ‘to comfort them in all tribulation.’

(Gill): And this is one considerable part of the elder’s work, to comfort souls under affliction, whether of body or mind; and sound doctrines, or the doctrines of the gospel, are wonderfully suited to such a purpose: and the other part of his work is, "to convince gainsayers"; such who resist the truth, oppose themselves to it, cavil at it, and object against it; these are to be refitted, and convinced by the scriptures, and arguments taken from them, and nothing is so powerful to do it as sound doctrine, and holding fast the faithful word.

4. THE GETTING OF KNOWLEDGE ALLOWS FOR US TO TEACH ONE ANOTHER.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. - Col. 3:16

(Gill): THE WORD OF CHRIST - By which may be meant the whole scripture, all the writings of the Old and New Testament, which are by inspiration of God, speak and testify of Christ, and were written for his sake, and on his account, and therefore may be called his word; and are what should be searched into, carefully attended to, diligently read, and frequently meditated upon...the exhortation to let it DWELL IN them, supposes that it had entered into them, and had a place in them through the spirit and power of Christ; and that it should have a constant and fixed place there, and not be like a stranger or wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night, or like a sojourner, that continues but for a while; but as an inhabitant that takes up its residence and abode, never more to depart; and intends not only a frequent reading, and hearing of, and meditating upon the word of God but continuance in the doctrines of the Gospel, with a steady faith in them, and a hearty affection for them; for such an inhabitation imports a very exact knowledge of the Gospel, and familiarity with it, and affectionate respect for it; as persons that dwell in a house, they are well known by those of the family, they are familiarly conversed with, and are treated with love and respect by them: and so the word of Christ, when it has a fixed and established abode in a man’s heart, he has an inward, spiritual knowledge of it; he is continually conversant with it; this word of Christ is his delight, and the men of his counsel his guide, his acquaintance, with whom he takes sweet counsel together, and esteems it above the most valuable things in the world, and receives and retains it as the word of God.

RICHLY; that is, largely, plentifully, in an abundant manner, that not one part of the scripture only should be regarded and attended to but the whole of it, every truth and doctrine in it, even the whole counsel of God; there is a fulness in the scriptures, an abundance of truth in the gospel, a large affluence of it; it is a rich treasure, an invaluable mine of precious truths; all which should have a place to their full extent, in both preacher and hearer: and that

IN ALL WISDOM; or, "unto all wisdom"; in order to attain to all wisdom; not natural wisdom, which is not the design of the scriptures, nor of the gospel of Christ; but spiritual wisdom, or wisdom in spiritual things, in things relating to salvation - which is to be desired and prayed for.

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER. *This may regard not only publicly teaching Christ, His Gospel, the truths and doctrines of it, and all His commands and ordinances, for which He qualifies men, and sends them forth in His name; but private teaching, by conference, prayer, and singing the praises of God, according to the measure of the gift of grace bestowed on everyone: and so admonishing may not only respect that branch of the public ministry, which is so called, and intends a putting into the mind, or putting persons in mind both of their privilege and duty; nor only that part of church discipline which lies in the admonition of a delinquent, but private reproofs, warnings, and exhortations;*

Beginning in Psalm 32, 13 psalms have the word *Maschil* in the 'title,' or preface. *Maschil* is a Hebrew word which, as a verb means to give instruction or to make wise. As a noun it is *Maschilm* and means one or those who instruct - it is a derivative of the Hebrew word *sakal* – which means to instruct or consider. In Psalm 32 which is a *Maschil* Psalm we read:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: i will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. – Ps. 32:8-9

It is one of several psalms written for specific instruction, but sung as a psalm.

There are 4 principal ways in which we are instructed, or taught:

1. Direct impulses on our hearts from God
2. Hearing the words of a faithful preacher
3. Hearing the words of a brother or sister
4. Reading (or listening to) scripture (and expositors of scripture)

I humbly submit to you that the young people of this body, and most specifically the young men, may not talk to one another a whole lot about the Bible – nor maybe do they consult the elder men very often on such matters. I'm guessing that this might be, in part, motivated by a self-perceived lack of meaningful input, which on the face of it, seems like a reasonable position. Here's what the scripture says:

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. - Mal. 3:16

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. - Tit. 2:6-8

I make mention of this, as the verse commands, as an exhortation, or vigorous encouraging.

5. KNOWLEDGE MAKES US ARMED AND READY TO PREACH TO EVERY CREATURE

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. - Mr 16:15

Beloved – when we are manning @wbcsays, or putting up a page for a website, or holding a sign that ends up in an AP photo, we are going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature. Preaching, by definition, implies at least a claimed knowledge. For us, it is an absolute must. Even when we hold picket signs out on the street, we must have solid, Bible-based expositions for why we carry that sign.

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. - Eze. 16:2

We're not talking about casting our pearls before swine, here. We know that our preaching to the reprobate masses condemns them. But the Lord also sends us to His sheep, and we don't always know who they are for a while.

6.KNOWLEDGE PREPARES US TO MORE FULLY PRAISE AND GLORIFY HIS NAME.

There is nothing more refreshing than contemplating, especially with some fresh new nugget of knowledge, the attributes of God – to behold His beauty and enquire in His temple, as the psalmist, and each of us, desires.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. - Ps 139:14

But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: - 1Pe 2:9

The more we know of our God's attributes, through that part of His will that He has revealed to us – called His word, the better able we are to praise and glorify His name.

Ye that fear the lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. - Ps 22:23

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. - Rom. 15:4-6

TO BE LIKEMINDED TOWARD ONE ANOTHER ACCORDING TO CHRIST JESUS (Gill): *or, according to the doctrine of Christ, which teaches, directs, and engages, as to sameness of judgment and practice, so to mutual love and affection; and according to the new commandment of Christ, which obliges to love one another; and according to the example of Christ, who is the great pattern of patience and forbearance, of meekness and humility, of condescension and goodness, and of equal love and affection to all His members.*

I love you all. Amen.