

## THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD

*Malachi 3:16 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.*

Today, I feel like David with a burden for the young in particular, without neglecting the not so young. “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD” (Psalm 34:11). Notice firstly that David desired to teach the fear of the Lord. This means that the fear of the Lord does not come on its own but must be taught. Who can teach the fear of the Lord, then? The answer is those who have been taught the fear of the Lord by others and continue to live in the fear of the Lord; individuals such as David. David in turn learned the fear of God through his own mighty experiences in the fields of Bethlehem and under holy men of God such as Samuel and Nathan. Malachi 3:16 states that “they that feared the Lord spake often one to another”. Fear of the Lord is developed through fellowship where the Lord Jesus Christ is the center and the subject of discussion. Why does the church gather together? Simply because by talking often about the Lord we will increase in the fear of the Lord. If you are a regular churchgoer, lift up your hands and thank the good Lord for this blessed habit. It is not a small matter to be called a God-fearer. Let us not forget that when God was manifested in the flesh, he spoke often to his disciples in the space of three years.

*Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

The scripture above highlights the first doctrine about the fear of God: to know the identity of Jesus Christ. Only God can know his Bible from cover to cover, and the Lord Jesus gave the disciples a thorough Bible study about his identity. Where people talk about the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fear of the Lord will take root and grow. This is why we want our youth to join us as often as possible when we talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us talk about the identity of Jesus Christ because an understanding of his identity leads to salvation. In the beginning, Adam and Eve talked often with God alone in the Garden of Eden. God walked in the cool of the day to continue his regular habit of talking often with this couple whom he loved above all his creation. There was no problem as long as they talked often with God. The problem began when they talked with the serpent. The serpent does not care what topic he talks with us about as long as it isn't about Jesus. “And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9). Where art thou? Can be

extended to include “Why aren’t thou speaking to me?” Young people, the Devil wants all of you to continue to be even busier talking to other people or things – only don’t talk to Jesus. Children’s lives consist of mainly talking with three screens simultaneously, organized sports, eating and sleeping. There is even a famous slogan everywhere which is also the title of a book – *Eat, Move, Sleep* (2013). These activities cannot replace and supplant the place rightly claims in our lives.

**Mark 12:29** *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.*

**Mark 12:31** *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

It is not Jesus who needs your attention, young person. You need the attention of Jesus because he created you in his image, loved you so much that he gave his body as a sacrifice to purchase you back from the power sin and enjoy his gifts of grace: love, joy, peace, righteousness etc. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22,23). To put it another way, you will never know who you are, what the purpose of your life is and where you are going after this life if you do not know the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Today many youths are experiencing an identity crisis. Am I male, female, trans or none of the above; am I gay or straight; am I black, white, mixed or other – the list goes on and on. An Indian woman recently married herself<sup>1</sup>; I had to learn a new English word, sologamy. There is even a branch of philosophy called deconstructionism associated with a French philosopher called Jacques Derrida. Simply put, Derrida states that a person is always developing and changing views and positions throughout life. As such, he cautions against saying “I” with any confidence. This led to what has been called the “death of the subject” – confidence in one’s own evaluation and integrity as a whole person was undermined. Contrary to the above, what does the Lord Jesus Christ say about this?

**John 8:32** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

**John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61671032>

God does not leave us in confusion. Remember that when our first parents spoke to the serpent chaos ensued. Who are you taking to today, young person? What is the Holy Spirit speaking? He is saying that Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh (John 1:1, 14); that Jesus has come with a body and name of salvation to deliver us from the power of sin, death, Satan and hell. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). No one in his or her right mind can withstand the combined forces of sin, death, Satan and hell. Consider that a tiny virus, Covid-19, shook the world and killed 6,308,401<sup>2</sup> people as I write. There is one person though who has conquered these forces, and his name is Jesus.

*1Cor 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

*1Cor 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

*1Cor 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

*Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*

*Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

Amen! Let us speak to the Lord Jesus who has the power to do these things. Let our conversation lead to the fear of the Lord. Let us look again at our key verse for today:

“**Malachi 3:16** 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”. Note that the Lord heard their speaking often one to another. They were not praying and requesting anything; they just talked about God and this was interpreted as prayer in the eyes of God. In other words, those who speak about the Lord Jesus Christ will gain the same benefit as those who pray fervently. Peter only spoke about the Lord Jesus Christ to Cornelius and his household; it does not appear that he expected much, but suddenly: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Act 10:44). Wonderful things happen when we speak about the Lord Jesus Christ. The words ascend like moisture to heaven, clouds of blessings gather, and burst showers of blessings upon those who speak about Jesus. This is not the first time Peter spoke about holy matters when he was interrupted by sudden blessings.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>

**Mat 17:4** Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

**Mat 17:5** While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Yes, it is true that what Peter was saying did not make much sense theologically, but the result was powerful because he spoke about Moses, Elijah and how good it was to be there and talk more with them in tabernacles. See, God is not waiting for an eloquent, gifted speaker, but a fisherman with a spiritual heart is sufficient. Just talk about Jesus and clouds of glory will gather and bless the speakers and hearers together. I believe there is a cloud of glory gathering all this time we have been here speaking and hearing about the Lord Jesus Christ. Even without praying for a blessing, God will bless us – let his Spirit and glory fall upon you and me now. Amen! Even when it appears that things are getting worse when we talk about the Lord Jesus, just keep on talking about him – a miracle will happen.

**Mat 9:18** While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

It was a good thing that the ruler heard Jesus speaking. Whatever the situation in your life, please don't stop speaking and hearing about Jesus. The Lord was actually speaking about the need to bury the old body in baptism in his name before one can put on a new body (new wine in new bottles). The Lord went with this man whose daughter had died and raised her from the dead to prove the point that he can give us a new body (new wineskin) if we dare to trust him and die to Adam in water baptism in Jesus name.

**Luke 10:39** And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

**Luke 10:41** And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

**Luke 10:42** But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Everything else in this world will be taken away from us – even your youth will be taken away with time, young person. Jesus promised, however, that the blessing of hearing and speaking about him will never be taken away. Mary is still hearing Jesus in heaven, and we must promise ourselves and pray that we will never stop talking often with each other about Jesus. Amen!