



Bethel Sunrise Sermon Notes – “*Fear That Draws Near*”

Speaker: Ps Preston Dobbins

Series: Awesome God

Scripture: Proverbs 8:13, Exodus 19–20, Revelation 1

Main Idea

The fear of the Lord is not a fearful distance from God, but a reverent awe that draws us closer to Him. As our awe of God grows, our fear of everything else diminishes, and we learn to hate sin while pursuing His presence.

As we begin our new series, **Awesome God**, we're exploring one of the most neglected yet transformative themes in Scripture: **the fear of the Lord**.

Many believers have become comfortable treating God casually, assuming He overlooks our compromises because "He understands." But Scripture reminds us that every one of us will one day stand before God and give an account for how we lived.

The fear of the Lord is not about living in terror—it's about living in reverent awe.

1. The Fear of God Frees Us From Every Other Fear

Many people live controlled by unhealthy fears:

- **Fear of the future**
- **Fear of finances**
- **Fear of failure**
- **Fear of people's opinions**

These fears produce anxiety, worry, and even paralysis.

Scripture repeatedly tells us **not** to live in that kind of fear because God has not given us a spirit of fear.

As Charles Spurgeon said:

"The fear of God is the death of every other fear."

The greater our awe of God becomes, the smaller every other fear becomes.

2. Godly Fear Draws You Near, Not Away

The fear of the Lord is not a servile terror that causes us to run from God.

The 1828 Webster's Dictionary describes **awe** as:

"Fear mingled with admiration."

Throughout Scripture we see this difference:

- **At Mount Sinai, the Israelites shrank back in fear.**
- **Moses trembled—but he drew near.**
- **In Revelation, John fell before the glorified Christ as though dead—but he remained in His presence.**

Healthy fear doesn't push us away from God.

It causes us to come even closer.

Even with shaking knees, we stay in His presence because we know there is nowhere better to be.

3. The Fear of the Lord Changes Our Relationship With Sin

Proverbs 8:13

"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

It's easy to recognize evil in culture.

It's much harder to recognize it in ourselves.

The fear of God causes us to honestly examine:

- **Our attitudes**
- **Our motives**
- **Our hidden sins**
- **The condition of our hearts**

Some battles are obvious sins of the flesh.

Others are much more subtle:

- **Spiritual pride**
- **Wanting recognition**
- **Performing for people**
- **Wanting to appear successful or spiritual**

God doesn't only judge our actions.

He also examines why we do what we do.

4. Stop Playing With Sin

Sin is never something we can safely manage.

Eventually, what we play with begins to control us.

The fear of the Lord causes us to hate the very things that separate us from God's presence.

Rather than making excuses or keeping sin hidden, we bring everything into the light where God can heal and transform us.

God isn't inviting us to stay on the edges of His presence.

He is inviting us to come fully near.

Final Challenge

Take an honest inventory of your heart this week.

Ask God to reveal any hidden sin, unhealthy motives, or areas where you've become casual with His holiness.

Choose to stop playing with sin, bring everything into the light, and draw as close to God as possible. As your awe of Him grows, you'll discover that every other fear begins to lose its grip.

Discussion Questions

1. **Preston said that "the fear of God is the death of every other fear." What unhealthy fears or anxieties have the greatest influence over your life right now, and how could growing in the fear of the Lord change your perspective?**
2. **What stood out to you about the contrast between the Israelites shrinking back at Mount Sinai and Moses drawing near? What does it look like to draw near to God with reverent awe today?**
3. **Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Why is it often easier to identify sin in others than to confront the sin or unhealthy motives in ourselves?**
4. **Preston challenged us to examine not only our actions but also our motives. Is there an area where you've been serving, leading, or obeying God more for the approval of people than out of love for Him?**
5. **What is one practical step you can take this week to stop "playing with sin," draw closer to God, and cultivate a greater fear of the Lord?**