



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 1/Issue 3

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

Week 3 of the Shelter in Place.

It's a new month, It's Palm Sunday and next week is Easter. The good news is that we didn't have to go out and buy new Easter outfits. We have another contribution from Pastor Chuck Vitel.

A special thank-you to Al Nuzikowski for developing and maintaining the vehicles to keep everyone connected through word and video during the pandemic.

This Sunday's reading is Psalm 66 (ESV). Titled, ***God of Our Salvation***. To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.

¹Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
²sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! ³Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. ⁴All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name." *Selah*

⁵Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man. ⁶He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the

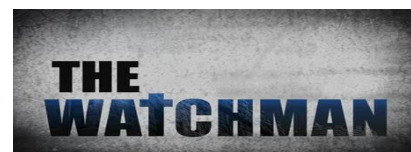
river on foot. There did we rejoice in him, ⁷who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*

⁸Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, ⁹who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip. ¹⁰For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. ¹¹You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; ¹²you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance. ¹³I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, ¹⁴that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. ¹⁵I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened animals, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah*

¹⁶Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. ¹⁷I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. ¹⁸If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have

listened. ¹⁹But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

This is another thanksgiving Psalm. For God's answer to the prayer of a particular member's prayer. It is on the occasion that this member of the congregation brought various sacrifices to express thanks. We see that God's deeds for this particular member is transferred to the congregation as a whole. The biblical worldview does not require a choice between "corporate" and "particular" rather, the particular person experiences God's love as a member of his people.



"The Watchman Notes" Pastor Chuck Vitel
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The Watchman's Notes
*Offering biblical messages,
perspectives and views on
Biblical & moral issues and current
events.*

**A Ministry of Chuck Vitel, Pastor –
Bible Teacher**

***“For thus the Lord said to me: Go,
set a watchman; let him announce
what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6 [ESV]
“Where are all the “God-Fearing
People?”***

According to the Bible – there are two kinds of Fear: [1] The unhealthy kind is the “spirit of Fear” as mentioned in **2 Timothy 1:7**, ***“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity [fear], but a spirit of power, of love,, and of self-discipline.”*** The spirit of timidity [Fear] *does not come from God. It comes from Satan or the devil – and he uses this “spirt of fear” to get into the minds and lives of people to entrap them and intimidate them for his use and will.* [2] the second type of Fear the Bible speaks of is the “Fear of God” – that is the healthy kind. It is good for man to Fear God.

Proverbs 1:7 tells us - “The Fear of the LORD is the beginning [the start] of knowledge [or wisdom], but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

The Old Testament Book *Deuteronomy* is known as the 2nd Law – however, it isn't really a second law – it's a repeat or review of the Mosaic law and an explanation concerning the Law of Moses originally given in *Exodus 19 & 20*. **Deuteronomy 5** begins with the Ten Commandments – which had already

been given to the people 40 years earlier. Most of the people listening to Moses in Deuteronomy were not even born when God gave the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai the 1st time. Moses is giving the commandments of God to a new generation in Deuteronomy.

However, Moses does more than just repeat the Commandments here. **He wants the new generation of God to learn to “Fear the awesome God”** – the same God who gave their parents the original law. Therefore, **Chapter 5:1-21** is a repeat of the Commandments of God. **Vs. 22-33 >** is a description of the scene 40 years earlier at the time when Moses originally presented the 10 Commandments to the people on Mt Sinai back in Exodus: ***The whole event was rather terrifying and apocalyptic in nature.***

Try to imagine it – you are standing in darkness all around you at the base of the mountain among thousands of people - and there is a blast of trumpets – the sound of a loud voice amplified so intensely that one could hardly bear to hear it. And overwhelming all of that was this massive ball of fire and smoke that came down and rested on the mountain. Notice how the fire dominated what Moses said and was etched in the minds of the people.

Hebrews 10:31 says – “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 12:28-29 says – “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Jeremiah 32:38-41 – also provides us with a great promise from God: ³⁸They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. ⁴¹I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.” **What a promise!**

Here is the burden of my heart today! It's a burden for the world – and for the Church! We desperately need to rediscover “the Fear of the Lord God.” The world is a mess including America – so, what is going to help turn the tide or change the direction? **Answer: A God-fearing people!** People with a Fear of the Lord God.” The present condition of the Church [Universal] leaves one to wonder ... *if the lack of the “Fear of God” is contributing to the fact that The Church is close to a spiritually dead condition? Is the Church today “Lukewarm” like the Church at Laodicea?*

[Revelation 3:15-17]

“Spiritual apathy” or “luke warmness” can kill a Church – it can kill a culture or a nation.

What our culture [society] needs more than anything today is “a healthy respect for God & His teachings – or...what is called, “the Fear of God.” Too many in the Church, especially many leaders and preachers, **seem to avoid mentioning the Fear of the Lord** ...perhaps thinking it may make people feel uncomfortable and make them less attracted to the Church.

I don't think I am overstating the case. The overall direction of the Church today in general > seems to be away from "the Fear of God" – that's a sad reality. We hear a lot of sermons/messages about the love and grace of God [and that's OK], but we hear very little about "having the Fear of God" in our life.

Is this an indication that we may just, "Fear MAN [or stand in awe of people] more than we stand in awe of God?" *That is sad!* It used to be we would say things like, "He is a God-fearing man or she is a God-fearing woman," "They fear God!" That's how we used to describe people who respected the Lord God. It was a compliment to people! *It was a good thing. It meant that a person respected the person of God and the teachings of God.* We don't hear that kind of stuff today!!

There are many examples in the Bible of how Fearing God is a positive thing - and not a negative thing.

The Bible takes "the Fear of God" seriously. In the O.T. alone, there are over 150 verses encouraging people to fear God. Yet, there are Christians today who will perhaps view the God of the O.T. as the One to be feared – but the God of the N.T. as the One that flows in mercy and grace.

Take Note: The God of the O.T. is also the God of the N.T. *One God! And He flows in both grace and wrath [judgment] just as much in both Testaments – before and after He sent Jesus into the world.*

Fear comes in many forms and a wide range of degrees. Fear can be a healthy response, and Fear can be a major motivating factor that helps to keep us from doing something that we should not do. The word "Fear" comes from the Greek word "Phobos" – from which we get our English word, "Phobia." Fear is an

unpleasant emotion induced by a perceived threat or danger; or caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat -*terror, fright, being afraid, alarm, panic, agitation, dread, dismay, distress.* **The person with phobias has an exaggerated fear** - the danger or threat is strong and very real. This is the "Unhealthy Fear" the Bible speaks of.

What does it mean to Fear God? As I have said before, the Bible has a whole lot to say about fearing the Lord God! However, the "Fear of God" doesn't necessarily mean to be afraid of Him or to cower in terror before Him. [Although at times, mankind may have to do that]! "The Fear of the Lord" is more of a reverential trust and respect for Him, a reverential awe or honor and willingness to walk in His ways.

Let us not forget that that when God gave His Law to His people – He did so with the sound of thunder and lightning and thick smoke. The people at the foot of Mt. Sinai trembled. No doubt - They were afraid of the Almighty God – because it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

One definition of fearing God that I like is: *"a wholesome dread of displeasing or disappointing Him."* It's thinking about the repercussions of our sins." **Psalm 2:11** – *"Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate His rule [governance] with trembling."* For those of us who know Jesus Christ as our Savior, Fearing God means to revere, honor, exalt, hold in high regard and esteem, worship, obey, acknowledge as worthy, and honor Him as our Creator and Judge.

Now, to the contrary, the unbelievers or the lost, who are without Christ in their

life, and living in sin: they have good reason to "Fear God" in the general sense of the meaning – that is; to be afraid of God, or to dread Him, because they are not right with Him and they are destined for judgment and condemnation. But if we are God's "Redeemed people," saved by the Blood of Christ, there is no reason to be afraid, or have dread, or be terrified of God. We have no reason to be scared of God.

We have God's promises *"that nothing can separate us from His love"* **[Romans 8:38-39]** and that *"He will never leave us or forsake us"* **[Hebrews 13:5; Deut. 31:8].**

In fact, we have every reason to show Him *reverence, respect, and honor Him.* – and likewise, to respect his Wrath and Anger. We need to know the Love of God and we need to have the Fear of God. They are both important.

Only the wicked have no fear of God, but when God came into the Garden of Eden, after the sinful disobedience of Adam and Eve **[Genesis 3]** - His Love overwhelmed *the fear of Adam.* God reached out to Adam and Eve and embraced them with His promises and His love. *"There is no fear in love. Perfect Love casts out fear!"* **[1John 4:18]**

Love and the right kind of fear are inseparable companions. So, I want to remind all of us - that it is often through *"Reverent fear of God"* that we come to Christ and redemption. Therefore; the Church cannot neglect, or sugar-coat, or avoid preaching about the fear of God.

- **Fearing the Lord God will make us wise – Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 11:10** – without the

Fear of God, you will make the wrong decisions, you will choose the wrong path in life, and you will mess up your life.

- **Fearing the Lord God will keep us from sin and evil - Proverbs 16:6** – it’s like a car brake against sin and we’ll be quick to repent of our sins.
- **Fearing the Lord God will motivate our Evangelism – 2 Corinthians 5:11** – we be more apt to *persuade others* to declare the unique glory of God’s one and Holy Son and to come to Him in faith.
- **Fearing the Lord God will elevate our worship of God – 1 Corinthians 14:25; Hebrews 12:28-29** – our worship is lifted up and God’s people come before Him with reverence and awe.
- **Fearing the Lord God will make you more like Jesus – Isaiah 11:2-3** – The Fear of God is the “soul of godliness.”

In conclusion, *the Fear of the Lord God* is mentioned frequently throughout the Bible as the “*beginning of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.*” The Fear of God is a good thing – and when people don’t fear God – they do bad and evil things! **Listen my friends, the wisest decision we can ever make is to “Fear the living God” - by honoring, obeying, exalting, serving, loving, worshipping, and trusting Him for our Salvation.** Amen.

Psalm 112:1, 8 - “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord... His heart is secure, he will have no fear.”

Pastor Vitel’s message this week provides a perfect segue into something that was mentioned in the Wednesday night bible study of March 25. Fear of God and its juxtaposition, the Love of God.

It appears that when we are struggling we turn to whatever source we feel offers the most credibility. We start to believe “blindly” over “scripturally” the powers of human knowledge. And we end up even more confused, frustrated and fearful. We don’t know how to respond to messages and lack of information with which we are bombarded. Not knowing what to expect occurs when we don’t have enough information about the change and we’re expected to take a ‘leap of faith’. This can result in a lot of anxious feelings. We need to realize that we have not plumbed the depths of the universe or conquered nature. As finite humans we have not even begun to scratch the surface.

We question God, “How can you let this happen?” Is it that we forget that everything that happens, happens because of a divine purpose of God; otherwise it could not happen! And with the right knowledge of the Love and Fear of God will give us comfort.

We need to realize that everything that comes from God’s divine purpose is for our benefit. What we see today is the world shutting down. It’s causing us to change our routines. And change in turn, causes fear. And fear is one of the most common reasons for resistance to change because it stops you taking any action at all. It causes us to shut down, just like everything around us today. The absence of so many things that have become natural in our lives, working,

dining out, going to concerts, the opera, plays, is causing us to change our habits. What we fail to realize is that we are now free. We are liberated from the “priorities” that we have made a part of our lives. These things that we thought were so important are no longer there.

We can now relax. WE CAN CHANGE OUR HABITS. We now have the opportunity to change these habits that have become normal; even some habits that we may have been putting off changing for a long time. Everything around us is changing; its an opportunity for us to change.

We are encouraged by these events to rethink where we were putting our priorities and energies. What are we living for? Change is being done for us. The world will be a different place. As Christians we need to seize the new opportunities afforded us; to become better in all aspects of our lives, in the way we approach worship, in the way we approach our devotional life; in the way we approach evangelism.

All habits can be challenged and all fears can be dismissed. This is the time to think about our mission. To think about others. This is not a punishment.





PRAYER LIST

✓ **Continuing Prayers for loss:**

All the families that have lost loved ones this past year families.

✓ **Continuing Prayers for physical needs:**

Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria

✓ **Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs:**

The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support of the church during the Virus

✓ **Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries:**

BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy Bartolome, Pastor and Sue Vitel

✓ **Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs:**

Leonard Hatfield

✓ **Continuing Prayers for:**

The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families

✓ **New Requests:**

Erwin & Elizabeth Lickman as they are quarantined from each other.

Mary Grace Reyes is the mother of Anne Benliros closest friend she's in ICU in California with COVID-19. Her daughter in Washington State can't travel to be with her. Pray for the family.

Mylin Lardizabal - My husband and I are both nurses and were told that we will be pulled to other areas as needed. We are very willing to help and do our jobs but also scared to get expose to this virus due to lack of supplies such as masks, eyeshields, gloves. The shortage of PPEs are very real and were being told to reuse almost everything.

Please pray for us that we will stay healthy to take care of others. Our biggest concern is not getting our girls and our friends sick and that includes our church family.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

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