

LEARNING THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Peter Hay, prepared for word ministry, 11 July 2021
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Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session, we understood that there are three dimensions of the oath of Yahweh, through which Their Everlasting Covenant comes to pass.

In this session, we will revise that content, and will look in more detail at 'the fear of the Lord', which is particularly connected to *the oath of the Son*.

The oath of the Son

The first of these three dimensions of Yahweh's oath is 'the oath of the Son'. This is the promise, or the oath, associated with *the finished offering of Christ*, which the Scriptures describe as His 'rest'.

Christ authored the pathway of salvation that belongs to every person, including fulfilling the works of their obedience, which belong to their sonship. This is the full, finished work of the cross.

It is important for us to understand, in relation to this remarkable oath, that everything is already finished through His offering, and that there are *two sides* to this oath, or promise.

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE OATH

I. Obtaining what He has finished for us

The first side of the oath of the Son is the promise, or oath, assuring us that we will obtain what He has already perfected and finished for us as we, by faith, *obey His word*. We receive this wonderful promise as we obey His word. Paul called this 'entering His rest'.

Regarding this 'side' of the Son's oath, we know that Christ *learned the obedience* that belongs to our sonship through the things which He suffered, becoming the Author of eternal salvation, of eternal sonship, to all who obey Him.

The promise of entering His rest

Furthermore, Jesus said that those who would be 'yoked to Him' – joined to Him – would find 'rest for their souls'. This is the promise of *entering His rest*.

We are to *obey His word*, and we need to *be yoked to Him*.

The reassuring summary statement of this side of the oath of the Son is the promise that He will never leave us, and that we will not be forsaken in the sea of God's forgetfulness. This is a wonderful dimension of the oath of the Son.

We enter this rest *every day*. 'The promise remaining of entering His rest' is not merely, at the end, entering into everlasting life in heaven. We actually enter His rest *every day*, by the mercies of God.

By the mercies of God, we wake up each day, and have an entrance, or a participation, in the finished work of Christ today, because He has 'perfected forever those who are being sanctified'.

As we are joined to the process by which we are *being sanctified*, we are *connected* to the 'rest', which is what He has perfected for us. This is truly encouraging!

Availing ourselves of the promise which He has sworn

So, *every day*, we enter that promise, or we avail ourselves of that promise, which He has sworn.

This means that, every day, we can be confident that, as we are walking by the Spirit in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, what He has finished for us will be completed in our lives. That is a great encouragement to us.

This means that, as we journey with Him, entering His rest every day, we are overcoming the 'giants' in our lives and in our families, which would seek to intrude upon or rob us of our sonship.

We don't need to be afraid, nor to draw back from them, because *He has already overcome them*. We simply participate in the work that He has finished for us.

We are able to do this in the *fellowship* of Christ's offering and sufferings because He has already overcome them through this same process.

Becoming the righteousness of God in Christ

Importantly, we are maturing as sons of God, fulfilling the works of sonship which Christ has perfected for us. In this, we are becoming 'the righteousness of God in Christ'.

This 'becoming' is the reality that 'now we are the sons of God, but it does not yet appear what we will be'.

We are not yet fully mature, but we are walking in our sonship; we are identified as those who are of His house, and of His body. And, as we do this, we are progressively attaining the perfection, or the maturity, which He has finished for us.

This is our daily connection to the promise that remains of entering His rest. We can live by faith, in confidence, obtaining that rest.

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE OATH

2. The temptation to draw back in unbelief

We understood last week that there is a second 'side' to the oath of the Son.

This is that Christ swears in His wrath that those who draw back in unbelief from their participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings will not enter the rest of eternal sonship and fellowship in Yahweh. He said, 'I swore in My wrath they will not enter in.'

We understood from the example of the children of Israel that it was because of *unbelief* and *disobedience to the word* calling them to enter.

The fear of death

And it was because they were *in bondage to the fear of death*, instead of learning the fear of the Lord, which is the motivation to draw near to Him and to enter His rest.

A person draws back because of the fear of death. 'The fear of death' is not the fear of the expiry of our mortal bodies; it is the fear of losing or failing to obtain the life that we desire. The fear of death grips us and motivates us.

Our view of a lifestyle that we desire

It is because we have our own view of a life or a lifestyle that we desire. And the fear of not obtaining that - or the drive to obtain it - is fear *other than* the fear of the Lord. This is the fear of death. It is the fear of losing, or failing to obtain, the life or lifestyle that we desire for ourselves.

It is evident that we are motivated by the fear of death when, like the Israelites, we doubt the word ministered by the Lord's messengers, supposing that the cultural implications of obedience to the word will be detrimental to us and to our families.

A personal view of what our lifestyle should be like

This is an important point. It means that we have a view of what our life and the life of our family should be like, and when we hear the word of the cross, we say, 'This can't be the word of God, because it will not give me the life I want.'

This demonstrates that we fear death rather than fearing the Lord. In truth, we fear not obtaining or maintaining the lifestyle that we desire.

Viewing life from our own perspective

As we do this, we view life and the implications of our fellowship in the cross from *our own understanding and perspective*. It is how we *perceive* both what our life should be like; and what the word should be, looking for the word to confirm the desire of our heart.

We do this instead of mixing the word with faith and walking in obedience to the word.

The fear of death is a way of living or engaging with a word that is *not based in obedience*.

When we live this way, we come under *the judgement of God*. The judgement on the earth is beginning in the house of God.

The continuance of preaching the word of life

In the midst of this activity, Christ continues to proclaim His word. There is, then, the promise of entering that rest to those who obey His word and are yoked to Christ.

How we *respond* to that word brings us into either rest or judgement.

Rest is the attaining of our eternal salvation, which includes dealing with our sin, and fulfilling the works of our righteousness.

If we continue in our own way, our actions bring us under the *judgement* of God, in His house. This is a noteworthy point.

Judgement in the earth will occur as people are getting on with their life in day-to-day worldly activity. This lifestyle may appear successful, yet, through it, they are being *reserved* for judgement at the end.

Becoming weak in faith

As we interface with the judgement of the Son *every day*, it is important that we know how to

respond to His word so that we do indeed enter the rest which He has promised.

When we live according to our own understanding and our own perspective, motivated by the fear of death, we come under the judgement of God.

What does that look like?

It means that we become *weak in faith*. When we are weak in faith, we are not confident in relation to entering our participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

It could be that we are simply not confident that this is the way in which we should live. We become confused. So, being 'weak in faith' is not *believing*.

The end result of being weak in faith

We may become spiritually, and even physically and psychologically, sick. This is associated with coming under the judgement of God, because we are in proximity to the word of the Son. We are failing in our spiritual being, and in our physical and psychological well-being, because of our unbelief.

Paul said that many lose their sonship over this, even while they remain associated with the church fellowship.

This is a key point for us to understand. We have spoken previously about 'falling asleep', which refers to the *death* of our sonship.

Active but asleep

In this situation, we may be completely engaged in the activities of a church, believing that we are 'alive' because of association but, in reality, we are spiritually asleep.

This was the scenario with many of the congregants in the church of Sardis. Jesus said, 'You have a name that you are alive.'

This means that they were getting about, being involved in many activities that were indicative of being 'awake'. However, they were dead in terms of *the transaction of that word as a reality in their life*.

The implications of being asleep, or spiritually dead

This judgement involves weariness; agitation, particularly in relation to the word as it comes; frustration in life - where the life that we seek to obtain and fulfil is unfulfilled, so we are

frustrated; anxiety - anxiety grips us as if we might be missing out on something; depression; rage - anger and rage; or even withdrawal, which is really a kind of rage; and scepticism of the Lord's messengers.

These are types of fruit that are associated with *not entering Christ's rest*.

Agitation, weariness, frustration, anxiety, depression, rage, withdrawal. Such emotions are indicative of a person not being at rest. They actually indicate a state of turmoil.

The word is calling us to turn, and to enter His rest

If you have this turmoil in your life, and it is afflicting you such that you are becoming weak in faith and are spiritually sick, I implore you to *turn to the Lord*.

In fact, this word itself is coming, calling you to enter His rest. This means that you need to let go of your own understanding, and you need to *learn the fear of the Lord*. That is what we are teaching today.

The children of Israel, over the course of forty unrepentant years, were slaughtered by Christ so that their corpses were strewn through the wilderness. Likewise, these ones who will not turn but who continue in their own way will be blotted out of the Book of Life, so that they are left in the sea of God's forgetfulness.

This does not happen immediately. Rather, the Lord gives us a season, calling us to come.

The purpose of coming under judgement - to turn again to the Lord

When we reject that word, we come under the judgement of God, so that we might not be condemned with the world. He causes us to come under this condition of agitation, frustration etc, so that we will *turn again*.

However, if, over the course of our life, we will not turn, when we die, He will blot us out of the Lamb's Book of Life. And that 'blotting out' means going into the sea of forgetfulness. We see the connection between being blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life and being 'forgotten'.

We have time and we have opportunity, so let us now give our ear and turn to the word so that we are entering the promised rest.

Two sides of the Son's oath

Paul summarised the two sides of the Son's oath. He said, 'Therefore since a promise remains of entering His *rest*.' Heb 4:1.

The fear of the Lord, therefore, is fundamental to obtaining that rest.

'Let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.' Obviously, 'coming short of it' means that we are *not entering that rest*.

'For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them [the Israelites], but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest.' Heb 4:2-3.

So, if you are a believer, you are entering this rest *through obedience*.

So, we note that the oath of the Son included two sides. The first reveals the promise of entering His *rest*. On the other side, 'because of disobedience', He swears, in His wrath, that they will *not enter His rest*.

We read further, 'As He has said, "So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest", although His works were finished from the foundation of the world'. Heb 4:3.

So, one aspect of the oath has to do with the fact that the works were *finished from the foundation of the world*.

Three dimensions of the oath of Yahweh

So, there is the oath of the Son, and it has two sides.

And there is the dual oath of the Father, which is *kingship* and *priesthood*.

The second and third dimensions of the oath of Yahweh are the dual oath of the Father, designating *Christ as King* - assuring me of the authority of my name in Him - and as *High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek* - assuring me of an eternal service as a priest to God as part of the temple of His body.

In our next session, I will take some time to explain why failing to acknowledge the oath of the Son leads to corruption in relation to kingship and priesthood. I will explain this through the examples of Saul and Jehoshaphat.

The importance of understanding 'the fear of the Lord'

Our focus today is on 'the fear of the Lord', knowing that this is fundamental to our obtaining the promised rest.

The example of the children of Israel teaches us that obtaining the promised rest of sonship, as those who live by offering in the fellowship of Yahweh, requires us to *fear* the Lord.

'Therefore since a promise remains of entering His rest, *let us fear*, lest any of you seem to come short of it.'

If we do not have the fear of the Lord, we will fall short of entering His rest. This highlights the point that the fear of the Lord is fundamental to *believing* and *obeying*.

The fear of the Lord - a grace which is learned

Now, the fear of the Lord is not a quality that is innate to any person. I want to make this point 'crystal clear' to us.

The fear of the Lord is *not innate within a person*.

Rather, it is *learned* by giving our ear to the ministry of the word *through the overseership of the church which is established by Christ*. It comes through a *shepherding* initiative toward us - through the overseership of His house.

The word that is ministered is Spirit and life. It is important to understand this, because the dimension of the fear of the Lord is actually *a spiritual grace*.

We learn the fear of the Lord by giving our ear to the ministry of the word through the overseership of the church, which is the shepherding initiative that is established by Christ.

David's instruction to Israel

We see this in the instruction of King David.

'Come, to Me, you children, listen to Me [give your ear to the word]; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' Psa 34:11.

He was speaking to people who were already *sons of God*. Remember, this was the major issue concerning the children of Israel.

They had already been delivered out of Egypt; they had already been brought to the Father as the firstborn; they had already been baptised, but

they failed to enter, because they did not fear God.

David was proclaiming, 'Come to Me, you who are born of God. You need to keep coming to Christ.'

Driven by the fear of death to seek another word

'Giving ear' to any other voice, including the consensus of fellow congregants in the church, is motivated by the fear of death. The fear of death will drive you to seek another word or to believe another word or to doubt the word of the Shepherd, Christ, through His overseers in His house.

The fear of death will drive you to not only pursue other words, but also to become confused; to begin to doubt that this could be the word of Christ.

We know that this happened. This point of consensus with fellow congregants happened to the children of Israel who, having claimed that their wives and children would be victims of the direction of the Lord to enter the land, spoke to one another and determined the best course of cultural action, thus establishing an alternative fellowship.

Israel's disobedience a lesson for us

This is very important. Under the pressure of life, and our fear of 'the giants in the land of our inheritance', we will look for consensus with other people who are pursuing a similar lifestyle to ours.

And, motivated by the fear of death, we will believe that our consensus together is the truth. Then we will malign the word which promises us the rest that we are to enter.

This is a delusion. It is another example of 'mixed wine' - the outcome of mixed wine.

We remember that the children of Israel stood apart from Moses and Aaron, who were the Lord's anointed. However, the Lord's anointed had been joined by Joshua and Caleb.

'So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt".' Num 14:4.

Consensus – the antithesis of living in one Spirit

Do you see that this form of 'speaking to one another' is consensus; it is *another fellowship*, over and against the Lord's *anointed*.

It was against Moses and Aaron, who had been joined by Joshua and Caleb in a fellowship of one-Spirit. This is where one-Spirit fellowship is.

Yet the multitude of people was over and against that. Do not think, for even a moment, that consensus and weight of numbers is where the truth is.

The *truth* is where it is being proclaimed by the Lord's *anointing*.

Questioning the word of God

For most believers, the issue is not, 'Will I obey God or not?' We are, by definition, those who proclaim that we are living by God's word; otherwise, we would not be believers.

The issue for most believers, isn't whether or not they will obey God. Rather, it is 'What is the word of God and where does it come from?'

It is either the dictates of our own heart - what we *think* God is saying; or it is consensus with like-minded people; or it is receiving the word through the administration that Christ Himself has established and through whom He is sending His word.

A person who fears the Lord *will not be confused on this point*.

Caleb and Joshua feared the Lord. They said, 'Do not be afraid of these giants. We are well able to overcome.'

Their association was clearly with Moses and Aaron, the Lord's anointed, whom the whole nation were maligning.

The fear of the Lord – obedience to His word; diligence to enter His rest; not drawing back

It is the fear of the Lord that means we don't get confused on all these voices. If you are not learning the fear of the Lord, you cannot be anything other than confused, or susceptible to these other communications. So, a person who fears the Lord is not confused on this point.

In fact, the evidence of the fear of the Lord is *obedience to the word of His messengers*.

Paul made this very point, summarising the oath of the Son - both the promise of entering into the rest, and swearing in His wrath that you won't enter. He then said that this is the key point to entering. He explained the implications of obtaining the fear of the Lord. This is the summary point.

He said, 'Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.' Heb 4:11-13.

This is beautiful, isn't it? 'Therefore since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear.'

If we want to be those who are entering the promised rest, we have to have *the fear of the Lord*.

'Therefore be *diligent* to enter that rest.' A person who is diligent to enter the rest has obtained, or is obtaining, the fear of the Lord.

'Lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

'And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.'

The fear of the Lord - the diligence to enter that rest - means that when the word comes, which *does* expose our heart, we don't draw back. That is the evidence of the fear of the Lord.

The evidence of the fear of the Lord is that we don't draw back when His word comes and exposes us. And it is initially confronting, because He does come with 'eyes like a flame of fire' which have wrath in them.

But He does it to deliver us from the very thing that stops us from entering His rest. This is, in fact, *the mercy of God*.

The fear of the Lord – pressing into Him, His word, His fellowship

Now, the fear of the Lord is *a spiritual grace motivating us to press into the Lord*.

He grants us, or teaches us, the fear of the Lord so that we won't draw back when He comes. Spiritual grace motivates us to *press into the Lord*, into His word, and into fellowship with His messengers, when He comes with eyes that are as flames of fire.

Accepting His purifying initiative

The fear of the Lord constrains us to accept His purifying initiative.

We baulk at this because the purifying initiative is actually over and against our desire for another life, being motivated by another law. We recoil from the word which is challenging, or confronting, that pursuit.

So, it constrains us to accept His purifying initiative, and we desire to fellowship with Him through this sanctifying process.

The fear of the Lord – our possession

In this fellowship, we find deliverance from the other law which would otherwise bring us into bondage to the fear of death.

And we are obtaining the precious life of our sonship.

This is again summarised by David. 'The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.' Psa 19:9-11.

We do not receive the fear of the Lord just to 'get us through' a *process*.

Rather, we obtain the fear of the Lord *as a possession*. It is a quality of a spiritual person.

'The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.'

We *partake* of something - which is the word - *because* we have the fear of the Lord.

'Moreover, by them Your servant is *warned*.'

This is the eyes as a flame of fire coming and shedding light on our thoughts and intents, warning us that, if we continue to walk in that way, we will be judged. So the fear of the Lord holds us to this purifying initiative.

'By them, your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.' That is the reward of entering His rest; but it is also the *reward* of *possessing* what He has finished for you.

This is wonderful, isn't it? It is the divine nature as a son of God.

Worshipping Him in the fear of God

Our participation in the fellowship of Yahweh as a son of God is our 'spiritual service of worship'.

King David said that we cannot worship the Lord without the fear of God.

So it doesn't matter what songs we sing, and what activities we do, if it is not founded in the fear of the Lord, it is not fellowship with Yahweh.

Walking in the fear of the Lord

'But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; *in fear of You*.' Psa 5:7-8.

Do you see that the mercies are new every day so that we can enter that rest every day as we walk in the fear of the Lord?

And what does 'walking in the fear of the Lord' look like?

It looks like you, by the mercies of God, in the fear of the Lord, *presenting your bodies as a living sacrifice*.

Sacrifice - it is messy and bloody and painful. 'A living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship'.

This is what it means to 'worship God in Spirit and in truth'.

'As for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.'

This does not mean celebrating the temple. It is saying, 'I am coming to *participate* as a worshipper in the temple.'

In worship, He makes our way clear to us

'Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies, make Your way straight before my face.'

The Lord makes His way, which is the pathway that He has pioneered and finished for us, straight or clear before our face when we do not turn our face from Him.

We need the fear of the Lord, so that we can *worship*. And, in that worship, we receive what is coming from His face, and it makes *clear* to us the way in which we are to walk each day.

There is no confusion. There is no doubting when things are going difficult or 'belly-up'. We do not think, 'Oh, I mustn't be in the will of God now, because everything is in turmoil.'

We understand that, 'No, I have a participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, and I am entering His rest, even in this circumstance.'

No rest for those who do not fear the Lord

This is not so for the wicked. The wicked do not think this way, and they do not enter rest.

'There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters [or praises] himself in his own eyes, and when he finds out his iniquity, and when he hates.' Psa 36:1-3.

That is amazing, isn't it - they are over and against the word of God. 'The words of his mouth are *wickedness and deceit*; and he has ceased to be wise and to do good.'

Paul quoted and highlighted this psalm. It highlights the wickedness and deceit that are the words of those whose mouth is 'the poison of asps'. And it is the tongue of those who engage in 'the mixed wine' conversation that belongs to those who do not fear the Lord.

And, because they maintain this conversation, it 'bites them like a serpent, and stings like a viper'. This is interesting, because it is actually what happened to the children of Israel after they were sent into the wilderness for 40 years. Around the issue of Korah and the family, they began to complain against Moses and Aaron. And what happened? The Lord sent vipers to sting them.

Paul connected the absence of the fear of the Lord with this wickedness and deceit in the mouth. He said that the wickedness and deceit in a person who doesn't fear the Lord is the evidence that they have been 'bitten by Satan'. And their conversation then becomes destructive to others.

'There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God, they have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.'

'Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practised deceit; *the poison of asps* is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.' Rom 3:10-18.

A conversation not founded in the fear of the Lord

If there is an absence of peace, which is the evidence of weariness, agitation, frustration, anger, hatred etc, it means that you are engaged in

a conversation that is not founded in the fear of the Lord.

Those with no fear of God draw back in unbelief

Paul then said, 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' There is no fear of the Lord before the eyes of the wicked, because they do not meet Christ eye to eye. David said, 'There is no fear of God before his eyes.'

The reason why there is no fear of God before their eyes is because they won't hold the Lord's gaze. When they are confronted by the word of the cross, they *draw back in unbelief*.

This means that they trust in an alternative source of the word, be it their own understanding, the cultural practices of those whose life they covet, the wisdom of the world. There is a whole myriad of other avenues as well.

A notable technique of withdrawal is the rapidity with which they apologise as they define and express contrition for their self-proclaimed shortcomings. A person who does not hold the gaze of the Lord's eyes when He comes 'with eyes like a flame of fire' will define their own iniquity and shortcomings.

They do not allow the word itself to pierce their heart and to reveal the thoughts and intents of their heart. They diagnose their own iniquity, rather than allowing the word to reveal the condition of their heart.

In doing so, they close the mouth of the messenger, who is unable to speak to them and to reveal to them the true condition of their heart, through the word of God.

Unbelief - no rest, no reality, no spiritual sight

A deceived person cannot find reality; nor can they see with spiritual sight, until they meet Christ face to face, and eye to eye.

When Christ meets them eye to eye, He looks into their heart and exposes the attitudes that are motivating them.

However, if they do not draw back at this point - and this is true for us all - if we do not draw back at this point, we understand that, unless we are delivered and changed, we will be lost and damned.

'I swear that they will not enter My rest.'

The fear of God connects us to deliverance

The fear of God that grips our heart is not the fear of being damned; it is the fear motivating us to hold His gaze. That is the fear of the Lord.

When the fear of God grips our heart, we are able to cry out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'

And His mercy to us as a sinner is the forgiveness of our sin.

But it is also *connection to the process* by which we can be delivered from its bondage - that is 'entering His rest'.

Fearing the Lord by His mercies

By the mercies of God, we now fear the Lord. We are then able to receive the instruction of the Lord through the word of the presbytery, and to learn the fear of the Lord.

However, if, after hearing God's word, a person rebels against it, God becomes angry with them and, in His anger, He leaves them in their unbelief. That is actually the ultimate judgement, because no-one can escape their own unbelief.

But that is not so for us, 'since there remains a promise of entering His rest, let us therefore fear the Lord'. Praise the Lord!

In our next session, we will look at the implication, through the example of Saul, and also Jehoshaphat, of this oath of the Son and the way in which it affects our participation in kingship and priesthood.