

Preached on 12/3/23 at GBC – Ruston

"The TERROR Of The Lord"

II Cor.5:11

We left off in the last message with this declaration by Paul – “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.*” (II Cor.5:10) Both BELIEVING and UNBELIEVING SINNERS will be present for this “*judgment seat of Christ*”, but HOW they “**APPEAR**” before this **judgment** will be infinitely different. To all those that are Christ’s by God the Father’s electing grace, by God the Son’s REDEEMING grace, and God the Holy Spirit’s regenerating grace, this declarative judgment will make manifest to them, as well as to the entire world that they “*are the sons of God*”. That being the case, **THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF CONDEMNATION** at this judgment for all who by God-given faith believe on Christ and rest in His imputed righteousness **ALONE** as their only **HOPE** and **CAUSE** of salvation – “[There is] **THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION** to them *which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*”; “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*”(Rom.8:1,2; 33-35) But to the UNBELIEVING (both immoral, ungodly sinners, as well as sincere, religious, moral sinners) this judgment will be for their condemnation – “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”(Matt.7:21-23) Their problem is that they **DID NOT DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER** – “*And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*”(Jn.6:39,40) That brings us to the verses we want to examine today.

“*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*” Listen to YLT of this verse – “*Having known, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men*”. The original word translated “*terror*” means ‘fear’ or ‘**reverence for one’s husband**’ (I WILL GET BACK TO THAT LATER). It is translated “*fear*” 41 times and “*terror*” only 3 times. The word translated “*knowing*” means ‘to know, i.e., to get knowledge of, to understand, or to perceive’. Whatever Paul and all God’s elect **KNOW**, i.e., have been given knowledge of, given understanding of, and perceive, it isn’t something the UNREGENERATE mind possesses or can know. Paul told those at Rome of man by nature – “*There is no FEAR of God before their eyes.*” That brings up a very critical and essential question: **WHAT IS THE “terror” or FEAR OF THE LORD?** Do the Scriptures make it clear what the fear of the Lord is? Do you and I have this fear? Remember what I told you the word “*terror*” means? ‘Fear’ or ‘**reverence for one’s husband**’. The Prophet Isaiah declared this of our blessed Lord and His people – “*For thy Maker [is] thine husband; the LORD*

of hosts [is] his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.”(Isa.54:5) Paul told us – “For the husband is the head of the wife, **even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**”(Eph.5:23) This “**terror**” or FEAR of the Lord is instilled in the mind and understanding of the elect sinner in regeneration – “**Knowing (i.e., having been given knowledge of, understanding, and perceiving) therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.**” The word translated “**we persuade**” means ‘to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe’. Neither Paul nor any of God’s redeemed are trying to induce men to simply believe there is “**judgment seat of Christ**” that all will stand before. Our goal is singular – to encourage sinners to rest in that alone which enables God to be JUST when He justifies the ungodly. King David declared of this “**fear of the Lord**” – “**The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do [his commandments]: his praise endureth for ever.**”(Ps.111:10) David’s wise son Solomon declared the same – “**The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.**”(Prov.1:7) Turn over to this very familiar passage – Ps.130:3,4 – “**If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But [there is] forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**” The word translated “**shouldest mark**” means ‘to observe or keep’. The word translated “**who shall stand**” means ‘remain or endure’. Think about the meaning of the answer to this question: “LORD, if you observe or keep or record iniquities, **WHO CAN REMAIN OR ENDURE?**” The answer is **NO ONE**. But thank God the Spirit moved David to continue – “**But [there is] forgiveness with thee, THAT THOU MAYEST BE FEARED.**” The phrase “**that thou mayest be feared**” is **ONE WORD** which means ‘reverence, honor, or respect’. Only those who have experienced and understood “**forgiveness**” CAN and DO reverence, honor, and respect the true and living God in every attribute of His character as a “**just God and a Savior.**” This is what Paul declares in our text that all God’s redeemed understand and perceive – “**Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.**” Our Lord stated this best – “**It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.**”(Jn.6:45); “**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**”(Jn.17:3) All those “**taught of God**”, know and understand that God could and did reconcile sinners to Himself through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. They understand what Isaiah meant when he declare of Jehovah – “**I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.**”(Isa.43:25) This godly “**fear**” isn’t something a sinner works themselves into, but something the Lord graciously puts in the heart of His elect – “**And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.**”(Jer.32,39,40) **Let me state this as simply and clearly as I can:** The God-given knowledge of transgressions forgiven, iniquities covered, and sins not imputed causes the one who is forgiven to truly FEAR or REVERENCE the true and living God for His mercy and grace.

Notice what Paul said next – “**but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.**” Let me read you YLT of this part of the verse – ‘and to God we are manifested, and I hope also in your consciences to have been manifested’. The original word translated “**we are made manifest**” is one word in the original, which Paul has used multiple times in this section of Scripture. Paul used in in Vs.10, where it was translated “**appear**” – “**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**” Paul used it in II Cor.4:10,11, where it is

translated “*might be made manifest*”. In every instance it means the same thing – ‘to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way’. These words have to be viewed and considered in light of Paul’s relationship to these believers and the ministry of the Gospel he had been given concerning them – “*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*”(II Cor.4:1,2) Paul had been the vessel the Lord had chosen to proclaim the Gospel to those at Corinth, and now these false prophets were calling into questioning both Paul and his message. Therefore Paul tells them flat out – “*but we are made manifest unto God*”. In other words, Paul told them and us that both his motive and his message was clearly manifest and known by God Himself who sees all and knows all. It is similar to the language used in Hebrews – “*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*”(Heb.4:13) Those false teachers had questioned whether or not Paul truly preached the Gospel. So Paul appeals to the judge of all the earth and says **GOD KNOWS** why Paul preached the Gospel. Paul told these same believers in the previous epistle to them – “*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*”(I Cor.9:16) Why was he so adamant about what he declared? He knew and believed what our Lord taught, namely that the **TRUTH** is what He is pleased to use to set His people free. I like what Mr.Gill wrote of this statement – “God who searches the heart, and tries the reins, who knows all actions, and the secret springs of them; to him the sincerity of our hearts, and the integrity of our conduct, are fully manifest; we can appeal to him that it is his glory, and the good of souls, we have in view in all our ministrations.”

Look at the last part of this verse and we’ll close – “*and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*” The word translated “*I trust*” means ‘hope’. Paul was hopeful that all he had preached to them, and all that he had done confirmed to them he was “*sent of God*” to them, and as God’s ambassador had been truthful with them about man and the God whom he served. It is as if Paul was saying to them that he was certain that they too could testify or witness of their faithfulness and honesty, as well as the lengths they went to and the godly concern they had for the welfare of souls of men. This brings to my mind Paul’s words to the elders at Ephesus right before he left them – “*And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: [And] how I kept back nothing that was profitable [unto you], but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*”(Acts 20:18-21) The Apostle Paul was a living example of the Apostle John’s words – “*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not [his] brother abideth in death.*”(I Jn.3:14) In spite of all the problems and difficulties that existed in this fellowship at Corinth, **PAUL LOVED THEM**, and he sought ever and always that which was for God’s glory, their good, and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the present world.

Let me say this in closing – **HE DID IT ALL BECAUSE HE FEARED (REVERENCED) THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.**

