

We've been engaged in a short topical series on the subject of Christian or Gospel Fear—in the previous couple sermons we've been considering the various descriptions or activities of Gospel Fear—that is—throughout Scripture we behold God-fearers acting in a certain way—thus far we've seen them Trembling before the just judgments of God and Bowing before the Holy word of God—this morning we come to—Standing in awe before the mighty works of God...

Now—historically, we divide God's works into three categories—His work of creation, providence, and redemption—and each of these aspects of God's work are reason for Christians to fear God—to stand in awe before His mighty works, Edward Reynolds—"There is indeed, in all of God's works, some kind of image and footsteps of His glory..."

Now—what I intend to do this morning is rather simple—I want to examine each of these works individually, considering a couple key texts for each—and then suggest several reasons why that work in particular causes us to stand in awe of God—and then finally at the end of the message, I want to provide a couple general lessons...

- I. The Work of Creation
- II. The Work of Providence
- III. The Work of Redemption

I. The Work of Creation

1. Thus—at this point—I want to examine three texts that describe God's work of creation—and then suggest several reasons why Christians stand in awe of it...
2. By "creation" I mean all that God created in six literal days as recorded in the first few chapters of Genesis...
3. This includes moral (man) and non-moral creation (the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that are within them)...
4. Ps.33:8-9—"Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast (Ps.96:4-6).."
5. [a] WHAT, v8—"Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him..."
6. [b] WHY, v9—"For He spoke, and it was don; He commanded, and it stood fast"—this refers to creation (vv6-7)...
7. Creation was a powerful act of God whereby He created all things that exists, out of nothing, for His own glory...
8. Ps.139:13—"For you formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well..."
9. Here David speaks about the greatest of God's creation—man—perhaps I could say—the crown jewels of creation...
10. Notice he says two things about man—"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"—these are similar concepts...
11. Simply put—the creation of man ought to produce fear and wonder in man—as God's glory is most seen in man...
12. Thus—at this point I want to suggest a few reasons, largely from these texts, why we stand in awe of creation...
13. [1] The REALITY of creation, Rom.1:20—"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..."
14. Because creation displays something of God's glory—Christians stand in awe at God's glory evidenced in it...

15. They behold His power and wisdom—the very fact of creation causes them to fear Him—to stand in awe at what He made...
16. [2] The BEAUTY of creation—for example, just take a quick tour with me through the 50 states in the USA...
17. Start with the Pacific Ocean on the West coast—pass through the hot deserts, the Rocky Mountains, the farm lands of the Midwest, the great forests of the north, the white beaches of the South, and the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean on the East coast...
18. Oh my friends—how beauty is creation—how diverse and unified—seemingly all opposites working together...
19. [3] The GREATNESS of creation—my friends, I don't think we really grasp how great and vast creation is...
20. Let me suggest two aspects of creation that are especially vast—the great oceans around us and outer space above us...
21. [a] The great oceans around us—my friends have you ever given much thought especially to the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans...
22. [b] The outer space above us—my friends, I trust we agree, we can barely scratch the surface of the universe...

II. The Work of Providence

1. Here I want to do the same thing I did with God's work of creation—examine a few texts and then suggest a few reasons why these works cause us to fear God (or to stand in awe before His mighty works)...
2. But before I do that—let me remind you what is meant by providence—providence refers to God's work of sustaining and governing creation...
3. It refers to the ongoing work of God, whereby, He works all things together, to achieve His eternal purposes...
4. Shorter Catechism—"Q. What are God's works of providence? A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions..."
5. Thus—simply put—the providence of God refers to—His present and ongoing work of governing all things...
6. Every single act within this world, takes place as the direct result of God's ongoing and sovereign providential work...
7. Ecc.3:14—"I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him..."
8. There is some debate as what specific works is here meant—I suggest it refers to all of God's works, especially to His mysterious works of providence within the lives of men...
9. V11—"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end..."
10. All of His works are perfect, especially His creation of man, and yet, His ways among man are past finding out...
11. I think this is again hinted at back in vv1-8—there is a time for everything, a time ordained by God's decree...
12. These decrees are worked out in the lives of men through His work of providence—they are past finding out...
13. But—notice why He works among men—"God does it, that men should fear before Him"—stand in awe before Him...
14. Ps.66:1-7—"Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious. Say to God, How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name. Selah Come and see the works of God; *He is awesome in His* doing toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry *land*; they went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him. He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; do not let the rebellious exalt themselves (Ex.14:31; 15:11)..."

15. Ps.145:4-7—"One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works. *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness..."
16. Throughout this passage, the Psalmist refers to God's works in various ways—(v4) Your works, Your mighty acts, (v5) Your wondrous works, (v6) Your awesome acts...
17. These works are called "awesome" and "wondrous"—because they produce "awe" and "wonder" within us...
18. As we examine the entire Psalm, the nature of these works are evident—they refer to His work of preserving and advancing His kingdom in this world...
19. Notice some of the attributes displayed in this mighty work—(v5) the glorious splendor of Your majesty, (v6) Your greatness, (v7) Your great goodness, Your righteousness...
20. In other words—these attributes are manifested as God keeps, protects, provides for, and advances His kingdom...
21. Now—before leaving this passage—let me suggest the Psalmist provides three proper responses to these works...
22. [a] We must praise God for His works, v4—"One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts" v7—"They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness..."
23. Thus—throughout the Psalms, which were intended to be sung in the congregation, mention is made of His works...
24. [b] We must meditate on God's works, v5—"I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works..."
25. To "meditate" means—"to think deeply upon"—to contemplate, to ponder, to muse, to prayerfully consider...
26. [c] We must tell others of God's works, v6—"Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness..."
27. Now—I do think that this, in the first place, ties back to singing and praising—we declare His works in song...
28. Put surely it also refers to speaking about God's mighty works one to another—speaking about God's greatness...
29. Thus—let me suggest—that while we behold all of God's attributes in providence, we especially see these three...
30. [1] We see His wisdom—my friends—we can hardly grasp the mighty wisdom of God as evidenced in providence...
31. Perhaps I could illustrate it like this—think of all the individual events that together comprise each of our lives...
32. Where we were born, every trial we've endured, our present situation in life—these are all the work of God...
33. And yet—He's taking each of these events, big/small, good/bad—and He working them together for our good...
34. Rom.8:28—"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose..."
35. [2] We see His power—my friends—think how many enemies the people of God have within this evil world...
36. Man by nature hates God, and because he hates God, he hates all that God loves, and God loves most His people...
37. But then think also of Satan and his host of demons—how they too hate God, and accordingly, hate His people...
38. [3] We see His faithfulness—of all of God's providential work, His work of preserving His people is prominent...

III. The Work of Redemption

1. There is no doubt, God's work of redemption is the crown jewels of all His work—a work which the other works serve...
2. Now—before I go further let me clarify something—oftentimes the work of redemption is coupled with providence...
3. Shorter Catechism—"Q. How does God execute His decrees? A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence..."
4. But—for simplicity sake—I want to divide His works into three—and focus more narrowly upon His work of redemption...
5. Thus—by redemption, I'm not referring to the application of redemption, but to its historical accomplishment...
6. That is—such things are Christ's incarnation, perfect life, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and session...
7. Ps.22:22-24—"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard (Rev.15:3-4)..."
8. Now—I think most of you know that this Psalm describes the coming of Messiah and divides itself into two halves...
9. First—in vv1-21 we have His crucifixion, and then in vv22-31 we have His resurrection and salvation of His people...
10. Thus—in vv22-24 we have the words of our Savior, describing WHAT He and His brethren will do and WHY...
11. [a] WHAT, v22—"I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You..."
12. But our Savior isn't content with praising God Himself—but He intends to have a beloved people to praise God with...
13. V23—"You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel..."
14. This is WHAT we are to do—we are to worship God, to praise Him, we are to glorify Him—we are to fear Him...
15. [b] WHY, v24—"For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard..."
16. Now—this refers directly to the Father's answering Christ's prayer, and delivering Him from death and the grave...
17. Heb.5:7—"In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear..."
18. But—remember brethren—our Savior's resurrection can never be severed from His sufferings and His crucifixion...
19. This is not only seen throughout the Psalm—but it's represented in the phrase—"the affliction of the afflicted..."
20. John Gill—"His afflictions were many, both in body and soul; in body, being scourged, buffeted, bruised, pierced, and tortured on the cross; in soul, being made exceeding sorrowful, and an offering for sin; sustaining his Father's wrath, and enduring affliction by the rod of it..."
21. In short—our Savior is exhorting His people to worship God in fear as we contemplate His mighty works...
22. Again—as I did with the works of creation and providence—let me suggest three reasons we stand in awe of God's work of redemption...
23. [1] Its gracious source—that is—the fact that redemption can be traced back to nothing but the eternal loving purpose of God...
24. There is a very true sense, that the work of redemption is to be traced back to nothing but the loving heart of God...
25. Jerry Bridges—"His greatness causes us to stand in awe. His holiness lays us prostrate in the dust. His wisdom calls forth our admiration. But His love, rightly understood, causes us to gasp in amazement. It's not without reason that Charles Wesley penned those memorable words, 'Amazing love! How can it be

that Thou my God shouldst die for me?' We can understand God's love to a worthy object, but it's the fact that He loves sinners that so astonishes us..."

26. [2] Its infinite cost—that is—the fact that His work of redemption would cost nothing less than the blood of His Son...
27. Here we behold the mighty justice, holiness, and righteousness of God—that He would not spare His own Son...
28. [3] Its unworthy recipients—that is—the fact that all this work was done to save such people like you and me...
29. Here we behold the grace and mercy of God—that He would so love the world—foolish, fallen sinners, to give His only begotten Son...

IV. Lessons

A. If Gospel Fear stands in awe before the mighty works of God, then let us study His mighty works

1. Here I mean—Christians should ever remain as students of God's works—creation, providence, and redemption...
2. They should study, discuss, and meditate on—His mighty works—they should together stand in awe before them...
3. Ps.111:1-3—"I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work is honorable and glorious..."
4. My friends—it's a simple fact—those who delight in God, of necessity, have pleasure in thinking about His works...
5. [1] Study Creation—that is—study what the Scripture says about it, but get out and study it for yourselves...
6. CHS—"There are two books every Christians should study—the book of Holy Scripture and the book of nature..."
7. But—remember the purpose behind this study—to behold the mighty perfections of God as seen in creation...
8. Hymn—"This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought, of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; His hand the wonders wrought..."
9. And brethren, as most of you know, we live in a time where there's an abundance of good material on creation...
10. Books, video series, museums—what wonderful tools to use to study with our families God's work of creation...
11. But you know—perhaps the best way to study it is to simply get out into creation itself first hand, and behold His glory...
12. [2] Study History—that is—study the history of God's people in Scripture, and study it beyond the Scripture...
13. It always confuses me, how so many Christians have no or little interest in the history of God's work in the church...
14. My friends—you've people say that history is HIS-STORY—it's true—we should study secular history with an eye to religious history...
15. In fact—there's a sense in which we really can't separate these—ALL history reflects the glory of our Father...
16. [3] Study Experience—here I largely mean—study your own experience—trace God's mysterious work in your life...
17. Reflect upon your life in the broad sense—I often love to take about 15-20 minutes and just remember what I was...
18. In fact—the apostle Paul often exhorts his readers to "remember" what they were, before they became Christian...
19. I understand the Lord brings His people to Himself in different ways—there is a sense in which each person is unique...

20. Yes—it's true there is a sense in which every person is brought the same way—as a penitent believing sinner...
 21. But—God brings every elect sinner to this knowledge in very different ways—some young, others old, some abruptly, others gradually...
 22. But here I'm not merely talking about our experience of becoming Christians—but also our experiences as Christian...
 23. My friends—I have been so convicted in my studies this week—because I don't always give this work enough time...
- B. If Gospel Fear stands in awe before the mighty works of God, and His work of redemption is His crowning work, then let us above all else study redemption
1. Let me put it this way—we should study God's works of creation and providence—with an eye to redemption...
 2. [1] Creation set's the stage for redemption—why did God create this world, but to serve His ultimate purpose of redemption...
 3. Perhaps I can put it like this—creation is the stage upon which redemption takes place—creation is redemption's setting...
 4. And it's for this reason that redemption is actually called a "new creation"—because it also shadowed redemption...
 5. [2] Providence always points to redemption—that is—all of God's does in providence is to achieve redemption...
 6. Thu—above and beyond all His works—let us study, ponder, search into, declare and praise Him for His mighty acts of redemption...
 7. The incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, session, gift of His Spirit, and second coming—this are His might acts...
 8. Now—just as God's work of redemption is the greatest of His works—the crucifixion is the heart of redemption...
 9. One man said—"Nothing is so well fitted to put the fear of God...into the heart, as an enlightened view of the cross of Christ. There shine spotless holiness, inflexible justice, incomprehensible wisdom, omnipotent power, holy love...They mingle their beams, and shine with united eternal splendor: the just Judge, the merciful Father; the wise Governor. Nowhere does justice appear so awful, mercy so agreeable, or wisdom so profound...
- C. If Gospel Fear stands in awe before the mighty works of God, then see how far from fearing God are those who deny these works
1. To deny or ignore any of these works is a very serious crime—one that withholds glory do to God's powerful name...
 2. [1] Non-Christians—that is—those who deny the existence of God, obviously deny creation, providence, and redemption...
 3. Such people do not fear God—they believe in evolution, blind change, and deny the need for and God's provision of redemption...
 4. [2] Some Christians—here I want to mention a few philosophies common among Christians that fail to give maximum glory to God in His works...
 5. But—perhaps it would be best to end by saying—simply indifference to God's works is a common hindrance to Gospel Fear...