

**The fear of God that is pleasing to Him is faith in His Mercy**

"If You, o Lord, kept record of sins, o Lord, who could stand?", the Psalm asks, with the answer obviously implied that no one could, before it goes on to say: "But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared."

Now, this might seem somewhat strange to some of us. God forgives sin; how can that be a reason to fear Him, rather than not to? This would seem to indicate, would it not, that to fear God has to do with something other than to be terrified of Him.

Actually, throughout Holy Scripture, one finds the concept of "fearing God" associated with this: that He is merciful and forgives sins. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him," another Psalm says, and then specifies: "On those who hope in His mercy." And yet another: "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities; for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us."

This has to do with the very nature of God. He is not like the false gods of the world, who keep their worshippers as slaves, tormented and terrorised by fear of not pleasing them; the true God has revealed who He is in this: that He has come into the world, not to be served, but rather to serve and give Himself up to the most severe sufferings and the most dreadful death for the salvation of sinners.

To fear God is to honour Him for who He really is, and to hold that precious, which He Himself holds precious. It is to rejoice in the true worship of God, under His Word, in which He declares sinners to be His own, on account of the price He has paid for us, and claims us as His own, and makes us to be that.

Such joyful celebration of His salvation is a serious one, also, though; the love of the Almighty is not to be taken lightly. As yet another Psalm says it: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." Confronted with the holy One and His goodness, sinners cannot but stand in awe, and we must, in our hearts denounce all that is contrary to His goodness, all that would come between us and His love, all ungodly behaviour and false teachings by which we would not only offend Him, but also accustom ourselves to ungodliness and unbelief, so that we would no longer seek His salvation, and separate ourselves from His love.

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