

## **Sermon Draft**

**Text: 1 Peter 1:17–25**

**Sermon: “No Fear”**

Our text this morning is from 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, and it immediately brings up the question are we supposed to be afraid of God. Like kids in confirmation, we struggle to understand and explain the question, *“Why do I want to fear the Lord?”* (1 Peter 1:17).

Is he not my Savior? Does he not love me? Am I going to be allowed in his presence only if I tremble with fear? We use the word respect to convey the idea that the fear of God means we love him so we don't desire to anger him. But we also need to keep in mind that we fear him because he will discipline his children for their own good.

We are to be wary of those things that bring God's discipline, for if they are unchecked, they will lead to his wrath and condemnation.

If we go back to the original Greek word for fear, which is derived from another Greek word we get a better understanding of how fear is used in our text. It means “to flee” or “withdraw.”

We are to cling to God for all good things: his salvation, his guidance, his protection. But as children of the living God, we fear him by withdrawing from those things that anger him, from those things that replace him in our heart as God. Not that we are fearful of those things in themselves; we are fearful of what they will do to our relationship with God. If we do not withdraw from such things, then something else in our life has become what we fear more, for we're no longer fearing God.

Instead, from the Psalms (130:4), ***“But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.”*** Let us ever withdraw from those things which do not give forgiveness idols, works, false religions. We withdraw from them so that we will ever be with our God.

The Epistle asserts that eternal life won for us by God's own Son was the plan before the fall into sin and before the creation of the cosmos (1 Pet 1:18–20). The omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God of love has brought it about. As a new creation, ***“love one another earnestly from a pure heart”*** (1:22).

From the Book of Concord, Smalcald Articles: **The first and chief article is this: Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:24–25). He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), and God has laid upon him the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6). All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works or merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23–25). This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit. Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us. As Paul says: “For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law” (Romans 3:28). “That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). “For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “And with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world.**

**Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine.**

**Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.**

Well, there it is—from the Smalcald Articles (SA II I 1–5) contained in the Book of Concord, the doctrine we confess about the faith and what I as a pastor took an oath to adhere to in my teaching and proclamation. We are saved by faith in Christ, apart from the deeds of the Law.

But then hear the first verse of our text: *“If you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear”* (v 17). “Who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds.” If we are judged on our deeds, we ought to fear! Because we are mankind, which means we are fallen beings made of spirit and flesh.

We are the kind who can’t keep a promise for a week, let alone for centuries. We are the kind that witness our God on a mountain giving us his Law and then build a golden calf against that law.

We are the kind that see our God fight a Pharaoh with miracles to free us and then doubt he can give us the land he promised us.

We are the kind that will listen to demons about the needs of our flesh and will bite on the temptations.

We are the kind that stand at grave sides. We are the kind that will be in graves.

We are the kind that know there is nothing righteous in us. So, then how are we saved? Not by works, not by our own ability but only through the blood and cross of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

God judges sinful deeds. God is fair. The Law is the basis for judgment. So, one sinful word, deed, thought, or desire condemns us.

Alas, by our very nature we are sinful! We are condemned!

Money or attempts to accomplish good deeds to avoid condemnation are to no avail. Any deed that does not flow from love of God is a transgression of the Law. If our deeds are judged this way, we should fear!

Yes, God is holy and just, but also merciful. Before creation, in his omniscience he knew what man would do and become. Man would be incapable of achieving his salvation. Before the first proclaimed Gospel, before the first sin, before the foundation of the world, God determined to send his Son for our redemption (v 20).

Silver or gold could not meet God's requirements for our sin. The precious blood of Christ, a sacrificial lamb without blemish or spot, did (vs 18–19). God has promised eternal life to those who trust in his Son, trust worked by his Holy Spirit (v 21) using his Word the never-changing, life-giving Word.

By faith in Christ his Son, our judge is also our Father. We come to him as our Father, confessing we are sinful and cannot meet his demands. If he judges by deeds, am I still condemned? Is eternal life mine or not?

God cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13). He must judge in righteousness, and he must be faithful to his promises. We know we speak and act with sinful flesh. Our actions and words, desires, thoughts are not perfect.

Even our acts of love are tainted with sinful thoughts. How will we be judged? As righteous! Because Christ's righteousness covers those sinful "taints" the righteousness given to us at our Baptism, received by the faith the Holy Spirit wrought! So, the Father does judge our deeds! But our sins are not in his book of deeds! Our sins shall not be remembered.

Our "good deeds," though tainted, are righteous by the blood of Christ. Our righteous deeds are the fruit of faith, evidence of being a new creation.

Therefore, since the Father has judged us righteous apart from deeds, live the deeds he judges righteous. We are righteous, "pure," by faith. So *"love one another earnestly from a pure heart"* (v 22).

You want to serve such a loving Father by serving your neighbor in love, not expecting anything in return for your neighbor has no impact on your salvation. That has been accomplished by Christ!

Since before the world began, our Father had us in mind. He would send his Son into the flesh for you and for me, to die for us, redeem us, and bring us to faith in what he has done.

We have been brought to that faith by the Father's own living Word, his imperishable seed. That faith, trust, is strengthened by staying in the Word. As long as that faith remains, feeble or strong we will stand confidently before our judge. So, live a life of thanks for what has been done to redeem you from sin, death, and the devil. Live in love for the precious blood and resurrection of the Son of God.

In Christ, eternal life is yours now! The great reunion with all the faithful is yet to come. So now live in the freedom, the joy, the deeds the gift of eternal life brings!

Amen