

GIFFNOCK THE PARK CHURCH

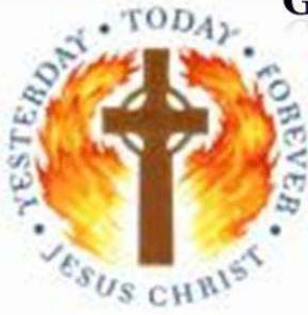
SUNDAY 14TH JUNE 2020

Our Devotional Reflection for this week: Consider what it means to Fear God

Good morning everyone,
What a week has transpired. It is not enough that we might have a Health crisis of worldwide proportions to contend with seeing millions of lives across the globe struggle with Covid19 and its health impact. Nations in Lockdown, industries on hold, travel across the world almost abolished overnight and a casualty list of hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their lives to this awful illness no-one saw coming. Yesterday I conducted the funeral Service of Wilma's Aunt whose cause of death was due to Covid19, a timely reminder of how close this is to home for all of us. Over and above all this, what we knew was coming has finally been announced and while the poorer nations of the world have always had to contend with a finance crisis of one form or another, it is now the wealthier nations (including our own obviously) seeing their economies hammered by all that has happened, a Finance Crisis greater than any seen in past History to date, greater even than the time of the great Depression of the 1930's and as if that wasn't enough our TV news and newspapers are full of all that has happened in the United States of America and the unrest caused across the globe because of the unlawful killing of a man by a person whose job was to serve and protect. In all this I have asked a strange question. At a time when we are needing to see where the story of Hope lies we will 'Consider what it means to Fear God' and I hope that by doing this reflection you might take heart and know that the Fear of God may be a positive thing in such times when the future is uncertain from all that is collapsing round about us.

With Best Wishes

Calum D Macdonald



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*Our Prayer this morning is an adapted prayer from the text of a Prayer by Ms
Debbie Nathaniel*

*“pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests”.
Ephesians 6: 18*

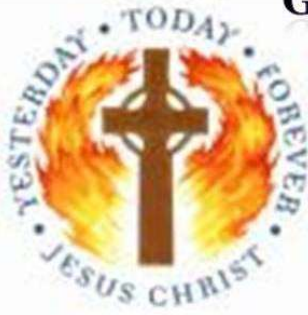
Our Gracious God and Father in the moment of these words being read, we begin by acknowledging Your Sovereign power over Creation itself. We acknowledge our need for your Love once more and are grateful for the gift of your Son as Your wholehearted response to us.

As we begin not just a new day but anew week; at the start of this day and indeed each day, help us to recognize you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of our heart that we might see you, and notice how you're at work in our lives and doing something new through our lives.

Give us wisdom to make the best choices, fill us with a desire to seek after you more than anything else in this world. Let your Spirit and power breathe upon us. Work through us, again we pray, refreshing the soul, renewing our minds. Forgive us these moments that we are distracted from your Counsel and stray from your paths. Teach us to

*trust you more and live our lives better that others may see
You at work within us.*

*Thank you that you are greater than anything we may
face in our day, particularly now more than ever before.
Thank you that your presence goes with us, that your joy is
never dependent on our circumstances, but that it is our true
and lasting strength, no matter what we're up against. We
ask that your Word lead us, that it would guard our hearts
and minds in you. We ask for your grace to cover our lives
this day. We love you Lord and we need you and remain
ever grateful to You for all You have done and continue to
do.... In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.*



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I have taken a slightly different tack this morning and rather than one specific reading brought before you a series of Readings predominantly from the Old Testament but I hope in doing so you will see there is a New Testament Application

A Selection of Bible Readings

Fear the LORD

¹² And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? (Deuteronomy 10:12 -13)

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools^[a] despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1: 7)*

*To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behaviour and perverse speech. (Proverbs 8:13)*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)*

*The fear of the LORD adds length to life,
but the years of the wicked are cut short. (Proverbs 10: 27)*

*Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress,
and for their children it will be a refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)*

*The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. (Ps 9:9)*

*Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him. (Ps 33: 8)*

*Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands. (Ps 112 :1)*

*He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and
wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.^[a]
(Isaiah 33: 6)*

*His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation. (Luke 1: 50)*

o0o

*Worry does not
empty tomorrow
of its sorrow,
it empties today
of its strength*



Carrie Ten Boom (Christian Writer & Holocaust Survivor)

quotespedia.info

Nothing in life is to be
feared, it is only to be
understood. Now is the time
to understand more, so that
we may fear less.

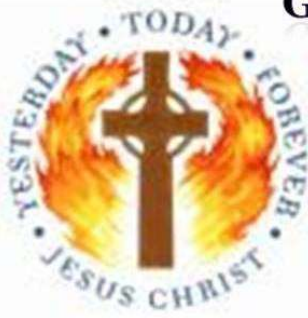


Marie Curie

**The Only Thing
We Have to Fear
is Fear Itself. FDR**



Franklyn D. Roosevelt



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Fear is something today that has been all too prevalent in our news. When there was to be a shortage of Hand gel people went mental because they panicked and out of fear arose such a selfishness with no concern for anyone else that they bought ridiculously copious amounts of the gel, probably at least a month's supply in some cases making sure they were okay and that others went without. And don't even start me on the story of Toilet rolls - what was all that about?

One of our elders was talking with a lady who was observing someone with a large trolley full of packets Toilet Roll leaving a well known supermarket heading for their car. The lady next to our elder remarked in a loud voice, " This is Ridiculous! " she said, "Doesn't she realise this virus attacks the Lungs - not your Backside?". While that comment was insightful it was Fear that was the great driving force there. It remains one of the most powerful, influential and one of if not the most difficult of emotions to conquer. The Absolute terror that fear brings on the Battlefield, we in civilian life, cannot begin to imagine and many of us, thankfully, have been spared that but it makes it very difficult for us to imagine what those in a Combat Setting have gone through and why many in the military say to those of us in Civilian Life - "You cannot begin to understand." When You compare the story of a war torn Combat situation where you are not certain to survive with that of fear of running out of 'Bog Roll' for the loo, it's a ridiculous comparison but it is fear that is the driving force in both.

Why am I Remarking about this in this way? Well it is because we often see fear as a Negative to be dreaded, And Fear has many

negatives about it. My Wilma will tell you she has an irrational Phobia (Fear) of Snakes. When we first got married all those years ago and I brought a newspaper in for her to read, as she was sitting down and as she worked her way through the paper, she suddenly threw the newspaper down and sprinted for the door and refused to come in till I had cut out the image and consigned to the bin. It was not until our 10th of 12 visits to Florida so far that I Was able to persuade Wilma to come with me on an Airboat ride through the Florida Everglades - why did it take so long? She was genuinely fearful that a snake would pop out of the water and look at her. This fear is completely irrational and difficult to comprehend why it is so. The good news 36 yrs down the road of Married Life is that she far better now than she was but that latent fear remains today.

Listed below are what is said to be the top 10 greatest fears. (I am not entirely convinced of the priority of these fears but they are genuine to many.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 01. Fear of flying | 02. Fear of public speaking (Stage fright) |
| 03. Fear of heights | 04. Fear of the dark |
| 05. Fear of intimacy | 06. Fear of death |
| 07. Fear of failure | 08. Fear of rejection |
| 09. Fear of spiders | 10. Fear of commitment |

Fear is such a strongly negative emotion that we sometimes miss out on the Positives that fear can bring. It teaches us to assess things before committing to them. The negative of experience can be positively tuned to respond to things in a better way. In short we learn to have a healthy fear of things. Scientists working in a nuclear reactor are careful not to push the boundaries beyond the levels of safety. Astronauts in Space have a fear of the unpredictable and the horrendously effectual ways in which Space can kill you but we still have a hankering to go there. The Facilities at Fukushima and Chernobyl surely highlighted the folly of not being able to work within these parameters causing loss of life and extensive damage for miles. Having a healthy fear is something that is a positive and in the most extreme circumstance keeps us alive.

As a young boy in my preschool years, my mother constantly told me to stay away from the coal fire in the living room and while she constantly warned me, I decided one day that after my mum had poked the fire with the poker, having turned her back for a few seconds, I decided in my very young wisdom that I too would poke the fire but also decided to let the poker touch my skin just blow the lower lip causing a race to the hospital for stitches. I learned two things, one that day, one years later, the first was never to do that again, I had a healthy fear of pokers and an open fire thereafter. But it dawned on me years later that an incident like that indicates the nature of original Sin, that part of us stemming from the depth of our Soul that refuses to take instruction from those who clearly know far better than we do and yet we still do not do as we are told.

The Story of the Old Testament People of God is a story of constant rebellion and unwillingness to listen to what Yahweh instructed the people to do. The story of the Old Testament prophets is usually about restoring God's people through trial and adversity of one kind or another to a place where collectively and individually they realise that maybe God does know better after all. The Story of the New Testament continues to proclaim the need for Humanity as a whole and as individuals to restore itself and oneself with God and of course we understand now that it is only through Jesus and by faith in Him that this can happen.

Those who remain ardent critics of this position say that we have become slaves to one who rules by Fear. Their understanding of that fear is wholly negative. All the various readings listed on previous pages suggest the positive outcomes for having that healthy Fear of who God is. He is "Our Father in Heaven" who has introduced us to his only Begotten Son Jesus. He is also the Maker of the heavens and the earth and one who we read in Old and New Testament as being difficult to comprehend and/or envisage.

We should stand in awe of Him. That sense of the Fear the Lord Spoken of in the Old Testament is I think primarily one of sheer Awe. It is not the blind idolatry that many today make of a

football player or team, or a pop idol, it is instead a deeper appreciation Who God is and what standing He has given to us in the grand scheme of things. The Fear of the Lord spoken of in these verses highlights the awe and wonder we should have of Him. Having that healthy fear of the Lord is something that will reveal some incredible positives...

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of **knowledge**

The Fear of the Lord teaches us to **hate Evil, Pride & Arrogance**

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of **Wisdom**

The Fear of the Lord **adds length to Life even Eternal Life**

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of **Security & Refuge**

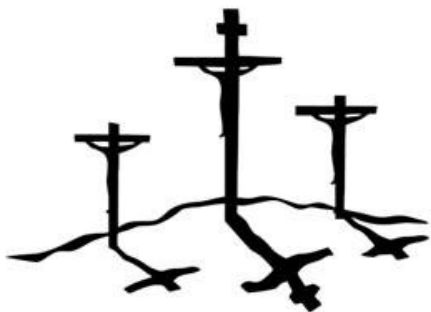
These are positive traits that show having a healthy Fear/Awe of o God is good, it offers a deeper understanding of God's needs for a Righteousness that is absolute, that is not open to reinterpretation or spin in the way that so many of our politicians, News media and social media can distort or change the truth of what is. How will a police officer justify his action of kneeling on the neck of a man causing him to suffocate and Die before God. How will politicians or an advisor to politicians justify their action allowing one man to break the rules that millions have applied to greater cost than Him or Her? How Will Presidents or Prime Ministers or Polit Bureau Chairmen or dictators, Princes, Kings or Queens whose power has been seen to be absolute, how will they stand in the light of God's Righteousness in what they have done. As I write this down, a wee voice in my head reminds me, firstly that "there but for the Grace of God Go I" and secondly the words of Jesus cautioning me to take the plank out my own eye before I look for the speck in the eyes of others. We all need to stand in Awe of the Living God, the Almighty, the All knowing, the Eternal God who knows us for who we are, for what we have done and continues to love us just the same. We can give thanks for that today because of His Son, Jesus, our Saviour

Have a great week

Calum D. Macdonald

Above all powers, Above all kings
Above all nature and all created things
Above all wisdom and all the ways of man
You were here before the world began

Above all kingdoms Above all thrones
Above all wonders the world



has ever known,
Above all wealth &
treasures of the earth
There's no way to measure
what you're worth.

Crucified Laid behind the stone
You lived to die Rejected and alone
Like a rose trampled on the ground
You took the fall And thought of me
Above all

For all that We give thanks &
Pray your Blessing upon us all
As Father, Son and Spirit , now & Always

AMEN