

DAY 9: June 11, 2025, Wednesday (Believe and Fear)

Proverbs 19:23, *“The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.”*

Proverbs 16:16, *“How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver!*

Matthew 28:4-5, *“4The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. 5The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.’”*

Romans 11:17-28, *“17But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19Then you will say, ‘Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.’ 20That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. 21For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. 22Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. 23And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. 24For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.”*

Monday and Tuesday we touched mostly on the believe aspect of the “Believe and Fear” theme. Today we want to focus on fear. I imagine there was fear in the moneychangers when Jesus tore through the temple knocking tables over and telling them they were in his house doing things they shouldn’t. He was clearly taking charge seemingly out of the blue and making wild claims that he was the Son of God and this was to be his house, a house of prayer.

In Matthew 28:4-5 we also see this kind of fear in the guards at Jesus’ tomb. They were terrified of the angel that came and spoke to the women. That is one kind of fear.

Of course we don’t want to instill that kind of fear into our kids about God. There is a place for terrifying fear, but we want them to experience a reverent fear. In Psalm 111:10,

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who do his commands have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.” Fear in this verse means to respect God and to be in awe of him. It encourages us to obey him, and in the process we gain wisdom and understanding. Proverbs says our fear of the Lord brings us wisdom and life.

The passage in Romans is talking about Jews and Gentiles. Read it in that context and it will be clear the “they” and “natural branches” are referring to the nation of Israel, the Jews. The passage is written to the Gentiles. (v. 13). This passage can incite fear in both directions: awe-inspiring fear of God that he has given us a way to salvation through his Son, and through our witness he can extend salvation to his chosen people; and, a terrifying fear to those who were the ‘natural branches’ because they have been cutoff and will stay broken off until they relinquish their pride (v. 20, 23) and accept salvation.

There are some pretty big thoughts in this passage for us to reflect upon. “Do not be arrogant toward the branches...” (v. 18). Paul is reminding us that yes, we have been blessed with the gift of grace, mercy and salvation and the Jews have been cutoff. But God reserves the right to graft his chosen back into the tree at any time. We are not more important than they. We don’t have a right to become proud (v. 20). They were cutoff so we could be ‘grafted in’ (v. 19). He tells us to fear—be in awe and respect God.

He gives us two opposing sides: the kindness of God and the severity of God. God is judge over the sinful. He shows no partiality. He didn’t spare his people from the cost and consequences of their sinful life and will not spare us if we choose it (v. 21). Conversely, he is kind to those who continue to follow him (v. 22).

It always boils down to our commitment to God in our daily life. How faithful are we to our relationship to him? We never learn it all or understand it all. It is a constant process of growing, learning, growing and learning. This is what we want our children to understand. God’s Word and our prayer life is central to our relationship with Christ.

⇒ Read Romans chapter 11 and find other insights God has for you

⇒ Pray over how God may need you to explain the fear of the Lord to a child positively

MEMORY VERSE: “...‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”