

SUNDAY SERVICE 19th AUGUST, 2018

The Fear Of Man: When People Are Big And God Is Small

Introduction

When people are big, it means that they are more powerful and more significant than God. Because they are bigger, we give them the power and right to tell us what to feel, think and do.

Proverbs 29:25

*The fear of man lays a snare,
but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.*

The fear of man is a major theme in the Bible.
Abraham.

- *Genesis 12:10-13*

Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

- *Genesis 20:11*

Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife."

➤ Power of thought – fantasy

Isaac.

- *Genesis 26:6-7*

So Isaac settled in Gerar. When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he feared to say, "My wife," thinking, "lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah," because she was attractive in appearance.

Saul

- *1 Samuel 13:8-12*

He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."

- *John 12:42-43*

Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

➤ They believed in Christ but were afraid of people to publicly confess.

- They didn't want to be disgraced
- They loved the glory that came from men than that from God.

Reasons for fearing people:

- 1) People can expose and humiliate you
- 2) People can reject, ridicule or despise you.
- 3) People can attack, oppress or threaten you.

Many names

The fear of men has many names,

- In teenage it is called peer pressure.
- In adulthood it is called people pleasing.
- In other cultures it is called codependency.

How it manifests

- 1) *Overcommitted*
 - Where one find it hard to say no even when wisdom indicates that you should.
- 2) *Need*
 - You need people to listen to you (spouse, friends or children).
 - Respect.
 - These people can control you.
 - These people begin to take the place of God.
- 3) *Self esteem*
 - Because your life revolves around what others think.
- 4) *Fear to be exposed as an impostor.*
- 5) *Afraid of making mistakes.*
 - Indecisiveness.
 - Procrastination.
- 6) *Feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness.*
 - Experiencing love hunger.
 - You need others to fill you up.
- 7) *Get easily embarrassed.*
 - Exaltation of the opinion of people to a point where they rule you.
- 8) *Lying.*
 - Those little white lies.
 - Cover-ups.
 - You want to look better before other people.
 - Covering our shame before people.
- 9) *Jealous of other people.*
 - People and their possessions control you.
- 10) *Avoid people*
 - Though you say you don't need people, they control you.
- 11) *Diets.*
 - Health eating to impress people.
 - The desire for the praise of men.
- 12) *Comparison.*
 - When you compare yourself with other people do you feel good about yourself?
- 13) *Fear to share your faith.*
 - Too timid because others might think that you are an irrational fool.

Right question

- *Instead of asking how can I feel better about myself and not be controlled by what people think, ask why am I so concerned about self esteem?*
- *Why do I have to have someone (even Jesus) think that I am great?*
- *The antidote for the fear of man is the fear of the Lord.*
- *God must be bigger to you than people.*
- *The problem with people is that we need them more than we love them.*
 - *We need them for ourselves.*
 - *We should love them for the glory of God .*
- *Let us need people less and love them more.*
 - *Do not look for ways to manipulate others.*
 - *Let us ask what our duty is towards people.*
- *The path of service is the path towards great freedom from the fear of man.*

Matthew 6:33

The main thing in life is to make the main thing the main thing.

- *Let the first thing be the first thing.*
- *This is the secret of being happy and making others happy.*

But this is not the case.

- *People do not have priorities.*
- *People are busy but doing the wrong things.*
- *At the end of the day, they are frustrated.*
- *They are leaking love tanks wanting to be filled.*

Love tanks with a leak.

Where is your strength?

- For Samson it was his hair.
- For some it is their pocket, clothes, shoes, etc.

Reputation becomes a problem..

- What people think about your shoes, clothes, phones, cars, talents, hair, etc.
- Your life is controlled by other people – by what they think or say about you.
- You don't have to measure up to the standards others opinions because God's opinion of you is rooted in the finished work of Jesus.
- Even though you are sinner, God loved you and made you righteous in his sight.
- Be aware of God's opinion of you.
- You are beloved son, a saint.
- You are alright in Christ.

Is it really Christ you are standing on or you are standing on your perceived success of and favorable opinion of others?

Do you feel good about yourself because people feel good about you?

You can be a walking love tank

- Empty inside and looking for a person to fill you.
- Are you a love tank with a leak?

Do not replace God with people.

- Let us have a biblically guided fear of the Lord.

Luke 9:23-26

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.