

Serving the Lord without Fear

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel. (Luke 1:67-80, ESV)

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Dr. Lawrence E. Bray is married with children, thoroughly enjoying being a husband and father. He is currently an Elder in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). As well as his role within the local church Dr. Bray is also an administrator with The North American Reformed Seminary (TNARS). These two positions allow him to work in Christ's kingdom both locally and globally as he strives to bring glory to God in Christ by the power of His Spirit. His terminal degree (Th.D.) was earned in 2013 through New Geneva Theological Seminary.

After John the Baptist is named, his father Zechariah prophesies. Notice that the focus of the prophecy is on Christ and not on John the Baptist. As with the rest of Scripture we see here that in everything the focal point is Christ. Even the limited praise that is given to John is from the perspective that he will prepare the way for the Lord.

Just like John, the only value that we have is in committing ourselves to the Lord's way and to bringing Him glory. Any time we seek value apart from Christ we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

In our passages Christ is said to – redeem His people, save them from their enemies, and show mercy as was promised in the covenant with Abraham. But this redemption is not for its own sake, there's a purpose to it. We are delivered from the hand of our enemies SO THAT we would serve the Lord without fear in holiness and righteousness. Fear can be a great hindrance to serving the Lord in holiness, and thus this passage speaks to a greater liberty of serving the Lord when it speaks of serving Him without fear.

One of the things that can bring about fear is when we trust in our own holiness before God. We have no holiness in and of ourselves, and so trusting in our holiness is trusting

in a lie, which always results in fear. Therefore one of the keys to serving the Lord without fear is to make sure that we are resting on the holiness of Christ; both the holiness accomplished in His life that is imputed to us at justification AND the holiness that God's Spirit works out in our lives through sanctification. Our trust must be firmly rooted in God's holiness rather than our own if we are to be fearless before a holy, holy, holy God.

Are you fearlessly serving the Lord?

If not, perhaps you are relying too much on your own holiness rather than resting on the perfect holiness of Christ. Cast yourself on His perfections and you will soon lose the fear of having to rely on your own goodness.

It may also be that you are not fearlessly serving the Lord because you don't fully grasp the love that He has for you.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. (1Jn 4:18)

Be encouraged that God's love for you does not waiver depending on how many good works you do. Rather, God loves you because you are found in Christ, therefore His love for Christ rests upon you...and it is a perfect love.

Our good works are how we show God our love for Him, not how we earn His love. Consider what Christ tells us...

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (Joh 14:15)

What an awesome God we serve! A God who has showered us with such love as is only warranted by His Son, Jesus Christ. May all praise and glory be to Him who doesn't waiver in His love to us. May we be motivated by His love, striving to love Him more in obedience even as we rely on His Spirit's power to accomplish such obedience.

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