**Fear and Trembling**

**The Word**

Read together Philippians 2:5-13

**The Big Idea**

Paul calls us to live out our faith with a posture of deep reverence and awe for who God is and a deep humility and submission to him in every area of our lives.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. The Fear of the Lord is a biblical concept that often comes with a level of confusion. What was the most helpful idea you heard about “fear and trembling” from Sunday’s message?

2. Philippians 2:12-13 are verses that are familiar to many Christians. How did seeing those verses in their context add to your understanding and appreciation?

3. It was argued on Sunday that, while the church in America seems to be opting for simplistic views of God (whether a God of judgment only or a God of acceptance only), Jesus himself consistently presents a view of God that is rich and complex. What observations would you make about the Christians around you and about yourself in this regard?

4. On Sunday it was stated that the opposite of living with “fear and trembling” is approaching your faith in a way that is cavalier, casual, and half-hearted. As you consider your life right now, is there any particular way you want to live with a greater sense of “fear and trembling?” What would that look like practically and specifically?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Paul is addressing how we live out our faith

A. The command in v. 12 is not to work for our salvation (which is entirely by God’s grace) but to work out what it means to live as saved people in daily life.

B. “Fear and trembling” represents the appropriate biblical posture in light of who God is

1. This is not a fear of God’s condemnation and judgment (see Romans 8:15-16 and 1 John 4:18)

2. Rather, it is an appropriate sense of awe, reverence, and humility in light of who God is.

II. We should live with “fear and trembling” in light of what comes before v. 12

A. God the Father has exalted Jesus to the highest place and given him all authority and honor (v. 9-11)

1. Paul is echoing the language of Isaiah 45:23 (“every knee will bow and every tongue confess”) in which God is declaring that he alone is the one true God, and one day every human being will have to acknowledge that (some to their joy and some to their horror)

2. Paul is taking language that can only appropriately be applied to the one true God and now applying it to Jesus! Jesus is LORD, and at his second coming he will be revealed as the one true Lord of the universe. Everyone will have to acknowledge it (some to their joy and some to their horror).

B. Therefore, we should live our lives with fear and trembling

1. Live our lives acknowledging that Jesus really is Lord of our lives. Bring every aspect of our lives humbly under his Lordship to honor and serve him.

2. The opposite of this posture would be to live a cavalier life in which we do whatever we want with our lives (how we spend our money, our time, what we watch, what we say, etc.)

III. We should live with “fear and trembling” in light of what comes after v. 12

A. The one who is working in our lives is none other than the living God (v. 13)

1. The Everlasting, all powerful Creator of the universe is at work in us!

2. Analogy: Imagine if Lebron James dedicated his time and energy to helping you become the best basketball player you could be. The sense of awe and privilege would lead you to be very intentional in how you go about that.

B. The appropriate response to his work is to feel honored and privileged that he would do that, and to respond with great intentionality and focus. It’s a sacred thing when God does a fresh work in your life.

IV. Our culture today is opting for simplistic views of God

A. Some paint a picture of a God of hell, fire, and brimstone who hates certain people

B. Others react to that and paint a picture of a tamed God of love and acceptance who would never think of actively punishing someone.

C. Both of those views are overly one-dimensional and simplistic, when in fact Jesus consistently presents us with a picture of God that is rich, complex, and multi-faceted.

1. He is a God of grace, love, and forgiveness but also of holiness, power and authority

2. C.S. Lewis’ picture of Aslan is a helpful depiction of one who is good but not tame

D. We can experience both appropriate fear and great comfort from our God

See Psalm 112:1, Psalm 147:1, Psalm 25:14, Psalm 103:11, Acts 9:31