

DAY 21

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

Our theme for today: Fear of God brings joy

Yesterday, we considered how Mary reflected on the truth that for those who fear God, there will be mercy. Her reflections were given voice in her song. Let's look at that verse, again.

Scripture

⁵⁰ *His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.*

Luke 1:50

Thought provokers

- Mary was so confident in the above assurance that she even declared it would be from generation to generation. In this Mary is joyful, not anxious. What responses could we have to such a notion; namely, if we fear God, there will be mercy.

Reflections

God gives us an invitation to be reunited into His family. He gives us an invitation to fear Him. There are two ways we can respond to God.

A first way of response is in our pride and in our arrogance. We state, *"God, I'm all good, I don't need you. I got this."* In such self-sufficiency, we reject God, and we walk away from His invitation. Which is strikingly arrogant, don't you think?

Why so? Well, if we take this type of response, then the future will be one of eventual judgment. If you walk away from God and His ways, judgment is sure to follow. It's no different than breaking earthly laws – there are consequences. But the consequences are alarming – they are spiritual, and they are potentially eternal. Judgement will happen. To take this path – that's arrogance.

The second way is so different. If you listen to God, if you embrace His invitation, if you take Him seriously, there will be no judgment – there will be mercy. If we can listen to His invitation and recognize and accept that we don't need to live in brokenness any more, then we will have mercy. We won't get what we deserve [that's what mercy is]. Truly, we can say, *"the fear of God, brings mercy."*

Here's a wonderful illustration that I think serves to highlight mercy.

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death.

"But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy."

"But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied.

"Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for."

"Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

God is offering you a pathway to mercy and this pathway will, in turn, lead you to joy. Which response will you have? Will you fear Him, or will you trust in your own ways? We hope you embrace this truth today: the fear of God brings joy.

Prayer and Song

Take time to pray and sing praises to Him. Here is one we've provided by Jean Perry.

That Beautiful Name

*I know of a name,
A beautiful name,
That angels bro't down to earth;
They whispered it low
One night long ago,
To a maiden of lowly birth.*

Refrain:

*That beautiful name,
That beautiful name,
From sin has power to free us!
That beautiful name,
That wonderful name,
That matchless name is Jesus!*

*I know of a name,
A beautiful name,
That unto a Babe was given;*

*The stars glittered bright
Thro'out that glad night,
And angels praised God in heav'n. [Refrain]*

*The One of that name,
My Savior became,
My Savior of Calvary;
My sins nailed Him there,
My burdens He bare.
He suffered all this for me. [Refrain]*

*I love that blest name,
That wonderful name,
Made higher than all in heaven;
'Twas whispered, I know,
In my heart long ago,
To Jesus my life I've given. [Refrain]*