

Greetings in the name of the LORD and Savior Jesus Christ! Welcome to The Well Community Church – Indian Service

## THE FEAR OF THE LORD

*A Sermon from the Life of King Josiah (King of Judah)*

**Main Text:** 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35

**Key Theme Text:** Proverbs 9:10

### 1. He Trembled at God's Word

References: 2 Chronicles 34:14–21; Proverbs 9:10; Isaiah 66:2; John 12:48

Beloved church, grace and peace to you in the holy and matchless name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, we speak about a truth that the Bible sets at the foundation of wisdom, holiness, and spiritual life: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"* (Proverbs 9:10). This fear is not panic. It is not superstition. It is not the kind of fear that destroys peace. It is reverence holy respect for God's holiness, God's authority, and God's Word.

When God's fear is missing, people still may be religious, but they become casual with sin. They may still sing, but they become careless with obedience. They may still speak about God, but they treat Him lightly. The fear of the LORD restores weight to worship and seriousness to obedience.

God gives us many examples in Scripture. Today we focus on **King Josiah**, king of Judah, recorded in **2 Kings 22–23** and **2 Chronicles 34–35**. Josiah lived in a time of spiritual decay. The nation had drifted, the temple was neglected, and the Word of God had been ignored. Yet the Bible says Josiah *"did what was right in the sight of the LORD"* (2 Kings 22:2). What made him different? What shaped his heart? We see a clear turning point when the Word of God was recovered.

The priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD (2 Kings 22:8). It had not been guiding the nation. It had been lost to public life. Then Shaphan read it before the king. And Josiah responded like a man struck by truth from heaven: *"When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes"* (2 Kings 22:11). This was the posture of reverence. This was grief. This was trembling. This was the fear of the LORD being awakened in a human heart. Church, notice what awakened fear: not a dream, not a rumor, not a fear tactic but **the Word of God**. Where Scripture is neglected, fear fades.

Where Scripture is heard, fear returns. God says He looks to the one who is humble and who trembles at His word (Isaiah 66:2). Josiah trembled because he recognized that God had spoken and the nation had disobeyed.

This matters because the fear of the LORD begins when we stop treating the Bible as optional. When a person fears God, they don't pick and choose what to obey. They don't excuse their favorite sins. They don't silence conviction. They listen. They receive correction. They respond.

And this is also where our message is firmly **Christ-centered** without comparing any man to Jesus. The reason it is Christ-centered is because God has established Jesus Christ as Lord, and Jesus teaches that we will be held accountable to God's truth. Jesus said, "*The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48). That means reverence for God includes reverence for the truth God has given. Josiah trembled because God's Word confronted sin. We must also allow God's Word to confront our hearts. The fear of the LORD begins when we say, "Lord, Your Word has authority over me."

Josiah trembled at God's Word. May God give us ears to hear and hearts that tremble, not with despair, but with reverence that leads to obedience.

## **2. He Humbled Himself Before the LORD**

**References:** 2 Chronicles 34:26–28; James 4:6–10; Psalm 51:17

The second mark of Josiah's fear of the LORD is humility. After Josiah heard the Law, he did not simply feel bad and move on. He sought God. He sent messengers to inquire of the LORD (2 Kings 22:13). That itself is fear—when someone says, "I must know what God says about this."

God answered through the prophetess Huldah. The message was serious: judgment would come upon Judah because the people had forsaken the LORD. But then God gave a personal word to Josiah that reveals the beauty of humility before God: "*Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD... and you wept before Me, I also have heard you*" (2 Kings 22:19). God notices humility. God hears humble prayer. God honors a tender heart. Josiah was a king—he had power. Yet fear of the LORD made him small in the right way. He did not act as if his title protected him from God's Word. He did not treat himself as above correction. He humbled himself. This is a lesson for all generations: fear of the LORD produces humility. Pride and fear of the LORD cannot live

together. Pride says, "I am right." Fear says, "God is right." Pride says, "I will decide what I obey." Fear says, "Lord, speak; I will obey."

Scripture teaches God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Humility is not weakness. Humility is surrender. Humility is truth. It is acknowledging what God already knows: that we are dependent and accountable.

And the gospel application is clear: without humility, no one truly repents. Without humility, no one seeks mercy. But the LORD draws near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18). A broken and contrite heart God will not despise (Psalm 51:17). Josiah's humility shows us that the fear of the LORD is not harshness; it is a soft heart toward God.

when Scripture corrects us, do we humble ourselves? When God convicts us, do we repent quickly or argue inwardly? Fear of the LORD is the heart that becomes teachable.

### **3. He Submitted to God's Commands**

**References:** 2 Chronicles 34:29–33; Deuteronomy 10:12–13; Luke 6:46; John 14:15

The third mark is submission. Many people can feel conviction. Many people can weep. But the fear of the LORD proves itself in obedience. Josiah did not stop at tearing his clothes. He moved to covenant commitment.

He gathered the elders and all the people. He went to the house of the LORD. He read the words of the covenant publicly (2 Kings 23:1–2). Then the king made a covenant before the LORD *"to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments... with all his heart and all his soul"* (2 Kings 23:3). And the people joined in.

That is submission. It is not merely respecting the Word—it is obeying it. Deuteronomy says fearing the LORD includes walking in His ways and keeping His commandments (Deuteronomy 10:12–13). Fear that does not produce obedience is not biblical fear.

This is where we keep Christ at the center without comparing Josiah to Jesus. We keep Christ at the center by recognizing that Jesus Christ is Lord, and Jesus teaches that claiming "Lord" while refusing obedience is a contradiction. Jesus said, *"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). He also said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15).

Submission is not how we earn salvation. Salvation is God's mercy. But submission is the proper response of those who honor God. Josiah shows the seriousness of obedience. He submitted his rule, his influence, his leadership, and his personal life to God's authority. That is what fear does: it rearranges life around God.

So make the application direct: do we submit in private? Do we submit with our words, our integrity, our money, our time, our relationships? Fear of the LORD makes obedience normal, not rare. It makes holiness important, not optional.

#### **4. He Removed Idolatry and Sin**

**References:** 2 Chronicles 34:3–7, 33; Proverbs 16:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 7:1

The fourth mark is cleansing. When Josiah feared the LORD, he did not only commit to obey; he removed what dishonored God. 2 Kings 23 is filled with action words: removed, burned, broke down, defiled, destroyed. Josiah took sin seriously because he took God seriously.

He removed idolatrous objects from the temple. He removed false priests. He destroyed high places. He cut down idols that had become normal in Judah (2 Kings 23:4–20). This was not a public relations move. It was spiritual cleansing. Proverbs declares, *"By the fear of the LORD one departs from evil"* (Proverbs 16:6). Josiah departed from evil—and he led the nation to depart from it too.

Church, fearing God always changes what we tolerate. When fear is real, compromise becomes painful. When fear is real, sin is not defended. It is confessed and removed. Repentance is not just sorrow; it is turning. The New Testament describes conversion as turning to God from idols (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The fear of the LORD produces that turning.

Josiah's cleansing also teaches us that sin can become "normal" in a culture. Judah had normalized idolatry. But God never called it normal. Fear of the LORD breaks the agreement we make with sin. Fear says, "This displeases God, therefore it must go."

What are the idols today? Not only statues, but anything placed above God: pride, money, secret sin, unforgiveness, entertainment that controls the heart, habits that weaken prayer, compromises that dull the conscience. Fear of the LORD calls for cleansing. Scripture calls believers to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). That is direct: holiness grows **in the fear of God**.

## 5. He Remained Faithful in a Corrupt Generation

**References:** 2 Kings 23:25; 2 Chronicles 34:2; Joshua 24:15

The fifth mark is faithfulness. Josiah feared the LORD while living in a spiritually compromised generation. Scripture says he did what was right and did not turn aside (2 Kings 22:2). And later Scripture gives him rare praise: *"Before him there was no king like him... who turned to the LORD with all his heart"* (2 Kings 23:25).

This shows that fear of the LORD is not dependent on culture. It is a decision of the heart. It is a choice to honor God even when the environment does not support it. Josiah feared God when many others did not. That kind of faithfulness requires conviction and courage.

Joshua once said, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:15). That is the voice of fear, reverent loyalty. And Jesus taught that endurance matters: *"He who endures to the end shall be saved"* (Matthew 24:13). Faithfulness is evidence of genuine reverence.

It is possible to live holy in an unholy world. It is possible to obey God when disobedience is common. It is possible to fear the LORD when others treat Him lightly. Josiah proves that a man can choose reverence even when the nation is drifting.

## Conclusion

Beloved church, King Josiah fits the theme "Fear of the LORD" because his life clearly displays five marks of reverence: he trembled at God's Word, humbled himself before God, submitted to God's commands, removed idolatry and sin, and remained faithful in a corrupt generation. These are not small lessons. They are urgent for church today.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. May God restore that fear in us—not fear that panics, but fear that reveres; not fear that hides, but fear that obeys; not fear that only feels, but fear that transforms. May our hearts be tender. May our obedience be real. May our repentance be sincere. May our faithfulness be strong. And may God be honored in our lives.

Look, if the fear of the LORD is there, that is positive; if there is no fear that is dangerous!

May the LORD bless you.