



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – February 17, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Do you have any phobias? I mean, do you have an excessive fear of something? Well, I can claim a couple of phobias including ophidiophobia. That is fear of snakes. I mean, I'm not staying around long enough to find out if a snake or is whether he's poisonous or not. I mean, I'm getting out of there but of the many phobias, the most terrifying, the most frightening is mastigophobia. That is fear of punishment.

I mean, especially when we're talking about the fear of God's punishment even more disabling, more terrifying than, than the fear of snakes or the fear of crowds or tight places is,, is this fear of God's punishment? And you know, the fear of God's punishment was once a disabling phobia for me. I mean, it was, it was far more troubling than any other phobia.

But then, but then God's good news began to sink in and to set me free from fear. As I saw in scripture that Jesus, the son of God on the cross, he took our punishment so that we might forever be free from God's punishment. We see this in a scripture that I want to share with you today over in a little letter of first John chapter four, I begin reading at verse 17 that says love has been perfected among us in this, that we may have boldness on the day of judgment because as Jesus is so are we in this world?

There is no fear in love because perfect love casts out fear for fear has to do with punishment. And whoever fears, whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. That means that when we live free of fear of God's punishment, then God's love has been made perfect in us. God's love has reached its goal because Jesus, the judge has been judged in your place, in my place. He's taken our punishment.

So if we as Christians experience fear of God's punishment, well, well, we can know that that fear is not coming from God, whether that fear of punishment is coming from our own confused projections unto God, or it's coming from Satan, the evil one who is called the accuser of believers. In revelation chapter 12 verse 10, you see because of Jesus and because of all that Jesus has accomplished for us, our text says that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, we can hold our heads high on the day of judgment.



water from rock

We may have bonus on the day of judgment. It says because as Jesus is so are we in this world? So that means today as Jesus is bold himself before the Father. So we can be bold with Jesus before the Father. That's what Jesus repeatedly says in the gospels. Do not let your hearts be troubled, do not let them be afraid because Jesus on the cross took our punishment that sets us free from any fear of punishment by God.

The great 18th century church leader, Nicolas Von Zinzendorf in his great hymn, writes about boldness before God on the day of judgment. As he writes Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are my glorious dress, midst flaming worlds and these arrayed with joy. Shall I lift up my head? Bold, shall I stand in thy great day for who ought to? My charge shall lay fully absolve through these. I am from sin and fear from guilt and shame. It may Jesus Christ and all that he has done for you and for me. May it set us free today from any fear?

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening until next time.