

“Fear the Lord & Serve Him Faithfully” (Part 2)
(1 Samuel 12:6–25)(2.27.22) Boy Scout Sunday

INTRODUCTION OF SCRIPTURE:

Today’s scripture is a sermon preached by Samuel, the last Judge of Israel, at the coronation of Saul, the first king of Israel. It is a time of transition for the nation; instead of leadership from Judges, kings will be in charge. Samuel wants to make sure they get off on the right foot, so to speak. Although much of Samuel’s authority will be transferred to Saul, Samuel is still a prophet of the Most High God.

1 Samuel 12:6–25 (NIV84)

⁶Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers up out of Egypt. ⁷Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your fathers.

⁸“After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

⁹“But they forgot the Lord their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of

the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them.¹⁰ They cried out to the Lord and said, 'We have sinned; we have forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.'¹¹ Then the Lord sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely.

¹²“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'—even though the Lord your God was your king.¹³ Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the Lord has set a king over you.¹⁴ If you **fear the Lord and serve and obey him** and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good!¹⁵ But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers.

¹⁶“Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!¹⁷ Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call upon the Lord to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what

an evil thing you did in the eyes of the Lord when you asked for a king.”

¹⁸Then Samuel called upon the Lord, and that same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the Lord and of Samuel.

¹⁹The people all said to Samuel, “Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.”

²⁰“Do not be afraid,” Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.²¹ Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless.²² For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.²⁴ But be sure to **fear the Lord and serve him faithfully** with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.²⁵ Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away.”

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"Fear the Lord & Serve Him Faithfully"**
(Part 2)

INTRODUCTION:

We all have foundational guiding principles by which we live. Some say, "It is all about me." For others, they think that whoever dies with the most toys, wins. Today, there are many that believe that humankind can solve all their problems and somehow we can bring about utopia if everyone is more educated – basically, that we are good. Then there is the party hardy crowd: eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.

These foundational guiding principles are extended to groups and organizations to which people belong. At the beginning of service today, Troop 77 recited the Scout Law and the Scout Oath. The pledges we heard were in sharp contrast to the people in my previous paragraph. A way of thinking, believing, and acting was professed.

Although my plan was to preach this text today, whether or not it was Boy Scout Sunday, it will be easy for me to demonstrate the connection to the Scout Oath & Law. Because I do not believe in coincidence, I believe that God the Holy Spirit is involved.

BODY:

We must begin by defining the fear of the Lord. There are so many scriptures in our Bible that address it. Fear of the Lord is one of the most important guiding principles for Christians. Yes, not just in the Old Testament; but, in the New Testament too: Acts 9:31 (NIV84) Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, **living in the fear of the Lord.**

Fear of the Lord is the awe that a person ought to have before God. It is an awareness of God's magnificence. That is why we sang "Majesty, Worship His Majesty." Fearing God is recognition that every person will be held accountable by God in the judgment.

"This fear is to be conjoined with love and hope, and is therefore not a slavish dread, but rather filial reverence." Filial means something that is due from a son or a daughter – like love from a child towards the parent. Synonyms for filial are dutiful, devoted, loyal, faithful, compliant, respectful, and dedicated.

The whole book of Ecclesiastes is King Solomon, Israel's third king and the wisest of men, wrestling with the meaning of life. Hear Solomon's conclusion: Ecclesiastes 12:13 (NIV84)

¹³ Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.

There are literally over 200 verses that address fearing God. And, to get the full scope and all the nuances of this healthy life-giving fear, you would have to examine them all. I will just give you a few. Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Isaiah 8:13–14 (NIV84)

¹³ The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy,
he is the one you are to fear,
he is the one you are to dread,
¹⁴ and he will be a sanctuary;

Psalms 31:19 (NIV84)

¹⁹ How great is your goodness,
which you have stored up for those who fear you,
which you bestow in the sight of men

on those who take refuge in you.

And the very words of Jesus in Matthew 10:28–31 (NIV84)²⁸ “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

You and I frequently fear the things of this world and NOT the Lord Almighty. Jesus establishes first that an eternal perspective is most important. Second, God is the ultimate authority over your eternal life. Third, God is sovereign. Fourth, we are to have faith and trust in God. Fifth, each of us is known intimately by God. Sixth, each of us is valued by God. This is the God who gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. That is the context of godly fear.

I went online and looked up The Meaning of the Scout Law from the Scouts BSA Handbook. It is interesting to me that the twelfth and last law is “A Scout is Reverent.” It seems that this is the capstone of the Scout Law. Not only does it stand

atop the others, but it also holds them all in place. It gives them strength and staying power.

The handbook explains, "A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others." The Scout Oath expands and amplifies that law: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Certainly, you can see how similar Samuel's charge to the nation of Israel is to the Scout Law and Oath. Verse 14: fear the Lord and serve and obey him; Verse 24: be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

Troop 77 (pause for hurrah), let me suggest an exercise for you. Put the Scout Law, with their meanings, in one column and those two verses in an adjacent column. Then match the connections and draw lines from the law to the scripture. I would do it for you now, but our time is limited.

Samuel is addressing all of Israel AND their new king, Saul. These requirements of a right relationship with the Lord Almighty and faithful obedience apply to the king also. No one, regardless of position or power, is exempt from

them. We are responsible individually and corporately.

Every group or community we belong to should submit ultimately to God. A Scout is **Obedient**. A Scout follows the rules of his family, school, and troop. He obeys the laws of his community and country. If he thinks these rules and laws are unfair, he tries to have them changed in an orderly manner rather than disobeying them.

What would happen if a scout was regularly disobedient? At first, they would be corrected and encouraged to comply. If they persisted in disobedience, wouldn't they be put out of the troop? Now, imagine if one of your adult leaders routinely modeled behavior inconsistent with the Scout Law. Not only would it be a terrible example and undermine what other faithful leaders were doing, they would be subject to consequences.

Being an Eagle Scout is a serious accomplishment. As a scout progresses, they learn and are given more responsibility. A scout not only expands his skillset, he learns discipline. Probably the most important thing a scout learns is leadership. At each stage of advancement, a scout learns not only how to share with those under their charge; but also a scout learns how to care for those under their charge. Having Eagle Scout on your resume

makes you a desirable contributor to any organization.

Let me point out how important the idea of "serving" is to being a scout. The concept is integral to the Scout law, using words like help, duty, and caring. And, here is one of the requirements for becoming an Eagle Scout: "While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in **a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community.**"

Recently, I saw an excellent example of servant leadership, godly leadership. As many of you know, The Pilgrim Academy is a Christian School here in Galloway. They have over 400 students from pre-K through 12th grade. Mr. Chris Storr is the headmaster of the school.

Not only is he headmaster, he coaches the varsity boy's basketball team. We were at a game recently to watch our grandsons play. During the game, a couple of the players landed on the floor leaving a wet spot. The referees called for a towel. People were looking around and Mr. Storr reached behind the bench and grabbed a towel. He didn't hand it to a player. He didn't hand it to the referees. He went out onto the court, got down on his hands

and knees, and wiped the floor himself. People cheered.

A few days later, we were at a junior varsity game, which Mr. Storr does not coach. At one point during the game, I noticed movement over by the gym entrance. Mr. Storr is in the foyer vacuuming the floormat. Although he has so many responsibilities, he remains a humble man. He serves the Lord with his whole heart. He is helpful and cheerful.

In contrast, think about Russia's invasion of the Ukraine. Do you think Russian leadership fears the Lord? They need to hear Samuel's closing admonition: "Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away." The author of Hebrews tells us (Hebrews 10:31), "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The Apostle John makes a strong comparison in his heavenly vision of Revelation 11:16–18 (NIV84)

¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,¹⁷ saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,

because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations were angry;
and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets
and your saints and those who reverence your
name,
both small and great—
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

CONCLUSION:

Did you catch, “rewarding your saints?” Who are the saints? Our New Testament makes it very clear that the term saints applies to every disciple of Jesus the Christ. If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord, then you are a saint. If you fear the Lord and obey Him, you are a saint. If you serve the Lord faithfully with all your heart, you are a saint.

If you are a saint, and think of yourself as a saint using the definition I just gave you, that guiding principle will define your thoughts and actions. The

Body of Christ, the Church, is filled with saints. Are they perfect? Certainly not. Are they new creations in Christ becoming more like their Savior day by day? Certainly yes.

But be sure to **fear the Lord and serve him faithfully** with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.