

Fearing God Psalm 31:19

Psalm 31:19 (nkjv)

Oh, how great is Your **goodness**, which You have laid up for those who **fear** You, which You have prepared for those who **trust** in You, in the presence of the sons of men!

This is a Psalm of David. Written when he was in some grave danger and calamity. Earlier in the Psalm, he makes a plea for mercy and salvation from 'his enemies'. He places his trust completely in God by saying 'my times are in your hands'. This Psalm is also made famous by Jesus when He uttered His famous last words, quoting verse 5 – 'into your hands I commit my Spirit'.

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We are going to look at 3 concepts. God's goodness, individuals who fear God and how believers Trust in God.

What does David mean by **those who fear you**? The Hebrew word used here is 'yarray' and can be used both to mean terrifying fear or to mean reverential fear depending on the context of the sentence.

So, what is the context being used here?

In verse 19 the Psalmist is also saying this individual who fears God also trusts God.

Fear and trust are usually incompatible. If one is terrified of snakes, one will not trust any snake! So, what kind of fear is that which also involves trust?

Let's see what the Bible says about this.

1 John 4:16-19 (nlt)

16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. (nkjv:- we believe the love that God has for us).

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So, we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love, because He loved us first.

John is laying out the foundation for Christian lifestyle. First of all, since God is Love, we come to understand how much God loves us because He sent Jesus to die in our place. And by faith we trust God in His word because His Word tells us that He loves us. As we mature in our Christian faith walk or as John puts it as we ABIDE in His love, or we live in God.

What do we remember about abiding in the vine from Jesus' teaching in John chapter 15? We bear fruit that will last. Our works begin to take on ETERNAL form! They are no longer worthless works that will get burned up in the fire of testing on that Day. And that is why we abide, or we take refuge or shelter in His love. We trust and believe that He is truly in control even when the storms of life assail us, and we feel like we are about to drown in various trials and difficulties.

We are no longer afraid of death and judgement! Why should a Christian be? We belong to Him and He has promised us eternal life the moment we step out of our earthly life body! Death has lost its sting; the grave is no longer victorious. Satan is a defeated and defanged foe.

That's why John says perfect love has NO fear. Perfect love expels all fear of the future Judgement!

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And therefore, we now have CONTEXT for the kind of fear Christians have for God. We have reverential fear. Not terrifying fear of Judgement! We fear to stray away from God. We want to LOVE Him and TRUST in His Word. We do not look at our surroundings and let our flesh feelings rule our attitudes and behavior!

I teach students for a living and have a small office. Most of the time, my office door is left open when I am at my desk. Sometimes, on occasion, I will close the door to my office, if I have something urgent to work on and do not want to be disturbed or if I am making confidential phone call or have to be in a Zoom meeting, or have a student who needs to speak privately, etc.

What do you think students do when they want to meet me? They ALWAYS knock on the door. EVEN when the door is OPEN, they will knock on the open door to get my attention and ask if they may enter in. Why is that? FEAR.

What are they afraid of? FAILING the class! If they make the teacher angry or upset, they risk getting a bad grade, so they always are extremely well mannered and polite. To them, I might seem to be like a human god that can easily get upset, so let's not upset this god of good grades! How do I know that? Because I get this treatment only from students in my class not from other students in the university or other universities!

One day, my door was closed. And all of a sudden, without any knocking, it swings wide open and slams against the metal cabinet making a huge sound that startled me out of my wits.

And standing there in front of my desk is the demand:
“Dad, can I have some money for a snack?”

And it wasn't because my son Nik, used the word “dad”; he could have said ‘Dr. Raj or Hey Teacher’, or even ‘what’s up bro, can I get money for a

snack'. No matter what he said, my response to him is very different to any of my students. Why is that?

He and I have a Relationship. A family relationship. Blood is thicker than water and, in this case, it was true indeed.

The real question is what is our relationship with our heavenly Father? Because the way we view our Heavenly Father and have our relationship with Him, determines how we approach Him and take refuge in Him.

Nik was making an entrance to my office knowing boldly and confidently that his Dad will welcome him and provide for him. Can we be bold and confident like that? What does the Bible say about our approach to God?

Hebrews 4:16 (nkjv)

Let us **therefore** come **boldly** to the **throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The writer to the Hebrews says that we can come BOLDLY (or with confidence) to the Throne of Grace...there is a title for this throne. It's a throne of Grace. What is grace? Getting something we DO NOT deserve. I realize that everything I have today and right now is purely by the grace of God. Nothing that I have earned to be boastful about. When we realize that all our material wealth, health, time, energies, whatever we have influence over is purely by the Grace of God; this realization has an impact in the way we view and approach God. We won't swagger in proudly, not at all. Our approach will be far humbler because of our realization of who we truly are before this "Throne of Grace".

Why do we come to the 'Throne of Grace' at all?

That we might obtain mercy and help in our time of need! What is mercy? NOT getting what we truly deserve! And we are approaching God to obtain help for our helpless situation.

Have you ever been to, perhaps a job interview or maybe a bank to get a loan? We don't walk in demanding our need. We go in very humbly. Our attitude is seen in our body language; 'can someone please help me?'.

That is what the writer to the Hebrews is conveying here. We are to approach God humbly because we realize that He is the only ONE who has ALL power and authority and therefore can supply all our need!

The writer to the Hebrews here also mentions the reason, why we are even ABLE to come boldly with confidence.

At the beginning of **Hebrews 4:16**, the writer says 'Let us THEREFORE' Wherefore? Or Why are we able to do this? We need to look at the previous verse.

Hebrews 4:15, talks about a High Priest. What use is a High Priest to us? Our entire existence is because of this particular High Priest! Jesus (Yeshua). His death, burial and resurrection is what enable us to even approach God!

Further down in **Hebrews 10:19**, the author makes it clear.

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have **confidence** to enter the **holy places** by the **blood of Jesus**, 20 by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with **our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience** and **our bodies washed with pure water**.

This verse says that our confidence or boldness to approach God is due to the act of Jesus. Our High Priest offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. His blood shed when He died cleanses our sin. God sees us not because of our good deeds, He sees we covered over in Jesus' blood and that's what makes us acceptable to Him.

And by His broken body, Jesus removed the curtain or divider so we can now approach God. The bible, in Matthew, Mark and Luke, mentions the dividing 'Curtain' leading into the Holy of holies, was torn from top to bottom.

(I had to look this up. Historically, secular literature tells us that on April 3rd, in 33 AD there was indeed a massive earthquake in that region that did damage the temple which would explain the curtain being torn apart. But

Top to bottom? Very important detail, as it is easier to tear a hanging curtain from the bottom up to the top! But top to bottom can only happen if the support beams or “curtain rod” was displaced or broken thereby tearing the heavy curtain starting from the TOP; something only an earthquake can do).

So, Jesus’ death removed the ‘veil / curtain’ that separated the Most Holy place where God would dwell in the Temple and now opened it up for anyone to enter through the sacrifice of The Son in order to approach God. God made a way for us to approach Him in Jesus.

This act of Jesus when accepted **by faith** begins a relationship with our Heavenly Father. A relationship that makes us now part of the ‘Family of God’. It is NOW that we are transformed from being simply created beings to becoming family members!

The bible goes so far as to mention ‘as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God’ (Romans 8:14). The relationship is a 2-way street. We get to be adopted into God’s family and He affirms or confirms that relationship with the promised continuous working of the Holy Spirit in our lives every day, 24/365 till we pass on from this earthly life.

Romans 8:14-16 (nkjv)

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Paul is encouraging his readers by reminding us of what kind of Spirit we are received in Christ Jesus. It is the Spirit of adoption that moves us into direct communion with God the Father.

The Greek word Abba only occurs 3 times in the New Testament and is actually an Aramaic- Hebrew word of endearment. Our today’s equivalent of ‘daddy’.

This word is also used in Galatians, where Paul is reminding readers that the Holy Spirit cries out to our Father using this intimate endearing word.

Jesus uses it in Mark 14 when He prays, 'daddy, everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me, nevertheless not my will, but your will be done'. In His most desperate time of need, Jesus approached the Heavenly Father with this request. Was it granted? Yes, it was! Jesus did not demand the 'cup be taken away', Jesus instead placed His TRUST in the hands of Father God, His daddy and was willing to accept the Father's will.

And that is the best example on how to approach with confident boldness, the throne of grace with our petitions. Willing to Trust the wisdom of our Heavenly Father that He will hear us and do according to His will for our benefit.

Abba Father.

How many times do you think my son Nik talks or communicates with me or Leena (we are one flesh!). Multiple times a day. Usually "can I get something to eat?". I'm the sucker in my household. If there is something that Nik knows his mother will not approve of, guess who he asks? Me. And then he goes back to his mom with "dad says I can have it"!! His sister is known to use the same tactic too. Communication between children and parents is a wonderful thing. It makes for a good and healthy relationship.

When was the last time we spoke to "Abba Father". I hope it wasn't last Sunday. It should be every day, 24 – 365. When Paul says Pray without ceasing, he is exhorting us to communicate with our Abba Father.

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Oh, how great is Your **goodness**, which You have laid up for those who **fear** You, which You have prepared for those who **trust** in You, in the presence of the sons of men!

What does David mean by God's goodness? Is this a blank cheque 'prosperity clause' that promises material goods in exchange for us fearing Him. Notice the Psalmist did not say 'how great is your goodness which you GIVE to those who fear you'

Of course not! We just defined who is the individual who fears God. It is one who loves the Lord, has a relationship with the heavenly Father and

calls Him, Abba Father every day. We are NOT in a relationship we God so as to get a lottery ticket or shopping cart full of stuff. We love our Father God and Trust Him with every decision we make (we are supposed to!)

David says, 'you have stored up or laid up your Goodness'.

The Hebrew word used here is 'toob'. It is used multiple times in the Old Testament. It can mean both material wealth and also qualities or values or attributes.

There are 2 things going on with the Goodness of God in this verse.

Firstly, it is stored up or laid up, meaning for the future use.

Secondly, it is also for use in the present tense, because it is used in the 'presence of sons of men or the world'. That means God is going to show this 'Goodness thing' IN THIS world while we are still alive AND also show us or give us this 'Goodness thing' when we leave this world in the future!

What then is 'toob' or the Goodness of God.

Exodus 33:19-22

18 And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

19 Then He said, "I will make all My TOOB (goodness) pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." 21 And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

Moses asked to see the Glory of God. And God says He will pass by in all His GLORIOUS GOODNESS! And will protect Moses from being consumed, not because Moses was better than others, rather because Moses found favor in God's eyes (this is mentioned a few verses earlier in the same chapter).

Now let's apply this to **Psalm 31:19**

Oh, how great is Your GLORY and GLORIOUS GOODNESS, which You have laid up for those who **fear** You. Future tense. This is for believers who are children of God, who Love the Lord in reverential fear and long for the day when the Dwelling Place of God is with Mankind (Revelation 21:3) . God promises to live in our midst. We will behold His Glory stored up to be revealed to us. No eye has seen, and no ear has heard the things that God has in store for those who love Him.

Secondly, while we are still living in the presence of the sons of men, we who love the Lord and have a relationship with Abba Father and TRUST His will (think Jesus in the Garden), God promises to lavish on us, prepare to show us, in our current life while we are still in the presence of mankind!

What a fantastic promise. God promises to work out His glory in middle of our life in front of all to see. Why? Because we are His witnesses to this fallen world. When people see the Glorious Goodness of God at display in our life, they are bound to ask us, and we must tell them the Good news of the Glorious Gospel of this Glorious God who loved us so much that He gave everything for us.

Summary:

We learnt that when we abide in His perfect love, it casts out terrifying fear of Judgement. It is replaced with a reverential fear that drives us to Trust Him in every circumstance of our life.

We love God and have a vibrant relationship with Him calling Him Abba, Father

We learnt that God has stored up for His children, His Glory that will be revealed when we dwell in His presence.

We also are comforted that He promises to lavish on us His glory while we are still in this earthly life in the presence of all those around us.