

Let me introduce myself. I'm Jeremy. I'm one of the pastors here on staff at the Village Church. I've actually been on staff for a little over five years. In that five years, I've have seven different titles and six different offices. I don't know if that means that I'm good at new things or if they're just trying to move me around. I'm not really sure yet exactly where all that falls. But my current role right now is the Flower Mound Missions Pastor. I have the privilege of overseeing things that we do in regards to equipping the body, engaging the body and sending it out that we might be ministers of reconciliation in the world in which God has placed us. So it's a great privilege to be here this morning with you. I'm here every week with you, but to be in this spot with you is really humbling as I have an opportunity to lead you in the Word, to engage the Word together.

Before we jump in, let me tell you a little bit about how we got here and where we're going to go today. About three or four months ago, I was asked if I wanted to preach in October. Sure, why not. Okay. Then I began to wrestle with, "Lord, what would You have me say? What is it our people need? What is it that I need to dive into so that I might proclaim Your name and be faithful to You?" As the missions guy, of course all the missions stuff comes in. Let's talk about going to the nations. Let's talk about what it means to make disciples. Let's talk about all these different things that tend to float my world. The Lord really pushed me in this to really press in and dive in. What we're going to talk about today is what I've been working through in the sense of my own life, in regards to the season that the Lord has me in. What I'm saying is that what we're talking about, I'm still struggling with. What we're talking about, I'm still working to walk in full obedience to. So I'm not coming at this as one who has got this thing figured out, but rather just like you, I'm desiring to be faithful to the Lord in the fullness of His Scripture. I pray that comes out in what we talk about. Hopefully what we talk about today will force you to ask a lot of questions. I've been asking a lot of questions for the last several months. I hope that our time together is fruitful but also at the same time that you don't hear this as one who's got it but one who's walking along side of you and trying to get it in the Lord.

So let's start in Isaiah 11. We'll start in verse 1 and read through verse 10, and then we'll come back and begin to talk about everything. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious."

Let's pray. "Father we come before You this morning desiring You. Lord, we desire You. That's why we're here. We've come here to seek You, to glorify You, to exalt You. So we ask that Your Spirit would be present and that You would move, that You would take hearts of stone and turn them into hearts of flesh as we engage your Scriptures. I pray that

Your Spirit may illuminate our minds and our hearts to understand Your Word. Lord, search our hearts today and let us see ourselves well before You today. Lord I pray that what I say may be from You and not from me. I would go only as far as You allow me and no further. We give this time to You. We need You. We desire You. So we pray for Your presence and are grateful that we pray with an assured hope because Christ is risen. So it's in His name that we pray. Amen."

The book of Isaiah is a very, very interesting book to me. At this point in Israel's history you have a nation of Israel who has been called by God to be the people of God, to be missionaries, to be the light of the gospel in the nations. This is what Genesis 12-15 talks about. Abraham was given to be a blessing to the nations. You have this nation of Israel, they've gone through Egypt, they've come out and they've seen the Lord demonstrate His power. He's given them the Promised Land. He's given them a king in Solomon. And now they find themselves in a time of despair and times of struggles. One commentator said, "The book of Isaiah is about God." I love that because it's absolutely true. He's saying that it's about the people of God, the rule of God and how those two things relate, how the people of God relate to the rule of God. And what's beautiful about Isaiah is there is such juxtaposition between the people of Israel and the mercy and grace of God. You have the people of Israel failing horribly, miserably, to be obedient to the Lord, to trust the Lord and to walk in submission to the Lord, but at the same time you have the Lord Who is condemning them and saying, "You are going to have to suffer consequences for your actions. That's a part of sin and a part of denying Me. I'm going to be gracious and merciful and compassionate." This is the book of the Bible where we get the whole idea that our God is a Redeemer, that He is the One who saves and calls forth a remnant from the nation that He is redeeming. This is where we find all this in Isaiah. Really, the beautiful thing about Isaiah is that it's about Christ. Over and over again, we have these prophetic chapters talking about who Jesus is and what He's coming to do in this future promise of Christ to the Israel nation. This is how God will redeem us.

So chapter 11 is about Christ. Chapter 11:1 talks about how He is the stump of Jesse, the root of Jesse, meaning that God will fulfill His mission, fulfill His plan to reconcile all things to Himself through Christ Jesus. He will take us back to Christ and from Christ. Therefore have a nation of people who glorify His name.

Verse 2 begins to talk about the power by which this stump of Jesse, this Son of God, is to reign. It's the power of the Holy Spirit. "He's been given a Spirit of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." In Luke, it said that Christ came by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brought forth Christ. The Holy Spirit empowered His ministry, led Him into the wilderness, and gave Him the power by which He did His ministry. We see that testified to here in Isaiah 11:2.

Verses 3-6 begin to outline how this King, how this Son, how this Servant of the Lord, this stump of Jesse will rule. It's a way, that should be a little intimidating to us, because he says that Christ will not judge what He sees and what He hears, simply by the outward actions and appearances, but that He will judge righteously. He will judge faithfully. He will see the motivations, the heart, the actual actions to what end does man labor. That's how He'll judge. He'll judge with equity on those things. So this is the type of rule that He'll have.

Then we go into verse 6-10 and it says, "What type of kingdom has He established?" It's a kingdom of peace. It's the wolf walking with the lamb. It's the child leading the lion and the bear. It's the child standing over the adder's den and the cobra's den and not being struck. It's the lion and the ox grazing together. So it's this kingdom of peace. It's this kingdom full of the knowledge of the Lord. We get that in verse 9. It's says the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth. In other words, we'll understand the rule of the Lord. We'll understand the kingdom of God and we'll get to live in that kingdom. Again, the book of Isaiah is this idea of the kingdom of God and the people of God and bringing these things together. The rule of God and the people of God. We have it fulfilled in Christ. That Christ ushers this in. Christ brings this in and establishes it. So that's where we find ourselves in Isaiah 11.

But really what struck me and what I want us to walk into for the next few moments is in verse 3. It says this, "His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." I read that and thought, "What? Are you kidding? Delight in the fear of the Lord? I don't understand it. I don't get it. I want to, but I don't understand." "Delight in the fear of the Lord." Those things seem to be opposed to me. They seem to be two opposites, because here's how I grew up. The fear of the Lord was talked about in two ways. One, it was a very condemning thing. The Lord is mighty and holy, and He will strike if you do not obey the commands of the Lord. And that's true. But it was a very stiffening. I couldn't move anywhere. I didn't know what else to do with it. I've got to obey or else I'll get blown up. I didn't know what else to do with it. So the fear of the Lord really wasn't a good thing. But then the other way of talking about it was it's not so much about the commands of the Lord and the right rule of the Lord, but it's this idea of awe and wonder. We see how God is great and big, how He's the creator of the universe, how He established order and guides the stars and sun and moon and all these things. So therefore, we're in awe of the Lord. We have a wonder of the Lord. That's a little more friendly, but at the same time what do you do with it? So the fear of the Lord is just an awe and a wonder. In my mind those two just don't line up. So either it stiffens me or gives me nowhere to go. So what really is the fear of the Lord.

As I began to pray and think about both these things, the idea of reverence kept coming in my mind. If we look at the Scriptures at every time, the fear of the Lord is used and we see in what context it's used, it's always this idea of complete and utter obedience to the Lord. It's always this idea of living right within His kingdom. There's both this, "He's going to judge if we don't walk in His ways," but there's also this, "He's mighty and so therefore that's why He leads, that's why He establishes, that's how He has created these things." So there's this idea of reverence, but reverence can't stagnate on itself. I'm not really reverent unless I actually am obedient in my actions and my attitudes. I can say I'm reverent to the Lord, but if I don't actually follow His ways, am I really reverent to the Lord? So this was the whole idea I began to work through. As I begin to parse these things together, look at Scripture and how Scripture talks about the fear of the Lord in conjunction with the kingdom of God, His rule, both His judgment and His might, His power and His wonder, here's where I came to. So here's the definition. The fear of the Lord is the awe and wonder that is demonstrated by humble submission to, unconditional trust in, and sincere obedience to the sovereign rule of God. So it's this idea of taking the awe and wonder of God, but there's a demonstration, there are attitudes and actions that lead to something, particularly to those things of submission, trust and obedience. We'll talk about these as we go throughout the morning of what these things are, how I might perform these things and be a part of these things. But then listen to the end. It says the sovereign rule of God is not just the dos and don'ts. The rule of God is the established order and purpose of God. It's the thing that guides all of life. It's the way we live, breath and move, how reality actually functions is the rule of God. The Lord has established a rule. He established an order and a purpose. When we talk about obedience, we're talking not just about obedience to a command but obedience to a way of life, obedience to the kingdom of God and obedience to the sovereign rule of God. So that's what we're going to talk about this morning.

As I began to pray and work through what is the fear the Lord, it came to me. Do I fear Him? Do I really fear the Lord? Am I in awe and wonder that is demonstrated through humble submission, unconditional trust and sincere obedience to the sovereign rule of God? For me, I had to answer, "Not completely. Not fully." So why is it that maybe I fail at this? Why is it that maybe I struggle with being delighted in the fear of the Lord, walking in the fear of the Lord? Why is it that I struggle in those things? As I looked in the Scriptures, as you look in Isaiah you can see this in Isaiah, how the people of God relate to the rule of God. There's three things that pop out of what makes us struggle with this. Why we struggle with this.

The first is what I'll say is a false appropriation of power. The Israelites gave a lot of power to humanity, to man. We see this is in Isaiah 2:22 "Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?" This is God saying, "Here I'm going to establishing my kingdom. I'm going to come. I'm going to judge." The last thing He says is, "Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?" He's telling the nation of Israel, "You're giving men a lot

of power. You're giving humanity a lot of power." This is demonstrated in a couple of ways. It's demonstrated in power over life. The Israelite nation gave the surrounding kingdoms power over their lives. They feared for their lives. They feared the attacks of the Assyrians, and the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and all these surrounding nations. They feared them. So what did they do? They feared the men that they could take their lives, so they compromised the commands of God to not be joined with other foreign nations. They compromised on worshiping of idols. They compromised on obedience to the Lord in regards to how His worship is carried out and where His worship is carried out. Why? Because they feared men. So they see these men who have power. They give these kingdoms power. So they say, "What do we need to do to appease that power? What do we need to do to stay right in that power?"

But they also gave men power over identity. We see this really clearly in 1 Samuel 8. If you remember, for the nation of Israel, God is their king. He leads them out of Egypt. He establishes rule over them, but He is their king. He is their leader. To Him they report, and He establishes judges to oversee them. Well, all the other nations have physical kings. So in 1 Samuel 8 they come to their judge, Samuel and say, "But Samuel, we want a king like the other nations have a king." Samuel is distraught. He goes to the Lord and says, "Lord, really? Is this what they want?" And the Lord says to Samuel very clearly, "Samuel, they didn't reject you. They are rejecting Me. Tell them what will happen when they have a king, but do what they wish." So Samuel tells them, "Listen, you are about to put yourself under a man. You are about to put yourself under this, and things are going to go bad." But they are like, "We want to be like the other nations. We want a king." So the Lord gives them a king. They wanted to be like the other nations. They wanted to be accepted. They wanted to have their identity confirmed. So what did they do? They compromised the commands of God. They compromised the rule of God. They subjected themselves to a power that wasn't the Lord.

And so if we think about it, if we're really honest with ourselves, we probably do the same thing in some ways. We give man more power than he has, power over life. Now for us maybe that's different. Like, we don't have kingdoms trying to come in and take us down and all those different things, at least not normally. We're not usually in a lot of physical danger. But think about it the way we operate in regards to our jobs. Think about it in regards to how we take jobs, how we respond to our bosses, what we compromise for our jobs so that we have provision, so that we are cared for, so we have our jobs. Our decisions a lot of times are motivated by fear of, "this person has power over my life" because life is financial for us, life is resource for us. And so they have a lot of control over that. Or the government or whatever you may want to do. We give men that power.

But even more so, I think really where we struggle is this idea of identity. We give men the power over our identity. Let me just give you a case in point for myself. So I knew I was going to preach today, so earlier this week I was thinking through, "Man, I don't get to be in front a lot. It's not my thing. So I should probably get some new shoes, get a haircut. A new shirt would be good." Why did those thoughts come into my mind? Because your approval matters, because I want you to think, "Oh man, he went to the gym this week...he's got some cool shoes...he doesn't just shop at Target." I wanted your approval in that. Essentially I gave you power to identify me as accepted or not. Even in a good sense, I'm going to study hard for this, prepare well for this, seek the Lord for this, in part because I want you to think I'm smart, because I want praise. And so that's me giving you power to identify me. To have my identity wrapped up in what you think of me. If we're really honest, how often do we do that? What motivates the majority of our actions, if not the praise of man, the fear of man, the giving of power to men over our lives and identities? What does that cause us to compromise? Are we fully obedient to the Lord? Do we walk in His statutes? Are we meek and are we gentle? Are we all these things because we love Him or do we compromise those things because our society says those things aren't the way it functions? And so we begin, just like the nation of Israel, to compromise. So I think the first reason we fail to fear the Lord, we fail to humbly submit to the Lord, is we give man more power than he has. So we buy into this false appropriation of power.

Secondly, I think we also buy into a false hope. A beautiful picture of where the nation of Israel's hope was found is in Isaiah 7. Israel is under pressure in regards to the other nations: Assyria, Syria and the like. King Ahaz is approached by Isaiah who says, "Don't give in. Don't make treaties. Don't make compromises. Trust in the Lord. He said He will provide. He will protect. He will establish His kingdom." Because the reality was these treaties they were making weren't like a treaty, "Okay we're going to work together in this." It was: "I'm going to come under you, under your leadership. I'll be a vassal to the Syrian kings," meaning that the nation of Israel would submit to the leadership of these foreign kingdoms for protection. Isaiah from the Lord came to Ahaz and said, "The Lord says 'No! I will protect you. I will establish you. You will be My kingdom and My people.'" He even says to Isaiah, "Isaiah, tell Ahaz he can even test Me on this. He can ask for a sign and a wonder that he might know that this is true." How often do we beg the Lord for that? It's just laid up on a platter for king Ahaz. This is a word from the Lord. He says test Him on this that He'll demonstrate this. And Ahaz says, "No. I got it. We're good. My wisdom, my understanding of how the world works, my hope is in our ability to make these treaties. The extra chariots it gives us, the wealth it gives us, the protection that it gives us. So that's where my hope is going to rest." His hope is in his logic, his ability to lead his kingdom is where his hope rested in.

But we also see this in Isaiah 50:10-11. "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment." We have here the Lord pushing against this idea of those who fear the Lord, submitting to the Lord, hearing His voice, responding, trusting fully in the Lord. Then we have those who say, "No. I'm going to rely on my torches, my own technology, my ability to have this accomplished." Then the Lord says, "Then you will fail."

We see the nation of Israel at times has relied upon their logic, their ability to lead and at times relied upon resources and technology. That's where their hope came from. There wasn't a trust in the Lord. There was a trust in their logic and wisdom, or a trust in their skills, abilities, technology in order to protect themselves, conquer, to prosper. Honestly, don't we do the same thing? Think about it. We trust in technology, logic and in our own wisdom. How do we make decisions? Do we make decisions by pressing into and seeking the Lord, or do the majority of our decisions come when we say, "Yeah, I have the ability to do that so I'll do that." Or my logic says, "Do this," or my wisdom says, "Do this," or my self says, "Do this." That's what we trust in. We trust in that we've made good plans. We trust that the medicine, the technology, the resources that we have at our disposal will allow us to be successful in whatever. And that's what our trust is in. That's what our hope is in. That's where we find our hope. Really, I think in our Christian bubble and here at the Village Church, here's where I see this playing out in missions. And again, this is from one who struggles with this, as one who has had to wrestle through this where my own heart has been in this. We tend to put parameters around the will of the Lord. We say, "Okay Lord, I will give sacrificially when I have so much in savings. . .okay Lord, I will trust to go where You lead, but only if you will give me the next five steps so I can put together my plan." We begin to make compromises. We begin to put parameters around obedience to the Lord. "Lord, I will live faithfully when I have the time to do it." It's a compromise. Our hope is in our ability. Our hope is in those plans that we make. Our hope is in our technology and in our resources. For whatever reason we really do believe that if we have enough money, then we will be good givers. If we have enough time, then we'll be faithful. So let's put together a plan to get there. What's our hope really in? It's a question we have to ask.

Thirdly, when we give a false appropriation of power to men, when our hope is found in technology, in wisdom, in logic and those things, we end up living in a false reality. Ultimately we deny the rule of God, the established order of God. Really this played out for the people of Israel this way. In Isaiah 66:1-4 it says this: "Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord.'" So here is the nation of

Israel building a place for the Lord, limiting the Lord, putting the Lord in a box. But He says, "No!" "But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." I think these next few verses really speak to where my heart doesn't want to go. Where I try to run from a lot in a sense of, "Lord, I pray that this is not me and I pray that this is not us." "He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight."

Do you hear that? They were following the rules of the Lord. They didn't just run off after some idols. They were doing all the precepts of the Lord, but what does He say? "You might as well have been worshiping idols. You might as well have been murdering when you sacrificed an ox because in the end, you are operating in a reality that I'm not in. You've created your own rules. You've tried to box Me in. You've tried to build this house for Me and to live in it. I tried to speak to you, I tried to talk to you, and you didn't listen. You chose what was evil instead of what I delight in." That was the nation of Israel. We have to ask ourselves the same question. Do we create a reality in which we box the Lord in? We say because of our fear of man, because of our false hopes, "Yeah, I'll be obedient to this piece but not to this piece of Scripture. Yeah, if I go to church on the weekend and am part of a Home Group and pray three times a week, man I am walking fully in the Lord and in complete obedience to what He has called me to. If I give a little bit, then I really trust the Lord with everything." You see, our actions begin to demonstrate that we put the Lord in a box. Our attitudes of why we're doing what we're doing begin to demonstrate that we put the Lord in a box. So we live in a false reality. We've created a home for the Lord that isn't His. He established us. What He says is, "Those who worship Me do so with a humble and contrite heart, a broken spirit, not ones who put Me in a box and create this false reality." I think we do that when we start to talk about, again, this idea of acting out the right deeds but truly failing to listen to God's Word in full. That's not our hope. None of us come here together, none of us are a part of this covenant body together for that to be our end, to live in a false reality, to give man more power than we should, to have our hopes fixed on anything else but the Lord, and therefore to box the Lord in. None of us want that. None of us desire that. But the reality is I think to some extent our comfort and our culture just makes us dull to the fact that that is a reality. That we have created this false reality. I know how to process through this.

This past year for my wife and I has been a difficult season. The Lord has done a lot of things. We've had to struggle through a lot of things, suffer through a lot of things and seek Him on a lot of things. But it's also been a very sanctifying season. A season which is awesome. I feel like I know my sin more than I've ever known it, which is awesome and horrifying all at the same time. One of the things I've really had to struggle with is, "Am I lulled to sleep by the reality that I've created?" Somehow this Christian life that I've created for myself is really what the Lord has in full for me, to His glory. I really had to press into the Lord and ask the Lord, "Where is my heart in this? Where is my mind in this? Is this really what You have, or am I being just like the nation of Israel, doing what is right in my actions but not fully unto You?" So this is where I began to wrestle with. The beauty of Scripture and the beauty of Isaiah is that it's not just about the condemnation or the weight of this, but it's also about the restoration and redemption, that there is hope in this. That according to the New Testament, what is Christ's is mine. If He had the spirit of fear and He could delight in the fear of the Lord, then so can I. That's what I want. That's what I desire.

So how do we get that? What does that look like? I think we would be remiss if we didn't notice that He's given the spirit of the fear of the Lord. If we try to attempt this in any way apart from the Spirit of the Lord and apart of the powering spirit of the Lord we'll never delight in the fear of the Lord. We may be able to obey. We may be able to keep commandments and to do things, but we'll do it for one of two reasons. We'll do it out of self-righteousness because we

think we're worthy, or we'll do it out of trying to win the favor of the Lord, to win our righteousness. So we'll never find joy and satisfaction and delight in humble submission, unconditional trust, and sincere obedience to the sovereign rule of God. But we might be obedient. So I don't want us to miss that. I don't want us to assume that what we're about to talk about is these steps that get us into the fear of the Lord. Because apart from the Spirit, apart from the Lord working upon you, apart from Him calling you to Himself, you are just going to be religious. We talk about that all the time. So we know that. But we don't want to assume it, so let's say it.

Here's the deal. If you think about this whole idea of awe and wonder demonstrated in submission, trust and obedience, this idea of demonstration is not just an idea of our actions. Because again over and over in Isaiah, it's not about the actions. It's not as much about the actions as it is about the attitude, the heart by which we are doing these actions. I love Proverbs 16:2 where it talks about how everything in eyes of men seems right, but it's the Lord who knows the heart. Therefore, in verse 3, let us commit our works to the Lord and He'll establish our plans. So this is what we're talking about. What I want us to talk about in regards to how can we delight in the fear of the Lord are these two things: we want to search our hearts, we want to ask the Lord to search our hearts, we want to dig into our hearts and know what is the motivation or attitudes for why we do this, and then what are the actions that we commit to the Lord so that He might establish our plans, that we might be established in His sovereign rule, that we might walk in obedience to His sovereign rule? So these are not steps, but in reality these are the things that Scripture calls us to.

So what I want to talk about is this. If one thing that keeps us from the fear of the Lord is a false appropriation of power, then what is true appropriation of power? This is what the Lord would say to Israel, those who feared men for life and identity, in Isaiah 46:8-11 "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose...I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.' The first thing we have to do is we have to move away from this understanding that man has power over life and identity and realize who God is. Just like He told the Israelites there in chapter 46, "I am God. There is no other like Me. Why give man credence when I'm the one who is the creator." There's a couple things we can do. One towards our attitude that will affect our heart. We have to ask these questions and reflect here. We remember the might and the majesty of God. I love Psalms 93. Let me just read it to you. It says: "The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore." In order for us to humbly submit to the Lord, we have to have a right view of who we are before Him. We have to have a view of His majesty and His might. That He is the creator God, the one who spoke us into being, the One by whom we have our very breath today. This is the might and the majesty of God. We have to reflect on that. We have to ask our hearts, "Do we believe that? Do we believe that He is mightier? Do we believe that He is great? Do we believe that every breath is from Him?" Because if we don't, we're going to give power to something else. Because if it's not God who is the most powerful, the most mighty and the most majestic, then something else is going to be the most powerful, the most mighty and the most majestic. So for our hearts, for our attitudes, this is where we rest. We have to push back into "Is the Lord mighty?" We have ask ourselves, "Do we believe, do we practice humble submission to a mighty God? Do we believe that He is powerful?" We sang it earlier. "Our God is greater, our God is stronger. There is no other like Him." Do we function that way? Do our hearts believe that?

Here's an action that helps move our hearts into this. Matt did a series basically on the avenues of grace and those things, and the conclusion was this: pray. How do we understand a true appropriation of power? When we pray for two

reasons. Reason number one, prayer leads to intimacy. It leads to connection and communion with the Lord. It leads to relationship. It pushes us into God, to know Him, to seek Him, to glorify Him, to proclaim to Him that this is who He is. But it also keeps a childlike faith, an utter dependence upon Him, a humble submission to Him. Because in prayer, we seek Him for everything. In prayer, we run to Him for everything. In prayer, we give glory to Him for everything. In prayer, we recognize His might and His majesty and our timeliness. And so we ask Him for his power and His strength to live today. We ask Him for His power and His strength and His might to lead our families well, to do our jobs well, to have conversation with our neighbors, to eat. It keeps us humbly submitted to Him. It keeps us utterly dependent upon Him, the action of prayer. So we see that the first thing to fearing the Lord is this humble submission which is played out in remembering the might and majesty of God and in the action of prayer.

But secondly, if we're going to replace a false appropriation of power, we also need to replace a false hope with a true hope. And so what is that true hope? Much of Isaiah is talking about Christ. In Isaiah 53, we find the same thing. Here He is, the Lord has condemned Israel in His saying, "You've put your hopes in other things, but remember My compassion, remember My faithfulness, here is where life comes." Of Christ, Isaiah 53:3-6 says, "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned— every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." This is our hope. It's not in our abilities, it's not in our technology, it's not in our logic and it's not in our wisdom. It's in the compassion and mercy of God that was demonstrated through His Son, Jesus Christ. That's where our hope is. We have no other hope. If we hope in anything else, it's a false hope. In regards to attitudes, we have to spend our time dwelling upon the compassion and faithfulness of God. What I love about the book of Isaiah is that the Lord is over and over again compassionate to those who rejected Him.

He is compassionate to His children, but even more so He is faithful. He is faithful to His own work to establish them, to establish the remnant, to be about His glory and to raise up a people. The reality is we are here today because of the faithfulness of the Lord to what He promised in Genesis 3:15 and for no other reason. The Lord has been faithful to work through history that we might come here today and worship Him, to stand before Him and know His power, His might and to know Him intimately. Because He, from the beginning, has worked through Christ so that we might be His body, that we might come together in this room today and worship Him. That's the faithfulness of God. You are not here because you like church. You are not here because this is a part of what you do and is a part of your identity. You are here because the Lord has allowed it and has been faithful to raise up a people to proclaim Him and worship Him and to know Him. We have to reflect on the compassion and faithfulness of God.

So what does that action play into? If this idea of humble submission comes from an attitude of remembering the might of God and the action of prayer, then our understanding of unconditional trust comes from remembering the compassion and faithfulness of God and translates into worship. All of our life is worship. Everything we do, we do to the glory of the Lord. Again, back in Proverbs 16 it says, "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit. Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established." What does that mean to commit your works to the Lord? It means to unconditionally and completely trust, hand over, walk in faith in everything that you do. That's worship. It's giving God glory in everything that you do. You trust Him because He is mighty. You trust Him because He is compassionate. You trust Him because He is faithful. Everything you do is trust in the Lord. This is what Romans 14:23 talks about. "Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." Because it's done not to God. It's done not for God. It's not done in complete trust to God. It's done for some other reason. That's not worship. Worship is giving God all

the glory, doing all things to the glory of Him. Yes, it's a service where we come together and we sing. That's a part of our life of worship. That's not where it stops. Our entire life, our entire being.

So we have to ask ourselves, "To what end are we working? To what are we committing to the Lord? Are we doing everything in faith because we know His might, we know His majesty, we know his compassion, we know His faith and we are submitted to Him in prayer?" So now we can unconditionally trust so when the Lord says, "Go," we go. So when the Lord says, "Give up," we give up. When the Lord says, "Do this," we do this. Whatever He commands, in all that He commands, we can actually say, just as Christ said in Matthew 6, that we know that because He is compassionate and faithful to feed the sparrow and clothe the lily that we can seek first His kingdom, submit to His kingdom. Fear the Lord and know that we will be provided for. Because He is compassion, He is faithful, and therefore our entire lives are worship.

That's not the end, because we've got this idea of false appropriate of power, a false hope leading to a false reality. So how do we get away from that? We've got humble submission. We've got unconditional trust. What about sincere obedience? Where does that come from? That comes from a true understanding of the reality of the Lord, that we live in His kingdom. This is what Isaiah 11 speaks to, that Christ is coming to establish His rule. That He will judge rightly, not just on actions but on attitudes, by what we are doing and why we are doing it. He will establish a kingdom of peace. He will establish a kingdom that all obey completely. The knowledge of the Lord fills the earth. We know that we might walk in complete and utter obedience to Him.

So how we do that? What does that look like? From an attitude perspective, we have to remember the power of the Word of God. Psalm 19:1-6 talks about the idea that the whole earth, its entire order, the sun, the moon, the stars, nature by which it functions, was all established by God speaking. Go back to Genesis 1. God spoke it into existence. By His breath your life is in existence right now. He speaks. His word is powerful. Verses 7-14 then say because of that let us hold fast to His word. This is what it says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward." Verse 14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." We have to hold fast. Reflect on the power of the Word of the Lord. It is through His word He establishes His order, His purpose, His rule.

But what does that translate into? So if that's our attitude, if that's our knowledge and understanding, if our mind can worship that, where does it move into? It moves into sincere obedience. Because if we understand that the rule of the Lord is established by His Word, then to walk in the rule of the Lord means that we have to fully and wholeheartedly submit to Him in obedience. I love 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 because when we think about obedience in our culture, we think of it as a push against authority. We hate it. We don't like submission. We don't like those things. But here's what 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 tell us about this. "For the love of Christ controls us . . ." The love of Christ. The compassion and faithfulness of God controls us. Moves us into this. ". . .because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." It moves us into sincere obedience. We obey because we know the order of the rule of God but we obey because we remember His compassion. We remember His faithfulness and His might. So because of Jesus Christ, we can walk in obedience because He doesn't just call us to partial obedience. Sincere obedience is attitude and actions fully, not boxing the Lord in, but living in the kingdom of His precepts that He determined by His rule. So knowing His word fully, what has He called us to? Who has He called to be? How has He called us to live? And

then out of the love of Christ, we obey. We walk because He is mighty. We're humble because He is compassionate and faithful. We are trusting because He has established His rule we obey. So our hearts and minds.

There's a lyric in a song called Awake My Soul by Sandra McCracken. It's been in my car for a long time, looping. I'm a Give me a free CD then I'll listen to it and never it go buy it type of guy. Usually the CD gets stuck in my car. It's usually there for a year or two. So this song has been in there. I've never really noticed it. You just hear thing and you just kind of go and whatever because you're just driving and your mind is in other places. But there's a lyric in here that says this, "I trust no other source or name. Nowhere else can I hide, for His grace gives me fear. His grace draws me near. And all that He asks it provides." I trust no other source or Name. I trust no other hope. I trust no other power. I trust Him. I can't hide from Him. His rule is established over all. His grace gives me fear. It's by His grace that we note His rule. It's by His grace that we know how His kingdom is established. It's by His grace we know His compassion, His might, His justice. And it's by His grace that we're drawn into it. It's by His grace that we're not rejected because we fail to obey. It's by His grace that we're draw in and all that He asks it provides.

So here's my hope, that you should ask yourself some questions. Again, I'm speaking as one who the last few months has been asking these questions. Where have I given man more power than he has? Where are my hopes? In what reality am I operating? And then remember that I trust no other source or Name. Nowhere else can we hide for His grace gives us fear, His grace draws us near, And all that it asks He provides.

Let's pray. "Father, we come before You this morning grateful for Your mercy and kindness, grateful that we can be here today. It's by Your might that we're here. It's by Your provision that we're here. So we give You praise and glory. Lord, I ask, just as You have been faithful in me to search my heart and know my anxious thoughts and lead me in Your way everlasting, that You do the same for those of us here. Lord, for all of us in this room, I pray that You would make known to us our own finiteness, our own sin, our brokenness. Lead us in Your way everlasting. Lord, Your grace gives us fear of the Lord, but I pray that we might delight in that fear. Lord, I pray that we might find joy and satisfaction in that fear. I pray that humble submission, unconditional trust, sincere obedience to Your sovereign rule would be our joy and satisfaction. Father, we lay this at Your feet knowing that apart from Your Spirit, we have no ability, knowing that apart from Your Spirit, if we pursue this, it is just religion learned in routine. So we ask again and again and again for You, that You might make Yourself known, that Your grace that draws us near would be real and that Your grace would lead us to fear You and delight in that fear. All this we pray, again, because Your Son came and died and rose again and now in this very moment intercedes on our behalf. And so it's in His name that we pray. Amen."