LIFE GROUP GUIDE

THE FEAR OF GOD

JUDGMENT AND THE GOSPEL

ACTS 10:34-48



Werner Steyn

The Bridge Church

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WELCOME

Werner continued Peter's sermon to Cornelius's household and led us through three truths that belong together: the fear of God, the judgment of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Tonight we will let Scripture set the tone, revisit the sermon and talk honestly about how knowing God changes the way we live, believe and speak.

THE WORD BEFORE OUR WORDS

READ ALOUD TOGETHER

Have one or more people read Acts 10:34-48 aloud. Listen especially for what Peter says about Jesus, judgment, belief, forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Keep your Bibles open as you discuss.

FORGIVENESS THROUGH HIS NAME

Acts 10:43 (NIV)

43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

MAKE ROOM FOR EVERY VOICE

Allow 30-45 minutes together. Invite everyone to contribute without pressure. These are weighty subjects, so listen carefully, avoid trying to win arguments and keep returning to Scripture and the sermon.

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THE SERMON IN A FEW MINUTES

Werner began where the previous week ended: Peter had crossed into Cornelius's Gentile home and now opened his mouth to speak. Because the audience did not share a Jewish background, Peter spoke from the widely known events surrounding Jesus. Werner then identified three themes in Peter's sermon that are easy either to overplay or avoid: the fear of God, the judgment of God and the gospel.

The fear of the Lord was presented as part of knowing who God is. Werner used pictures of gas, electricity, a lion and royal protocol to show why careless familiarity is unsafe. Yet fear is meant to mature. His marriage illustration showed the movement from fear of rejection toward carefulness with a relationship that has become precious.

Werner then faced judgment. Jesus is appointed to judge the living and the dead, and each person will give account. Abraham's question - whether the Judge of all the earth will do right - anchored trust in God's justice. That reality prepared the way for the gospel to be heard as good news rather than vague encouragement.

The sermon concluded with the gospel itself: Jesus's life, death, resurrection and lordship; the believer's debt "paid in full"; forgiveness through His name; the privilege of opening our mouths to speak; and the Holy Spirit given to those who believed. Werner ended by praying for true faith, deeper relationship with God and rescue through Christ.

WHAT WE HEARD THIS WEEK

- The fear of the Lord grows out of knowing who God is.
- Holy fear can mature from dread of punishment into careful love for a precious relationship.
- Jesus is appointed to judge the living and the dead, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.
- Judgment exposes our need for rescue and makes the gospel genuinely good news.
- The gospel is about Jesus - His life, death, resurrection and lordship - not merely self-improvement.
- Believers have the privilege of opening their mouths, offering the gospel and asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

THREE CONVERSATIONS

Take your time. Let Scripture and Werner's sermon examine our shared life as well as our individual responses.

1

FROM FEAR TO PRECIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Werner began with the danger of having no fear of God and then showed how fear can mature. His marriage illustration described a relationship becoming so precious that carefulness replaces mere fear of rejection.

LET'S TALK: Where would you place your own understanding of the fear of God today - indifference, fear of punishment, or careful love? What helps a relationship with God become genuinely precious rather than merely familiar?

FROM THE WORD: Proverbs 9:10; 1 John 4:18

2

FACING THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH

Peter says Jesus is appointed to judge the living and the dead. Werner connected that certainty with Hebrews 9:27 and Abraham's confidence that the Judge of all the earth will do what is right.

LET'S TALK: What emotions or questions does the subject of judgment raise for you? How does God's character - holy, just, merciful and righteous - shape the way we face those questions and our own accountability?

FROM THE WORD: Acts 10:42; Hebrews 9:27; Genesis 18:25

3

GOOD NEWS WE ARE READY TO SPEAK

Werner moved from judgment to the gospel: Jesus died in our place, was raised from the dead and offers forgiveness. Peter opened his mouth, and Werner challenged us to be ready to do the same.

LET'S TALK: How would you explain the gospel from this sermon without turning it into advice about becoming a better person? Who has God placed in your path, and what would wise, loving readiness to speak look like this week?

FROM THE WORD: Acts 10:43-44; Ephesians 6:15

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Invite several people to pray briefly. Keep the prayers rooted in the sermon and in what the group has discussed.

Holy fear: Ask God to deepen our knowledge of Him and turn careless familiarity into reverence and love.

Trust in the Judge: Bring difficult questions honestly to God and thank Him that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Paid in full: Thank Jesus for His death and resurrection, and pray for assurance that rests in His finished work rather than our own record.

Ready witnesses: Ask for the Holy Spirit's filling and for courage, wisdom and love to open our mouths when God gives an opportunity.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

God is holy and just, and the gospel is genuinely good news: Jesus died in our place, rose again and offers forgiveness to everyone who believes. Let holy fear become precious relationship, and let received good news become spoken good news.

ONE LAST QUESTION FOR THE WEEK

Who is one person God may be placing in my path, and how can I be ready to speak about Jesus with clarity and love this week?

Suggested flow: Scripture aloud • sermon recap • three conversations • prayer • take-home thought