



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	The Fear of the Lord	SPEAKER	Elder Leon Oei
THEME	A Disciple-Making Church	DATE	11 & 12 July 2026

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The book of Proverbs is a collection of gems of wisdom, all held together with a common thread: the Fear of the Lord. This central theme is captured in Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding".

The fear of the Lord is characterised as a posture of deep reverence, obedience, and foundational respect for God's holiness. Elder Leon explored this theme through three questions: What is the fear of the Lord? Why should we fear the Lord? Where is our fear in the Lord? While God does not compel us to fear Him, choosing to do so is not only the right thing to do; it also brings spiritual benefits such as prolonged life, confidence, security, and the avoidance of evil.

UNDERSTANDING THE FEAR OF THE LORD

1. What is the Fear of the Lord?

The phrase is a translation of the original Hebrew 'Yirat Yehovah'. It describes a posture of Reverence, Obedience, Awe, and Respect before the holy and living God. Rather than being just one characteristic, it is the thread that binds together the wisdom that is found in the whole bible and in Proverbs and is described as the "beginning of wisdom".

- **It is a response to God's Holiness:** Like standing before a mighty mountain, it is the sense of the sheer "smallness" one feels in the presence of the holy, divine, uncreated God.
- **It coexists with love:** Fearing God does not contradict the command to "fear not". Instead, it is when we fear God, that we can live fearlessly (Matthew 10:28; John 6:20; Psalm 118:6)

2. Why Should We Fear the Lord?

While God commands us to fear Him, He does not compel us; it is a choice with natural consequences. We should fear the Lord because:

- **It is commanded and good:** Like most biblical commandments, it is intended for our benefit.

- **Proverbial blessings:** Proverbs associates the fear of the Lord with prolonged life (Proverbs 10:27), a fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27) confidence (Proverbs 14:26), refuge from inevitable troubles in life (Proverbs 19:23), and the avoidance of evil (Proverbs 16:6).
- **It is the "blessed and holy thing to do":** We should not fear God merely because of the blessings He gives. Elder Leon reminded us of Daniel's three friends who refused to bow to the idol of Nebuchadnezzar. They trusted that God was able to deliver them, and they chose obedience even if He did not. Likewise, when the wicked appear to prosper or life feels unfair, we continue to fear the Lord because we trust that He is just and will ultimately make all things right.

3. Where is My Fear of the Lord?

Elder Leon contrasted the genuine dread of ancient Israelites who were terrified of God's raw presence with the danger of unchecked familiarity among believers today. We were reminded to not distort one characteristic of God that we like at the expense of another. He challenged the congregation to examine whether the fear of the Lord is evident in our daily lives.

- **Our Posture in Prayer:** Our physical posture can reflect and shape our spiritual posture. Whether bowing, kneeling, or lifting our hands in worship, these outward expressions remind us to approach God with humility and reverence
- **God as the "Ultimate Boss":** Do we truly regard God as our Ultimate Boss or have we prioritized work, or social media over our prayer life?
- **Family and Sincerity:** Rather than offering "sum-up prayers" are we taking time to pause, sincerely thank God and find our refuge and security in Him?

CONCLUSION

We resolve the tension between loving God and fearing Him by looking at how Jesus approached the topic. Jesus pointed us back to the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:5 "*love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength*". Jesus did not diminish the call to fear God. He warned His followers to fear the One who has the authority to "*destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5).

Elder Leon concluded with a powerful inscription found in a synagogue: "**Know Before Whom Thou Standest**". These words remind us that we stand before the sovereign Lord. They invite us to examine whether our routines, busyness or familiarity has shifted our reverence, obedience, awe and respect for God. As we remember before whom we stand, we return to the true *beginning of wisdom*: living in the fear of the Lord, giving Him the honour and reverence He alone deserves.

QUESTIONS

1. We can choose whether or not to fear and obey God, but our choices bring consequences. What are some effects you have seen and experienced in society when people live without the fear of God?

2. God does not force us to fear Him, but the Bible says that fearing the Lord brings blessings such as life, security, and protection from evil. What should we do when we do not seem to experience these blessings, or when we see ungodly people prospering and doing well?

3. What are the areas of your life where routine, busyness, work or distractions have shifted your reverence for God? What is one practical step you can take this week to cultivate a deeper posture of reverence in your prayer life, worship, family or daily routines?