

The Question of the Week

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;
be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna.”

Matthew 10: 29

The last of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is “Fear of the Lord.” Those words grate on our ears. We don’t like them. “Fear of the Lord.” No. We don’t want to be afraid of the Lord. We don’t want to cower in fright. We do not want to hide ourselves from a demanding and cruel God who blisters us for our faults, failures and sins. That is not the God revealed to us by Jesus of Nazareth.

I agree. Such fear is not what Jesus of Nazareth came to instill in the hearts of those to whom he preached. If anything, Jesus preached a message of reparation. He repaired the breach that we created by our sin, our unwillingness to trust God, our disobedience towards the request for faithfulness. We cannot restore that breach on our own. Jesus was able to and actually did restore the breach because he was both God and human. He could speak for both sides in the estrangement. He reunited both in himself.

And just how did he accomplish this? By taking on our sins and allowing himself to be crushed under the weight of those sins. And then, from the depth of the grave to rise again. To life. Never more to die. His is the victory of love. Stronger even than death. Stronger than the grave. There is a power there that is truly awesome. Every once in a while, we get it. We grasp just how high and deep, how wide and broad is this love. Every once in a while, we get a taste. And it takes our breath away. Every once in a while, we are humbled by the majesty of the God who so loves the world. Before that God we should have a deep reverential awe. That God is not to be trifled with, taken for granted, or treated dismissively. That God is to be revered with the deepest reverence we can muster. That is what the gift of the Holy Spirit is really about. So ask yourself this question: Have I lost this sense of reverential awe before the living God? And if you have, will you ask for the Lord to allow the Holy Spirit to return it to you? That is the question of the week.