



# BERKSHIRE COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

## BULLETIN

12 31 2023



### Fear of the Devil or Fear of God?

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight” (Pro. 9:10).* The motivation behind one’s religious beliefs has been a topic of contemplation for centuries. For Christians, the choice between fearing the Devil or God can significantly shape the nature of their faith. If you fear the devil’s malice, you do well. His only priority in this world is your destruction, and he will use whatever evil he can to accomplish his goal. One should also never be foolhardy enough to believe that you are stronger and wiser and can outwit the devil on his home turf of sin and debauchery.

There is a country song that is the perfect analogy for that dangerously foolish attitude. The song’s title is “The Devil Went Down to Georgia,” and many people love it because a young fiddle player thoroughly beats the devil. However, it is, to say the least, incautious to think that victory will be that easy or even certain. If you are a Christian because you are scared of hell, good for you, but if you are one for that sole reason, you have a faith problem. Faith cannot be genuine or sincere if all it is driven by is the fear of consequences. Doom and gloom cannot be what the decision to follow God is based on. What a miserable life that would amount to.

If your sole motivation is fear of the devil, you are missing an important piece of the puzzle – fear of God. Now, that may sound contradictory; how do we fear the devil and God simultaneously? In fact, why should we fear God at all? Simply put, the fear of the devil is negative, and that of God is positive. For the devil, the motivation is a terrifying fear, which should motivate one to seek refuge in Christianity as a protective shield. On the other hand, fear of God has nothing to do with terror and everything to do with respect for his Power. The best way to understand it is to think of two magnets. If you bring them closer, there are two possible results – they will forcefully resist or attract one another. Can you guess which is which when we are speaking of God and the devil?

Fear of God is symbolic of the level of reverence we have for Him. In that case, the two magnets (God and us) are drawn together with an attraction that is very hard to break. The fear of God serves as a moral compass, guiding believers to live in accordance with divine principles. It is rooted in a desire to please God and live a life that reflects His character.  
PTO...

Rather than focusing on the negative consequences of disobedience, these individuals are motivated by a love for God and a commitment to living in alignment with His will. BTW, defeating the devil takes this kind of fear. That is the one and only way to defeat him. **James 4:7**, “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” Notice that even submission to God causes the devil to retreat in fear.

By all means, fear the devil and the dangers he represents, but make sure that it is not the only type you have. If it is, your faith will be shallow with no real roots, and the crashing waves of sin will wash you away until you drown in it. Instead, use it to draw you to God, and when you are there, rid yourself of that negative fear and replace it with the positive fear of the Lord. You no longer need to be afraid when you have the armor of God to wear in your daily battles. If you want the Day of Judgment to be a day of joy and delightful expectation, choose the fear of God. Don’t allow the false positive fear of the devil to prevent you from obtaining the promise of eternal life.

Don’t let the words of **Matt 7:21** be a reflection of your life and a result of a bad choice, “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.*” Don’t come that close only to lose the greatest prize of all. Stand firm in your faith and fear of God, and you will raise the Christian flag and wave it victoriously to the glory of the Father on that great Day.

<u>AM ORDER OF WORSHIP</u>	<u>PM ORDER OF WORSHIP</u>
<u>ANNOUNCEMENTS</u> - Bill Joy	<u>ANNOUNCEMENT</u> - No Service
<u>SONG</u> - 598 - Standing on the Promises 1,2,4	<u>SONG</u> - No Service
<u>PRAYER</u> - Ps 46: 1-2a Bill Joy	<u>PRAYER</u> - No Service
<u>SONG</u> - 621 - Ten Thousand Angels 1,2,4	<u>SONG</u> - No Service
<u>COMMUNION</u> - Isaiah 53:5 Douglas Roy	<u>SERMON</u> - No Service
<u>SONG</u> - 618 - Sweet Hour of Prayer	<u>SONG</u> - No Service
<u>SERMON</u> -Navigating the challenges of a New Year	<u>COMMUNION</u> - No Service
<u>INV SONG</u> - 627 - The Gloryland Way	<u>INV SONG</u> - No Service
<u>CLOSING PRAYER</u> - Emmanuel Twumasi	<u>CLOSING PRAYER</u> -No Service



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS**

Please silence your phone by placing it in airport mode.



**We ask all visitors to please pick up a visitors card and fill it in.**

- Bulletins are on the fireplace table and sermon notes are inside when available.
- Please put your offering in the provided envelope (don't write anything on it)..
- If you look on the back of the visitors card you will see space to right a prayer request if you have one - feel free to do that and hand it in to us so we can pray about it.
- Our next potluck meal will be on 28 January following morning service. Please invite a friend and bring a dish to share ( enough to feed 12 people)
- Ladies breakfasts will resume again on 3 February (weather permitting) here at the church at 10:30 am. Please bring a dish to share.



## **PRAYER REQUESTS**



- 
- Continued Prayers for Melinda's mom Isabel du Toit who is still undergoing Chemotherapy.
- Prayers for Cleve's dad Edgar Stafford who has early onset of dementia.
- Prayers for all our service people wherever in the world they have been deployed to.
- Safe travels to everyone still traveling.

## **PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

- Praise God for our sponsors.
- Praise God for the privilege to worship in safety
- Praise God for the measure of health and wealth we enjoy

## **BIRTHDAYS / SPECIAL OCCASIONS**



### **January Birthdays**

- 1 - Benjamin Twumasi
- 4 - Damien Tarmey

Sunday morning Bible Class - 9:00AM  
 Wednesday Evening Bible Study - 7:00PM  
 Personal Bible Study (Convenient time)



Web Page



WiFi



Facebook

Word Search



Word List

- |          |          |          |            |
|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| CONCEIT  | DEED     | DEED     | DRINK      |
| EARTH    | EAT      | FAMINES  | GENTLENESS |
| GOD      | HUMBLE   | JESUS    | KINGDOM    |
| LORD     | LOVE     | MOUNTAIN | NEWYEAR    |
| PATIENCE | PRISONER | ROAR     | STRENGTH   |
| WORD     |          |          |            |