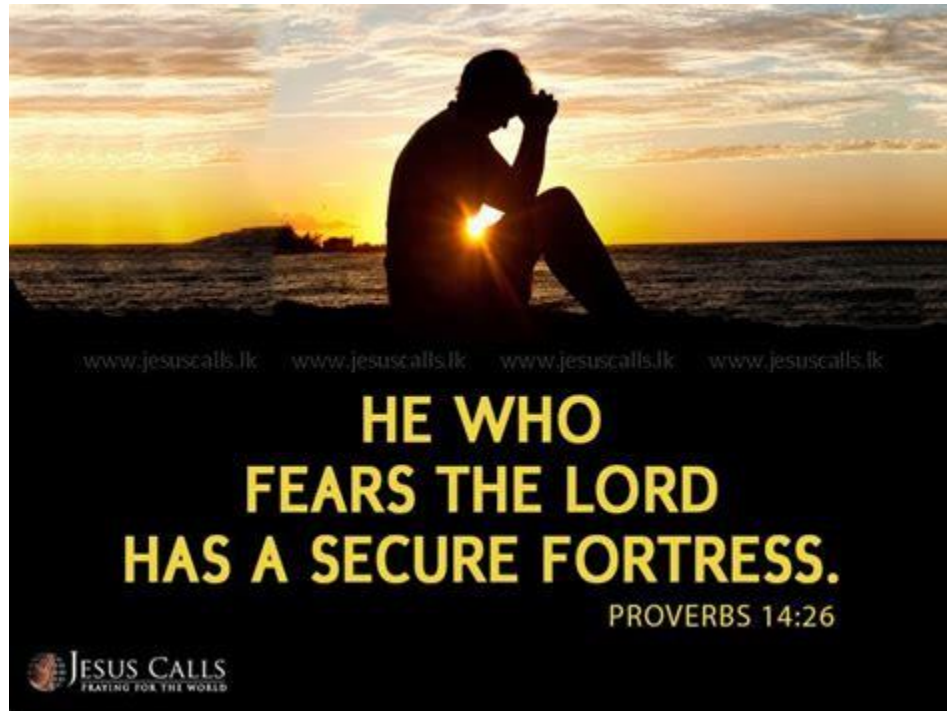


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** *“Have mercy on me, God, for I am treated harshly; attackers press me all the day. My foes treat me harshly all the day; yes, many are my attackers. O Most High, when I am afraid, in you I place my trust. I praise the word of God; I trust in God, I do not fear. What can mere flesh do to me?” ~ Psalm 56:2 – 5*

***Blessed are they who hope in the Lord!!!***



Sacred Scripture tells us that we need to have the fear of the Lord. It's important for each of us, as Christians, to understand what this means. The scriptures make a distinction between fear of the Lord and the normal, emotional fear that all of us experience at different times of our lives.

The first distinction is that normal, emotional fear is something that we do not have to learn whereas fear of the Lord is something that we do learn. Saint Hilary of Poitiers wrote that *“Fear is not to be taken in the sense that common usage gives it. Fear in this ordinary sense is the trepidation our weak humanity feels when it is afraid of suffering something it does not want to happen. We are afraid, or made afraid, because of a guilty conscience, the rights of someone more powerful, an attack from one who is stronger, sickness, encountering a wild beast, suffering evil in any form. This kind of fear is not taught: it happens because we are weak. We do not have to learn what we should fear: objects of fear bring their own terror with them.”*

When St. Hilary writes about our weak humanity he is speaking to our fallen human nature which causes us to naturally fear those things that bring danger or difficulty into our lives. We

don't have to learn to fear the things of the world that bring danger, illness and difficulty. That type of fear comes to us naturally.

We do, however, need to learn to fear the Lord. In the Book of Wisdom, Solomon tells us that *"If you cry out for wisdom and raise your voice for understanding, if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord."* We must begin by crying out for Wisdom, by looking and searching for Wisdom. And, by Wisdom, we mean the Truth that God has revealed to us through the Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church.

Saint Hilary also wrote that "The fear of the Lord has then to be learned because it can be taught. It does not lie in terror, but in something that can be taught. It does not arise from the fearfulness of our nature; it has to be acquired by obedience to the commandments, by holiness of life and by knowledge of the truth."

When we enter into a loving relationship with our Lord and God, the love of God brings our love for Him to perfection. Our love for God consists of observing his commandments and counsels, obeying his laws, and trusting his promises. For us Christians, the fear of God consists wholly in love, and perfect love of God brings our fear of him to its perfection.

The Way of the Lord is found in the law, in the prophets, in the gospels and sacred scripture, in the writings of the apostles and the Church fathers, in the teachings of the Church, and in the different good works by which we fulfil the commandments. When we love the Lord our God with all our heart and all our strength, we will find the Way of the Lord. And, when we walk in the Way of the Lord, we will have attained the fear of the Lord that the scriptures speak of.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

