

# Awe of God introduction sermon

January 6, 2019

**Albert Einstein** once said: *"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand wrapped in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed."*

And so I begin this morning by asking the simple question: what captures your sense of wonder and wraps you in awe?

As we begin a new year, we can easily become discouraged with all the problems in the world and perhaps with the various challenges in your life as well. Many in our church are battling various physical challenges with their bodies and we have financial concerns and every day we're reminded on the news that our government officials can't agree and therefore it's shut down and there's increasing violence and distrust of one another. The cumulative effect of all of that can be heartache and discouragement and negativity. Living day after day with this sense of heaviness over our minds and hearts. But I'm pretty convinced that God did not design us to live this way.

God intends for His people to live with a different outlook on life. And this different outlook doesn't come from simply putting a smile on your face and pretending like everything is all right when everything is not all right. But I believe God wants us to live life everyday with a deep and abiding awe of Him. But that doesn't happen by simply coming to church once a week and spending an hour or so praising Him and then going back to your regular lives. It comes from a daily life lived in awe of God.

**John Piper** has a profound perspective on this. He says: *"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you've drunk deeply and been satisfied. It's because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great things."*

I think there are at least three major challenges to us living in daily awe of God.

1. **Familiarity** – the longer we experience something the less the excitement level. Familiarity tends to blind our eyes and dull our sense. Many of you have been Christians most of your life. And you've listened to hundreds of sermons and attended countless Sunday School classes and Bible studies. And so you know a lot about God. And what was once a thrill learning about God has become more routine and mundane. And so we still go through the motions, but the excitement level is no longer there like it once was. I have a tendency to do that with a new tasty food. I eat plenty of it quickly until I'm bored with it.
2. **Misplaced awe** – we become excited with or satisfied with the things of this earth without realizing that they are intended to point us to the provider rather than be satisfied with the provision. We need to begin to retrain ourselves to see the things of this world as **mnemonic devices** that are intended to point us to our awesome God. When you see a thunderstorm let it remind you of God's power and might, when you see a beautiful flower let it remind you of God's creativity or as you walk through a crowd of people and notice that every person is different – let it remind you of God's complexity. When you give or receive a hug from someone let it remind you of God's love and tenderness for you and the promise that He will never leave or forsake you.

I recently read a book simply entitled **"Awe"** by **Paul Tripp**. In it he creates a new word to describe what God designed this world to do and be. The word is **"glory-scope"** and I found it helpful in understanding God's intent for the things and people in this world. He says: *"God has designed the world in which we live to be a glory-scope. Just as a telescope points you to the stars and magnifies them for you to see their illuminating glory, so the earth focuses our eyes on God and magnifies His glory, so it can produce wonder in us. Every beautiful and amazing sight, sound, color, texture, taste, in touch of the created world has glory-scopic intention built into it. Every powerful and mighty thing, is*

*glory-scopie by design. No created beauty is an end in itself. No physical wonder exists in isolation. Everything exists for a grand vertical purpose. God created every fish, stone, flower, bird, cloud, tree, monkey, and leaf to be glory-scopie because it's loving creator knows how fundamentally blind we can be."*

3. **Satan** – He doesn't want us to live in constant awe of God because he realizes that type of lifestyle will only draw us closer and closer to God. So, he tries to distract us from our wonderment and awe of God. Think of the very first sin. Adam and Eve were clearly had this incredible relationship with God until Satan appeared and he tried to distort their image of God. And when he enticed them to take a bit of the forbidden fruit he told them that when they did they would be just like God. At that moment, the allure of becoming just like God trumped their existing awe of God. And Satan does that in our lives all of the time. He tries to lure us into feeling like we want or even need something or someone in our lives to make us happy or satisfied. But once we have that, often the satisfaction wanes quickly. Why? Because things of this world were never intended to satisfy our deepest longings. Only God can fully satisfy the deepest longings in our hearts and souls.

### Steps to Restoring our Awe of God:

#### 1. Read Scripture passages of others who were in awe of God.

**Psalms 139:14 (NIV)** *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

**Exodus 15:11 (NIV)** *Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?* Moses and Miriam declaring the greatness of God after He rescued them from the Egyptian army

**Psalms 68:34-35 (NIV)** *Proclaim the power of God, whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens. You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.*

**Psalms 40:5 (NIV)** *Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.*

**Psalms 145:1-7 (NIV)** *I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty— and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works— and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

We're going to be studying this psalm deeper tomorrow night in the Life Group,

- but notice **how often** David commits to declaring God's awesomeness – daily and forever and ever.
- The word "**commends**" means to declare loudly for everyone to hear. Shout it from the mountain top. There is intentionality in that. You're declaring it not just for you to hear but specifically for others to hear.
- Notice he **commits to meditating** on God's wonderful works. So, he spend time daily thinking about God's works and then from that reservoir he declares it aloud for all to hear. And he declares it both in spoken word and in singing. Our goal is not just to declare God's greatness privately, here it's declared so that others may hear about it. When was the last time you declared the greatness of God outside of the walls of this building or in your private quiet time with God? And this is different then simply educating students on the character of God. This is declaring it as part of your lifestyle choice.

2. **Hang around others who live a life of praising God's greatness.** It will likely rub off.

3. **Begin to live each day with intentionally aware of God's awesomeness.**

4. **Pray that God would open up your physical and spiritual eyes to see His greatness in everyday things.**

Throughout the month of January I'm going to focusing on the awesomeness of God to aid us in transforming how we live each day. Paul writes in Romans that we are more than conquerors through Jesus who loved us. And then he goes on and gives us a specific reason why we can live each day like that no matter what's happening in our lives. For right before this Paul talks about how each and every day is a day of risk for him in living for Jesus. But we're going to close our service by reading this passage together and planting in our minds and heart one really good reason why God is awesome.

### **Final closing reading.**

**Romans 8:37-39 (NIV)** *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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When did you last experience awe?

### **Challenges to living in awe of God:**

1. F \_\_\_\_\_
2. M \_\_\_\_\_ awe
3. S \_\_\_\_\_

### **Steps to Restoring your Awe of God:**

1. Read \_\_\_\_\_ of others who were in awe of God.
2. Hang around others who live a life of \_\_\_\_\_ God's greatness
3. Begin to live each day intentionally \_\_\_\_\_ of God's awesomeness
4. Pray that God would open up your physical and spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ to see His greatness in everyday things.

### **Daily recognition of God's awesomeness:**

Sunday:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday:

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