

## LWML Spring Workshop 2020

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### Psalm 139:14

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well. (ESV)

### Mark 13:3–13

And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (ESV)

When the end is near people will be horrible. They will not care for one another. They will devour each other. We entered the end times when Christ ascended into heaven, but beware, these are just the beginning birth pains. (I chose this introduction before the coronavirus epidemic hit, so in light of where we are now I simply pray, “Lord save us. Lord God, protect and defend us from ourselves that we may live unto You and with You”.)

This text from the gospel of Mark helps us understand how people could behave the way they do. How could anyone ever support the murder of babies? How could anyone call themselves Christian and support abortion? We hear these questions all the time. We even ask them ourselves. The answer is “**For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.**” (Mark 13:22ESV). Our brothers and sisters in Christ have been so misled by the evil one that they think evil is good and good is evil

(Is. 5:20). We must bear with each other in patience as our Lord is patient with us. They have been so misled that they no longer fear God and not fearing God they fear no punishment for sin. They have traded the true word of God for the will of man. Believing evil is good, they place the will of man above the word of God. Not fearing God, but fearing man they give into the will of man as if the wrath of man is worse than the wrath of God. But what can man do to us? Mock us? Scorn us? Speak ill of us? Take our lives? Well, yes. These scripture passages even promise it will happen to Christians.

**“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.”** (John 15:18–21 ESV).

**“We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”** (1 Corinthians 4:10–13 ESV).

**“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** (Matthew 5:11–12 ESV).

**“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”** (Matthew 10:28 ESV).

**We are fearfully and wonderfully made**, but we lost that fear when we lost the image of God as recorded in Genesis 3. The Augsburg Confession, article II says, *“Also they (the Lutherans) teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with 2] concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.”* We should expect nothing different from the unbelieving world. We should expect an attack on God and all that is his, including human life. Sadly, we should also expect this from erring believers. They have been led astray. The devil has confused them and caused them to believe falsely. These we must love more than ourselves and bear with them in patience, slowly teaching them the truth. The most difficult part of this is while we are teaching the truth we should also expect to receive hatred. Jesus taught truthfully and it landed him on the cross. Christians should expect no different (Mt 16:24).

Rev. Stephen Preus did a podcast for Gottesdienst.org on “The Fear of God” (<https://www.gottesdienst.org/podcast/2019/1/23/tgc-023-the-fear-of-god>). Rev. Preus does an excellent job of explaining how we are **fearfully made** and why we no longer fear God as he created us to fear him. Allow me to summarize it here.

Fear of God comes from terror over sins, but it is not just terror (2<sup>nd</sup> use of law). Fear is also a sense of worship. Fear can be divided into serval fear and filial fear.

Serval fear can be thought of as the fear a slave has toward his master. It is a fear of punishment. Out of serval fear the slave does what is required to avoid punishment. He doesn't want to do it, but he does it out of fear. He does what is required of him out of selfishness; to save his own skin. Serval fear is fear from hatred in a sense. The slave does his job not out of love and desire, but in hatred for his wrathful master. The slave only submits because of the punishment. Think of a prisoner in jail. He doesn't love the guard, but does what the guard orders out of fear.

Serval fear comes upon sinners in the presence of holiness. This is seen in the call of Isaiah, **“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”** (Isaiah 6:1–5 ESV). Isaiah saw the holy angels of God and trembled in fear because he knew he was not worthy to be in the presence of that which is holy. He expects to die because no one can see God and live (Ex 33:20).

We see this serval fear again at the birth of Jesus. **“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** (Luke 2:8–11 ESV). Imagine being a young shepherd out in the field at night and this happens. They were consumed by “great fear”. They must have assumed judgment day has come upon them. Thus the angel comforts them and calms them with the words, **“fear not”**.

The purpose of this fear (or the 2<sup>nd</sup> use of the law) is to prepare us for the gospel. When we become terrified over sin we long for salvation from the Lord's wrath. Then we are willing to hear the gospel and we gladly cling to Christ because he has taken the punishment away. He has saved us from God's righteous wrath and made us worthy to be in the presence of holiness.

Even after coming to faith and being comforted by the gospel, serval fear remains. The Christian throughout his life has this fear because he is never without sin. This serval fear is the reason we always need the gospel. As we are continually terrified to be in the presence of the holy One because of our sins, we run to the presence of God in the flesh of Jesus so that he may continually make us holy.

Filial fear is a fear which only Christians have toward God. Instead of a slave/master relationship think of it like a father/child relationship. This fear is not from hatred, but love. A child fears disappointing his father, or not living up to his expectations; therefore he does the father's will out of a desire to please him. Filial fear is a selfless fear. It fears not not being in the presence of holiness from unworthiness, but in the presence of holiness it is still afraid in sense of reverence, awe, and worship. The son submits to the father because dad is the strongest man in the world. Dad is so wise and smart. He knows everything and can fix anything. That is the awe a son has for his father. As Christians, we fear offending the heavenly Father who gave his Son for us. Our love comes from his love and we fear losing this love, so we do as our heavenly Father desires; not in fear of punishment, but in a desire to please him. Christ had this fear. It is seen in his submission to the Father. **“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”** (John 5:19 ESV).

Filial fear is what caused Abraham to be willing to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22). This same fear causes all Christians to do things to please God. Filial fear causes Christians to want to pray, go to church, love the neighbor, etc.; not to avoid punishment, but to please Lord (3rd use of the law). It causes Christians to love the commands of God because of the promise. It is an assurance of faith to do good works. These do not merit salvation, but they are the result of Christ's justification. Filial fear is the result of trusting in God alone for salvation.

Through the fall into sin humanity lost the fear of God, as stated above. It has caused humanity to seek after the pleasures of the flesh (selfishness) and to do the will of the devil. **“The intention of man's heart is evil from his youth”** (Gen. 8:21b). The great deceiver has done his job so well that people gladly exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling man and birds and animals and creeping things (Rom. 1:23). The devil has confused humanity to such a point that people do not know good from evil. Isaiah says, **“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!”** (Isaiah 5:20ESV). God made us to fear him. Sin makes us not fear him. Sin goes against the wonderful work of God.

This may help us understand “How could anyone ever support the murder of babies? How could anyone call themselves Christian and support abortion?” We must look at abortion from a different point of view to understand why any human being, especially a Christian would think it is acceptable. Doing so will allow us to empathize with them that we may love them as God has called us to do. It will also help us to understand how to better argue a case for life. The best way to defeat the enemy is to know his next move.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Let us live in serval and filial fear that we may praise God through all we do. As we do this the false Christs will call good evil. That makes our task of confessing the truth all the more difficult. It makes it one of great suffering. We take up our crosses and confess the truths of God as recorded in holy writ with the comfort of knowing that we are not only fearfully made, we are also wonderfully made.

God's people are set apart from all other people by the fear of the Lord; they have it, the world does not. This can be seen as far back as Genesis when God makes his covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15). The children of Abraham are to be God's people. The children of those who live around Abraham are not children of the covenant, but only Abraham's offspring. This is clearly spelled out in Genesis 17:7, **"And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."** (ESV). And again, **"You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."** (Ezekiel 36:28 ESV). God takes this so seriously that when his people entered the promise land, they were to exterminate all foreign peoples so that their foreign gods might not pollute the people of God.

**"But in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the LORD your God has commanded, that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the LORD your God."** (Deuteronomy 20:16–18 ESV).

The Lord God said **"And you shall be my people, and I will be your God."** (Jeremiah 30:22 ESV). To separate his people from the foreign people God gave ten utterances which God's people will do that the foreign peoples will not (cf. Ex. 20:1-17). We call these the Ten Commandments. God's people are set apart from all others because they worship him alone. God's people are set apart because they keep his name holy and remember his Sabbath. God's people are set apart because they love their neighbors and do not murder them. In short God's people hear God's word, believe it, and live as though they believe it to be the only rule and authority.

Being set apart by God his people believe he is the creator of all. All that he made is good as he has declared; especially God's declaration of humanity being very good (Gen 1:10, 31). God's people look at God's creation and honor and care for it as a way to honor and care for the Creator. Specifically with humanity, God's people praise God for how wonderful humanity is. After all it is only humanity that was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

**"For you formed my inward parts;  
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;**

**my soul knows it very well.  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.”** (Psalm 139:13-16).

Just reading this portion of the psalm one finds a great reverence for God’s creation of humanity. God made such a complex machine, the most complex known to man and he did it so wonderfully. He did it in such a way that the creation stands in awe and praise of what God has done. What better way to honor the Creator than to care for his creation?

**“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.”** (Acts 17:26–27 ESV).

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”** (Ephesians 1:3–10 ESV).

This text pertains to our election unto salvation and not to the fifth commandment. However, it shares so much insight into how God has created us. Since he chose the elect before the foundation of the world it had to be his will that they be born. Before God ever said, “let there be light” he had numbered his redeemed and set them apart as his beloved. As the doctrine of election teaches us all that are redeemed are done so by God’s grace through his Son and all who are not saved are not done so by their own sin. God created none to be damned. Thus if any are it is their fault. Yet if any are saved, it is solely by God’s grace.<sup>1</sup> Likewise if any have earthly life it is because God created that life by his almighty power. God has given us this wonderful gift of life; life on earth and eternal life in his kingdom. For this he is to be praised above all others. This is done when he is feared and honored in all facets of life.

Here is another example.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on election read the Formula of Concord article XI. <https://bookofconcord.org/pdf/TrigBOC.pdf>

**“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:12–20 ESV).**

This text clearly deals with the sixth commandment and not the fifth, but there is still so much for us to learn about honoring God with our bodies. They are not ours. They are God’s. This knowledge takes away the only major argument for abortion; it is a woman’s body and therefore a woman’s right to choose. No! It is God’s body. He created it in the most wonderful way and therefore it is his to do with as he chooses. If God chooses to honor the female body by allowing it to conceive another human being then it is an act of rebellion against God to undo the wonderful work that God has done. Fear of God, both serval and filial should cause us to glorify God in our bodies acknowledging that they are fearfully and wonderfully made by him, even when he does it through the female reproductive organs.

Filial fear causes us to love all of God’s works, especially those created in his image. God’s people treat all life as though it is God’s creation and therefore let him be in charge of it all. Humans are allowed to kill plants for food as we learn from Genesis **“And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”** (Genesis 1:29 ESV). Later, after the fall into sin, God gave the animals as food for man as well.

**“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.”** (Genesis 9:1–3 ESV).

Humanity is different than the other animals of the earth. As stated previously, only humanity was created in the image of God and thus all humanity is holy unto the Lord. To take a human’s life is something which only God can rightfully do. God determines the length of a man’s days.

God has given the responsibility to take a human life to the government to punish wickedness. Capital punishment is a task the government can carry out according to God's word, but the government can only use it according to God's word. **"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. [2] Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. [3] For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, [4] for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer."** (Romans 13:1–4 ESV).

Apart from the government doing their God-given task of punishing the wicked taking of any human life is murder. This is clearly forbidden by the fifth commandment, **"Thou shall not murder."** God's people understand this because they fear God. God's people honor God's creation because they acknowledge that **we are fearfully and wonderfully made**. God's people know this because they are set apart to know this. The world that hates our Lord also hates his word, his will, and all his ways. Therefore, Christians should not be surprised when the world, who hates the Creator, also hates his creation. Christians live as those set apart; set apart to praise God, to confess his word, and to live according to it.

**Psalm 139:14**

**I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

**Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well. (ESV)**