

**The Book of Romans
Not Even One! (Part 5)**

Romans 3:9-20

November 15, 2015

*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church*

Those of you who are old enough, you remember that back in 1989 a company was launched, a clothing manufacturer, and the label of that clothing manufacturer was *No Fear*. T-shirts with that emblazoned across it were everywhere. It was a company, really, promoting extreme sports, but the *No Fear* logo, sort of, surpassed that reality. It became a popular way for everyone, even those not engaged in extreme sports to say, I will do whatever I choose to do, because I fear nothing and I fear no one. *No Fear*.

That is an absolutely stupid slogan. Sorry parents, I don't know another word for it. The truth is, whenever we puny human beings are confronted with anything that is truly great, it always produces a sense of fear. You understand this. If you have ever been caught in the middle of a tornado. If you've ever been in a hurricane. If you've ever been in the middle of, at the epicenter of an earthquake. If you've ever been in the middle of a vast ocean. You are overwhelmed with a sense of your own smallness and of fear.

But the response of fear and awe produced by those created things is absolutely nothing compared to the human response that always comes when a finite human being encounters the infinite God. How do people in Scripture respond when they encounter God? When they truly come face to face with God? Well the Scriptures are filled with those responses. You have, of course, Moses in Exodus 3, where God tells him, don't come any closer, you'll be incinerated. Instead, you better take the shoes off your feet because the ground on which you stand is holy ground. Israel at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20:18-19, "the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood at a distance. And they said to Moses, 'You speak to us, Moses, and we will listen, but don't let God speak to us or we will die.'"

You come to the New Testament, you see the same reality. In Matthew 17:5-6, Peter, James, and John are at the Mount of Transfiguration. They've just seen our Lord transfigured. And we read, "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the clouds said," this is God, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" And when the disciples heard *this*, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified." John the Apostle, in his nineties, had walked with the Lord for many, many years; on the isle of Patmos, you remember, he has a vision of the glorified Christ, his Lord, his Master, the one he walked with day in and day out for three and a half years. And in Revelation 1:17 John writes,

“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man.” I was paralyzed with fear. I couldn’t move.

It is impossible to see a genuine display of the greatness of God and to fail to respond in fear. It’s only when our view of God becomes eclipsed either by our ignorance of the true God or by our sin that we can encounter God and not be afraid. According to Paul’s indictment of all humanity in Romans 3, that is exactly what has happened to us all. Our ignorance of the true God and our sin has clouded our vision so that we think we can actually encounter the true and living God and everything will be fine. Paul says, this is the fruit of our sin.

Look at Romans 3 again. I’ll read the paragraph we’re studying, beginning in verse 9. Paul writes,

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”
“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,”
“THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;
“AND THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;
“THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,
AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”
“THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Now in these verses, as we’ve learned, Paul summarizes and he proves to us, from the Scripture, his indictment against all of humanity. He begins in verse 9 with the formal indictment of man in his depravity. And then in verses 10 through 18 he presents the biblical evidence of man’s depravity. He introduces the biblical proof that all men are, in fact, under sin. The evidence begins in verse 10 with a summary, a summary of man’s depravity. “as it is written, ‘THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.’” Paul then uses a string of Old Testament references to

illustrate the depth of depravity, the extent to which it has affected us all. We have darkened minds, we have enslaved wills, verse 11 says. Verse 12, we exhibit rebellious lifestyles and sinful behavior. In verses 13 and 14, we demonstrate toxic speech. What comes out of our mouth destroys. And as we learned last time, toxic speech spills over into destructive relationships in verses 15 to 17.

Tragically, the sin within our hearts leaks out and it infects and destroys all of the human relationships that we have. We noted last week that there are three reasons behind these destructive relationships, this destruction. There is within us, we noted in verse 15, a predisposition to violent anger. “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD.” Boy, is that right off the front page of our newspaper this morning. Their feet are swift to shed the blood of a creature made in the image of God, for any reason, and sometimes even under the guise of religion, albeit false religion.

There’s a pattern of destroying relationships, verse 16, “DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS.” In other words, if you follow the path of a fallen human being, in their wake, everywhere you look, you will see the debris of shattered and destroyed relationships. Verse 17, they have no perception of the path of peace. “THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” Not only do they fail to walk on a path that is peaceful and that leads to peace, they don’t even know how to find it.

So Paul lays out here then the biblical evidence for depravity in verses 10 through 18. We have seen in verse 10 a summary of depravity and we have seen in verses 11 to 17 the depth of depravity, but we still haven’t reached the bottom. We still have not arrived at ground zero. But that’s exactly where Paul takes us this morning. To what we could call, the foundation of depravity, the foundation of depravity.

You see, if we attempt to dig down to what lies behind human sinfulness, behind our own sin, apart from Christ. If we try to discern how creatures that depend entirely upon their Creator for everything still deny His existence, use His name as a curse, become openly antagonistic to Him. Or in other cases, as we learned in Romans 1, even though they know so much about God from creation and conscience and providence, instead of worshipping the true God, instead they create their own gods and they fall down in front of a rock or a block of wood or something else.

Or, other people do neither of those first two, instead they simply ignore God. You realize that nine out of ten people on this planet believe in a supreme being, but most of them live as though that supreme being did not exist. They sin with impunity, without fear of punishment. Some grow up in Christian homes and sit in Christian churches like this one, and they hear the gospel again and again and again. And they refuse to accept God’s offer of mercy and grace.

Now, why? Why would mankind respond this way, or in these ways, to its Creator? Paul says, there is only one reason. When you really dig to the very bottom, what you will find, in verse

18, is that “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” That’s ground zero. “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” Here is the root cause, the basic reason, the primary source behind all other sins. Now, Paul quotes this verse from Psalm 36:1, “A Psalm of David.” I won’t take you back to Psalm 36, but it’s interesting, the Hebrew of verse 1 of Psalm 36 is a little difficult to understand, but literally it reads like this: “An oracle of transgression regarding the wicked is in the midst of my heart.” What David is saying is this, he says, when I reflect, in my own heart, about the wickedness of sinners, the transgression of sinners, I can only conclude that there is one explanation, it’s because they don’t fear God.

Now, he specifically says, notice verse 18, “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” Why does he refer to the eyes? You know, in this passage he’s talked about various parts of the body, our lips and our throat, and other parts of the human anatomy, and here he speaks of the eyes. And he refers to the eyes in reference to this because the eyes have to do with what directs our steps. You look where you’re going and you choose to walk where your eyes look. You see the connection. What David is saying is that a legitimate fear of God has absolutely no place in directing the steps of our lives, none at all. We may be philosophical atheists. We may be practical atheists. But regardless, for all sinful mankind, God is simply left out of the life. A fear of Him doesn’t direct our course at all.

John Murray writes, “The fear of God is appropriately expressed as before our eyes because the fear of God means that God is constantly in the center of our thought and apprehension. And life is characterized by the all pervasive consciousness of dependence upon Him and responsibility to Him. The absence of this fear means that God is excluded not only from the center of thought and calculation, but from the whole horizon of our reckoning. God is not in all our thoughts. Figuratively, He is not before our eyes.”

Now, what we have learned in Romans 1 makes this very startling. Because, you remember, Romans 1, we learned that God has made a vision of Himself, of His person, clear in the creation. But what we learn here is that fallen man can choose not to keep God before his eyes. God’s there, everywhere you look. There’s an evidence of God’s power in creation, His eternal existence, but you can choose to shut that down. You can choose not to keep God before your eyes.

Contrast that, by the way, with what the true believer does. The Psalmist in Psalm 16:8 writes, “I have set the LORD continually before me.” That’s what a believer does. You set the Lord before you. You realize you always live in His presence. You live *coram deo*, before the face of God. You realize that, I can’t go anywhere where He isn’t. And when you set the Lord before your eyes, when you live in the awareness of His constant presence, it causes you to fear Him. And if you fear Him, then you will turn from evil and you will walk in obedience. The Scripture always makes this connection.

Let me just give you a couple of examples. Deuteronomy 5:29, God says this, “Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always.” You see the connection? You fear God, you keep His commandments. Job 1:1, “Job was blameless, upright, fearing God and,” therefore, “turning from evil.” When you fear God, you turn from evil. Proverbs 3:7, “Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” And these are just a few examples. When you really fear God, you turn away from evil and you obey and follow Him.

In fact, John Calvin writes, “Righteousness,” that is, a right life, a life that conforms to God’s standard, “Righteousness flows from only one principle, the fear of God.” You understand this at a practical level. Think, for a moment, about a specific sin that you struggle with, a specific sin. I can promise you this, there are certain people before whom, and certain circumstances in which, you would never commit that sin. You may think, well, you know, I don’t have much control over that sin. Truth is, you do, because there are certain people and certain circumstances where you would never commit that sin. Perhaps it’s before your spouse or in front of your parents. Maybe it’s with your peers. Or perhaps, it’s with spiritual leaders in your life. Maybe you would never commit that sin if I’m around.

Now, why? Why would you never consider committing your sin in the presence of that person? It’s because you fear. You fear what would happen if that sin were exposed in that situation. But God always knows. And yet we still sin. Why? Because either we don’t really believe that God sees or we don’t really fear the God who sees. So, a failure to fear God is the foundation of our depravity.

But what exactly is the fear of God? What does that mean? Well, when Scripture speaks of the fear of God, or the fear of the Lord, it’s used in one of three ways. Let me give them to you briefly. First of all, it is used of true believers and the true worship of God. Sometimes, often in fact, when the Bible speaks about one who fears the Lord or those who fear the Lord, it’s a description of all of those who have genuinely come to believe in the true God and to worship Him. It’s shorthand for believer. Genuine believers fear God. That’s why, in Proverbs 9:10 we read, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” You don’t even begin a relationship with God apart from the fear of God.

Psalms 31:19 goes on to say that you can describe believers as those who fear God. Psalm 31:19, “How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You.” If you take refuge in God, in New Testament terms, of you take refuge in Jesus Christ, then you fear God. And if you fear God, you take refuge. Psalm 103:17, “The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,” on true believers. Malachi 3:16, “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and a book of remembrance was written before God for those who fear the Lord, who esteem His name.” It’s shorthand for true believers.

Even in the New Testament this is true. Revelation 19:5, “A voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants,’” that is, His slaves, His *doulos*, “‘you who fear Him, both small and great.’” So, Scripture often uses the expression, those who fear the Lord, simply to identify those who have come to truly believe in the true God and to worship Him. Let me put it to you very bluntly, if you don’t fear God, you are not a true believer. You are not a Christian.

The fear of the Lord is used, secondly, in Scripture, of reverence and awe for God, reverence and awe. Now, we throw these words around, so let me give you a definition, just so we’re clear. Webster’s defines reverence as an attitude of deep respect tinged with awe, mixed with awe. So what’s awe? Well, awe is an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder, that is inspired by authority or by the sacred or by the sublime. It’s dread, there’s a fear mixed in with it, as well as wonder, and you’re overwhelmed by the reality of this. This is how we’re to respond to God and sometimes when Scripture uses this expression, the fear of the Lord, it’s talking about reverence and awe of the one true God.

Let me give you a couple of examples. Deuteronomy 28:58, Moses writes, “you must be careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God.” Fear Him because of His awesome character. Be awed by God. Be filled with wonder as well as with legitimate fear. Psalm 33:8, “Let all the earth fear the LORD,” and then the Psalmist explains, “let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.”

Listen, to fear God means you literally not only respect Him, but you are taken away with wonder, born away with wonder and fascination and veneration and adoration of His greatness. You’re overwhelmed by God. Malachi 2:5 speaks of Levi and says, “‘Levi feared Me,’” and then He explains, “‘and stood in awe of My name,’” he was awed by what’s true about Me. This is what it means to fear God. It means to truly be moved in your heart and in your thoughts and in your spirit by the greatness of God. To fear God is to have an attitude of deep respect combined with a sense of wonder inspired by who God is and what He’s done, and frankly, what He could do if He wanted to do.

There’s a third way that Scripture uses the fear of the Lord and that is of terror or dread. You see, when God is truly seen, either in person or in His Word, and when He is properly understood, He always inspires terror in human beings. Sometimes this happens unintentionally. God shows up in a theophany, in a visible appearance, and what happens? People are terrified. Even believers are terrified. I shared a number of examples with you just a few minutes ago. Let me remind you of John on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation 1:17. He says, “I saw the glorified Christ and I fell at His feet like a man in a coma, like a dead man; I couldn’t move.”

Other times in Scripture God intends to be terrifying, He intends to be. For example, Psalm 2:11, a Psalm about the Messiah, it says, “Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with

trembling.” When you come to worship the Messiah, God says, you can rejoice, but you also ought to tremble, your knees ought to knock as you think about the greatness of My Son. Jeremiah 5:22, God says, “Do you not fear Me? Do you not tremble in My presence?” God says, really, your knees aren’t knocking when you come into My presence?

Turn over to Isaiah 2. Isaiah talks about the future day of the Lord, the future day of judgment, and three times he says, sinful people should hide from the, and will hide, from the terror that is God. Isaiah 2:10, “Enter the rock and hide in the dust,” again, this is the future, this is the day of the Lord, God’s day when He comes in judgment on the earth,

Enter the rock and hide in the dust
From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty.
The proud look of man will be abased
And the loftiness of man will be humbled
[Every proud person will be humbled to the dust.]
And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.
For Yahweh of armies will have His day.

He’s going to have His day.

And notice again in verse 19 how fallen sinful man will respond. “Men will go into the caves of the rocks and into the holes of the ground before the terror of the LORD.” They’ll run like rats into holes in the earth to hide from the splendor and the majesty and the terrifying presence of God, “when He arises to make the earth tremble.” Verse 21, again, they’ll “go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble.” In light of that, “Stop regarding man, whose breath *of life* is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?” Listen, do you want to know who to be afraid of, God says, don’t be afraid of man, be afraid of Me. The Lord and only the Lord is truly terrifying.

So those are the three senses, or the three ways in which the fear of God is used in Scripture. It’s used of true believers and true worship. It’s used of reverence and awe, being carried away with wonder in the presence of the greatness of God, and of terror and dread.

Now, in the New Testament there is only one primary word for fear, the Greek word for fear, it’s the word *phobos*, from which we get our English word phobia. That’s the word used in Romans 3:18. Because there’s only one word, it’s hard in any context to know exactly which of the senses is being used. However, in the Psalm Paul quotes, Psalm 36:1, the Psalmist uses a Hebrew word that only means one thing, terror and dread. So David, and therefore Paul, was not intending to say that sinners failed to respect God, they failed to respond to God with awe, although that’s true. Instead, Paul and David are both saying, sinners don’t even respond to God with terror or dread. Fallen man has no terror at the thought of God.

Now think about that. That is ridiculous when you think about it. I mean, think about all the things people are afraid of. Think of what you're afraid of. You know, afraid of what might happen, some financial crisis, afraid of ISIS, afraid of cancer, afraid of an accident, afraid of death. And yet, no fear of God? The unbeliever has no sense, in his rebellion, that he should live every moment of his life in sheer terror of God. Instead, Paul says, "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE HIS EYES," no terror at the thought of God. Why is that? Why are all sinners without fear of God?

Well, Scripture tells us there are several reasons, let me give them to you very briefly. Unbelievers do not fear God in any of these three senses for several reasons. Number one, they have no understanding of God's revelation. Ultimately, all true knowledge of the fear of the Lord comes through the Scripture. Deuteronomy 4:10, God says to Moses, "Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so that they may learn to fear Me." God says, when they hear Me speak, when they hear My words, they'll learn to fear Me. Psalm 19:9 even uses the fear of the Lord as a synonym for the Scripture itself. Psalm 86:11, the Psalmist writes, "Teach me Your way, O God," and when You do, "unite my heart to fear Your name." I'll learn to fear You when You teach me Your word. Because unbelievers don't understand God's revelation, they have no fear of God.

There's a second reason they don't fear God, it's that they have no sense of God's greatness. We live in a day, sadly, when advertisers have completely destroyed the English language. When breakfast cereal is great. It's ridiculous. Even the dictionary has an informal definition of the word great that means satisfactory. The real definition of great is, unusually large in size and dimensions, unusual in degree, power, intensity; wonderful, notable, remarkable, exceptional, outstanding. Folks, by that definition, only God is great and everything about God is great, His character, His word, His works, His ability, they're all great. And because of that men fear Him when they understand that.

Turn to Job 37. Elihu is speaking, and in Job 37 he says something remarkable about God and our response to God. Verse 21, he uses the sun as an illustration, he says,

"Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies;
But the wind has passed and cleared them.
Out of the North [again now, he's talking about the sun and it's splendor]
Out of the North comes golden *splendor*;
Around God is awesome majesty.

He's making a comparison. He's saying, look, if you go outside at noon and you try to look at the sun, you can't do it, you're overwhelmed by the glory, the splendor of the sun. He says, imagine, if it's true of the sun, what it would be like if you really saw God. "The Almighty," verse 23, "we cannot find Him; He's exalted in power," verse 24, because of that greatness, "Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart." From an

understanding of that greatness of God comes fear. By the way, if you haven't read it recently, go home and sometime this week read Job 38 to 41 where God talks to Job and He puts His greatness on display. God says, think about this. Because fallen man lacks a true sense of the greatness of God, he fails to fear Him.

A third reason unbelievers do not fear God is that they have no sense of God's power. It's related to the previous one, but just a slight distinction. Listen to Exodus 14:31, "When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD." When you get a glimpse of God's power, you fear Him. I remember with my family, back when I was living in Mobile, one dark night, for many hours sitting in our little wood frame house watching and feeling the roof lift again and again, afraid that any moment it was going to fly off as Hurricane Camille came powering through the Gulf Coast. I can promise you this, everybody in our house, and everybody who was still there, feared God that night because we saw just a glimpse of His power.

A fourth reason sinners do not fear God is that they have no sense of God's judgment, no sense of God's judgment. People just assume that God is not going to judge them, that He's not going to bring temporal judgment for their sin into their lives here. You know, that's not true. The truth is, God executes temporal judgments on unbelievers even during this life. I'm not just talking about future judgment, we're talking about now. Read the Scriptures. There is example after example of unbelievers whom God brings down His temporal judgment on because of their sins - starting with Cain, by the way, and throughout the Scriptures.

But God also disciplines believers in this life. You know, sometimes we can think, okay, there is no judgment for me in the future, and that's true if you're in Christ, in the sense that you're not going to be judged for your sins. But God will deal with you now. And we ought to live in fear of that. You ought to be afraid. If you grew up in a good Christian home, you were afraid to violate the will and command of your parents because of the discipline that would come. You better fear God in the same way. First Corinthians 11:29 says, about the Lord's Table,

he who eats and drinks in an unworthy way, eats and drinks God's judgment to himself. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and some have died.

First Peter 1:17, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*." Fear of what? Fear of displeasing the Father. Fear of His discipline. Listen, don't you imagine for a moment that because you're a Christian, you can sin when you want to sin and our Father isn't going to discipline you. He will. "Conduct yourselves in fear."

People also assume that God will not judge and punish their sin in the future. Jesus had a lot to say contrary to that. In fact, He had the most to say about hell of anybody in Scripture. And in Matthew 10:28, He says this, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the

soul.” In other words, don’t fear ISIS. The worst they can do is put your body to death. He says, I’ll tell you who to fear. Jesus says, “Rather,” He’s talking to His disciples, “fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” You better fear God. You going to be terrified by somebody? Let it be God. If you have refused to repent and believe in God’s Son, God says, you should live in terror of His coming judgment.

Turn over to Hebrews 10. Hebrews 10, he’s talking here about those who are attached to the church but have never truly believed and then decide to abandon the Christian faith. So these aren’t real Christians, these are people who belong to Christian homes and Christian churches, but never really believed and then abandoned the faith. He said, if that happens, verse 27, all you have to anticipate is “a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME GOD’S ENEMIES.” He says, look, if you broke the Law of Moses and two or three witnesses testified against you, you could get the capital punishment, you could get death. “How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve,” here’s what this is like, “trampling under foot the Son of God, and regarding as unclean the blood that He shed, and insulting the Spirit of grace?” Don’t forget, God said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.”

And then verse 31, one of the most challenging, difficult verses in all the Bible, toward those who attach to the Christian faith, or those who refuse to attach the Christian faith, “It is a terrifying thing to fall in the hands of the living God.” Listen, if you’re not a true believer. If you haven’t really come to Christ. Whether you’re attached to the church or whether you’re not. “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

So I understand then, Paul says, that behind all human sin is an absence of the fear of God. If you’re here this morning and you are not in Christ, let me tell you, it’s because you don’t really fear God. If you really understood something of the greatness of God, the power of God, the coming judgment of God, you would run to Jesus Christ. And if you’re in Christ, you don’t fear God the way you ought to fear God; I’ve had to admit that to myself this week. We don’t fear God the way we should. But here’s the good news Christian. I love that Isaiah 11:3 says of Jesus the Messiah, “He will delight in the fear of the Lord.” In other words, He lived a perfect life of the right kind of fear of God for 33 years and if you’re in Christ, that is yours. God sees you as if you had lived your whole life in the right fear of God.

Let’s pray together. Our Father, we have already in this service confessed our sins to You and sought Your forgiveness. But having studied this, we come, O God, to seek Your forgiveness for not fearing You as we ought to fear You. Not only before Christ, but Father, even since You brought us to know You, we have not lived in that sense of awe and wonder and reverence and respect. We’ve treated Your holy things lightly. We’ve taken You lightly. And Father, we have not had the response that we’ve seen from so many in the Scripture. O God, help us to rightly fear You. Forgive us. Cleanse us. And prepare us who know You to take of this reminder of

our Lord's death for all of our sins, including the failure to fear You as we ought to fear You.
We pray in Jesus' name, amen.