



## Dear Friends,

Last week, I spoke about Michael Horton's latest book, *Recovering our Sanity*. Horton argues that we are living through a pandemic of fear in Western culture. He recognises that Christians face political, social and cultural challenges to their faith and values in a secular culture. But to be driven by those fears, says Horton, results in us losing our minds. Instead, Christians are to fear God, and in so doing, we will regain our sanity. We are to look up to heaven rather than fixate on what is going on around us.

So, I finished last week's newsletter by asking, what does it mean to fear God?

**To fear God is to regard God rightly and respond to him accordingly. Our attitude toward God is to lead to action.**

To take the call to fear God seriously demands that we consider WHO God is. The Bible uses the word, HOLY, to speak of God. The angelic host in Isaiah 6:3 call out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty." The heavenly gathering in Revelation 4:8 never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

**Scholars have pointed out the word holy means "to set apart" or "other". In what sense is God "set apart" or "other"?**

We can speak of God's holiness in two ways. **Firstly, God's majestic otherness.** God's majestic otherness is his holy being. God says in Isaiah 44:6: "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." Holiness, in this sense, is God's utter uniqueness, his 'godness.' Only God is God. He is in a category of his own. So, when the Bible says, "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2), it doesn't mean being like God in this sense.

**What does it mean, then, to be holy as God is holy?** Well, there is a second sense in which God is holy. Holiness is also God's moral otherness. God is true, righteous, good, just, wise, loving, kind, compassionate, patient, gracious and gentle. When we are united to Christ by faith in his death and resurrection for us, we receive the Holy Spirit. Christians are holy in two senses – set apart as saints by the justifying work of Jesus, and transformed by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to become who we already are in Christ as God's holy children.

Horton says to fear God is **SANITY**. To fear God is to live with the grain of reality. He points out that "once upon a time in Western nations, people used to ask, 'How can I be right before a holy God?' But now we ask, 'How can I have my best life now?'"

To live with the grain of reality is to realize we were created by God to love, serve and enjoy him. To fear God is to rightly regard him as your Creator, Provider, Ruler and Judge. But above all else, it's to receive his offer of salvation to us in Jesus Christ, who through his death, resurrection and ascension, has conquered all human fears. Jesus conquers the fear of living without meaning. The fear of loneliness without love. The fear of guilt without forgiveness. The fear of evil without justice. The fear of dying without hope.

God Bless  
Mark Adams