**6/30/19**

**Sermon Reflection:**  After the introduction last week to his summer series on Proverbs, Keith Boyd covered the first topic which is also the foundation for the rest of the book:  **“Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge.”**  (Proverbs 1:7).  Keith reminded us that we all have fears, and that whatever we fear fuels our choices and behaviors.  In that way, our fear is what controls us or masters us.  We may fear what people think or say about us, or we may fear death, or going hungry, or failure or being rejected, or any number of things. These fears are not good masters because they prevent us from being who God made us to be.

But the fear of the Lord is the one fear that eliminates all other fears.  And, the fear of the Lord is not a fear of punishment because Jesus took that on himself.  We can trust God to be our master because he loves us. We know he loves us because he gave his life for us on the cross, and then gave his life to us through the Holy Spirit.  So, this fear is not the same type of fear as others.  It’s a reverent fear where we put God above everything else; we are in awe of who he is and what he’s done for us.

**Personal Reflection:**  I have let my fear of failure and of what others think of me be my master most of my life.  I have walked away from significant relationships out of fear (I reject them before they can reject me) and I have turned away opportunities because I was not POSITIVE I would succeed.  And it’s only been as I’ve accepted how loved I am by God that I have been able to fear him more than I fear the other things.

**Application:**

1. In the times when you’re not fearing the Lord, what is the fear that fuels your choices and behaviors?  (e.g, fear of being wrong, being ridiculed/left out or rejected, missing out, being poor, failing or disappointing others, sickness or death, etc).  Ask God for the grace to trust him, and pray for opportunities this week to make new choices.
2. By a show of hands we all said that the wisest people we know are not necessarily the most educated or wealthy, but they all had relational and emotional health.  How healthy would you say your relationships and emotions are, and how would the fear of the Lord improve that?