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Every year around this time Chapman University conducts a poll to determine what ranks high on American's "Fear Chart." This year the #1 fear was: governmental corruption, which has ranked that high for the last 4 years. Down the list were: water pollution, air pollution, fear of not having enough money, illness in the family, etc. None of that surprises me. What I find interesting is that they always seem to conduct this poll in the Fall. Why? Why not in the Spring, or Summer, or in the dead of Winter after the holidays are past? I cannot answer for the researchers, but I have my own views about the Fall and how it can bring on morose feelings.

The biggest Fall holiday is Thanksgiving. It's a happy time of celebrating the bounty of the harvest, blessings, and getting together with family and friends. No negativity there. But what about the rest of the Fall? Investors are well aware that October/November are often downer periods for the stock market. Anyone alive in 1987 cannot forget "Black Friday." Likewise, the Great Depression and the crash of 1929 began in the Fall. People generally get sicker in the late autumn, too. The heady days of endless Summer are past, so everything folks have put off and ignored come home to roost. Fall is a time to take life seriously and "hunker down." And when people do, they are afflicted by fear. They worry over all the stuff they seemingly cannot control.

Many years ago I wrote here about how the body physically draws inward during the Fall. We know Winter is coming. We literally "feel it in our bones." The cold, the snow, the dark days and very long nights pull at us. We contract as humans to marshal our reserves against what we know awaits. And when the cold rains of November descend, all those inner fears we've been harboring break into our consciousness.

The Church year calendar has recognized this fact for centuries. Thus, with November the Church year winds down with the Last Judgment and the things leading up to it. And in the modern calendar, it culminates and concludes with: Christ the King Sunday. I think that is very fitting. For after all the discussion of how evil afflicts us and our attendant fears of it, what is more uplifting than to focus on God's gracious power and love wrapped up in the King of all creation reigning over us in a new kingdom where fear is totally banished?!

Getting back to the Chapman University poll, it's fascinating to me that all the top ten fears were about things that humans basically have little or no control over. That's a metaphor for life. Feeling powerless, losing control, undergirds all human fears. But, for you, that's where Christ the King comes into play. For He IS in control and He DEARLY LOVES YOU! "All things work for good to those who love God." Our King has banished the fear of death, the ultimate "loss of control" by rising to life! So what's the moral to the story? Just this: enjoy the Fall colors, celebrate Thanksgiving, sleep hard each night, and revel in

God's blessings no matter what. Fear polls are meaningless for God's children..... "This is the day (and season) the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!"