



The Ten Commandments – Part 7
Exodus 20:7
GCSP – 08/22/2009

Before we get started this evening I need to correct something I said a few weeks ago. I mentioned that God never called the commands we are studying in **Exodus 20** and **Deuteronomy 6** as the Ten Commandments – I was wrong. He didn't call them by this name when they are listed in those two passages, but He does refer to them, through Moses, as the Ten Commandments in **Deuteronomy 4:13**.

What's in a name? Did you know that your name has a meaning behind it? And did you know that even if you or your parents were oblivious to that meaning that you probably portray some of the traits associated with the meaning of your name?

Let me list some names with their meanings and see if you don't agree? – And I had no clue who would show up tonight so don't get offended if I didn't choose yours.

Chuck means manly.
Clay means worker.
Sue means graceful lily or rose.
Trent means traveler.
Richard means regal.
Ginny means pure.
Michelle means who is like God?
Damon means to tame.
Connie means constant and faithful.
John and Jean means God is gracious.
Lisa and Beth means consecrated to God.
Dave means beloved.
Adrienne means rich, wealthy dark one.
George means earth worker.
Cherry means cherry.
Jerry means spear warrior
Nicki means victory of the people.
Bonnie means pretty girl.
Judy means praised.
Caleb means faithful and bold.
Cali means beautiful.
Alfred means handsome counselor.
And this one I'm clueless about: Glenn means a secluded woody valley.

Now other than those last two, I'm sure you can at least see some of the traits of these meanings in the people here tonight with those names. And while the meanings of names are somewhat ignored in our American culture, many other cultures pay extremely close attention to what a name means before giving it to one of their children.

Now let me list a few other names with their meanings.

Adonai – The Lord, or My Great Lord
El Elyon – The God Most High
Elohim – The All-Powerful One, or Creator
El Olam – The Eternal or Everlasting God
El Roi – The God Who Sees Me
El Shaddai – The All-Sufficient One or God Almighty
Immanuel – God with Us
Jehovah – The One Who Is or the Self-Existent One
Jehovah-Jireh – The Lord Will Provide
Jehovah-Mekaddishkem – The Lord Who Sanctifies
Jehovah-Nissi – The Lord My Banner
Jehovah-Rapha – The Lord Who Heals
Jehovah-Rohi – The Lord My Shepherd
Jehovah-Sabaoth – The Lord of Hosts
Jehovah-Shalom – The Lord is Peace
Jehovah-Shammah – The Lord is There or The Lord My Companion
Jehovah-Tsidkenu – The Lord Our Righteousness
Yahweh – I AM or HE IS

These are the proper names of God mentioned in the Old Testament from the Hebrew. Probably the most significant name in the New Testament would be Yeshua – The Christ or Messiah.

In the use of the Old Testament names of God, most, if not all of your Bibles will simply say God or LORD. I believe the translators have done us a great disservice by doing this. Even though the Bible will often give us the meaning of the specific use on occasion in most instances without looking up the Hebrew we are simply left with the generic God or LORD, and thus lose some of the richness of the passage.

Some may say, what's the big deal? The big deal is that the meanings of these various names of God not only better describe the character of God, they tell us who He is. If you are struggling with inner turmoil, calling upon Jehovah-Shalom and knowing the Lord is Peace can have a dramatic effect on you. If you have a physical ailment, calling upon Jehovah-Rapha and knowing He is the God who Heals can drastically change how you pray and increase your faith. If you are helplessly wandering through a season in your life without any direction, calling upon Jehovah-Rohi and knowing the Lord is Your Shepherd will bring the direction you need in greater ways than just hoping God will lead you.

The confidence you can gain by understanding the character of God described in His names is immense. The measure of faith you will gain by knowing God through the meanings of His names is critical. The peace and contentment and tranquility that come from the realization that God is all of these things and infinitely more can be the fulfillment of so many of His promised blessings; which unfortunately are needlessly missing from the lives of most Christians.

And yet the vast majority of the world, and unbelievably many who call themselves Christians, not only are unaware of God's names they also causally and flippantly toss God's name around as a curse word.

And if you will excuse my frankness, god damn is just the tip of the iceberg. Do you think you are actually saying anything different when you choose the words gosh darn instead? The same sentiment is inherent in both. Do you think it's proper to exclaim "Oh my God" or "Jesus Christ" as a way of expressing surprise or dismay or shock? Used in the proper way, or as an immediate prayer over the situation is not a problem, but not as an expression of surprise or dismay or shock.

How would you feel if someone used your mother's name every time they were caught off guard or shocked at a particular situation? Would you be offended? Or how about if I hit my thumb with a hammer and inherently shouted out your name as a way of expressing my anger, would that offend you?

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Exodus**.

Exodus 20:7

Let's pray.

An unnamed diplomat once said, "The purpose of words is to conceal thoughts." Let that sink in for a moment; the purpose of words is to conceal thoughts. That's obviously a very cynical viewpoint but it is also unfortunately often true.

As a general rule, we are not very careful with our words. Often, we are not even very careful with the truthfulness of our words, or we speak of things we are not 100% sure about as if they were fact. Why do we have to preface a serious comment with, "To be completely honest with you..." or "Well, to tell the truth..."? Why do we have to follow up some interesting news we just heard with the question, "Are you serious?"

These phrases have become commonplace to the point of simply being expressions we sue whether we really mean it or not. When someone says to me, "To be completely honest with you" I do not automatically wonder if everything else they have said up to that point was dishonest; or do I?

The point is we are reluctant to treat our words as our bond anymore. We are so casual with our words today that we almost have to change our expression and reinforce ourselves with the phrases I just mentioned to show that we are serious now as opposed to our normal manner.

The reason marriage vows, contracts, and all other ordinary promises are so easily broken today is this casual attitude we have about the words we speak. The old expression, "Say what you mean and mean what you say" is a dinosaur in contemporary thought.

Why are our lives littered with broken promises on both sides of the equation? - Because of our sinful unwillingness to take our own words seriously.

God takes our words very seriously, especially when it comes to the use of His name. Taking God's name in vain is literally using His name "to no good purpose" or "falsely." So when we invoke God's name in any conversation it had better be for a good purpose

and it had better be in complete and utter truth, otherwise God promises you will be punished. He does not describe the type and measure of punishment but if you are in the habit of using His name in vain you can take it to the bank that some of the problems you have been facing are in actuality punishment for breaking this commandment.

And before we move on let me say that the Jews of Jesus day and many of the more orthodox Jews of today took this commandment too far. They chose to not ever mention God's name in any way. Even when they wrote the name Yahweh they eliminated the vowels and just used the capital letters YHWH. I'm sorry, but purposely avoiding God's name does not honor Him just as much as using His name in vain does not honor Him.

Another way to view this sin is that you are profaning the name of God when take His name in vain. Profaning means to debase or defile that which is holy or worthy of reverence. It is an attack against something holy. It's an attempt to take something exalted or revered and jerk it down from its pedestal. When you profane something you are trying to bring it down to your level so you can reduce it to being no better than you are.

So then, when we profane the name of the Lord we are attempting to reduce God down to being no better than us. It is a direct attack on His holiness and majesty and power; as a matter of fact it is a denial of His holiness and majesty and power.

Do you think that's casual or flippanant, or do you think that's serious business?

Why do you think the tabloids sell by the millions still today in an age where once popular newspapers and magazines are folding up every day? They still sell because the common man and woman enjoys seeing the rich and famous being knocked down to their level. The public likes to see that the celebrities and politicians are no better than they are. And by cursing God and using His name in vain they believe they are doing the same with our Lord – bringing Him down to a point where God is no better than me.

The meaning of the word, damn, is to condemn. From a biblical perspective, it means to condemn to hell. I have to assume that most people do not fully understand what they are saying when they speak words like, G-D that woman, or G-D those kids, etc. But God knows; and this is why He includes this in the Ten Commandments. He knows that every time we use His name in those terms we are bringing punishment and destruction into our lives and the lives of those we love.

When you don't put God first in your life and when you don't honor His name, expect your life to be hard. Expect divine punishment and expect turmoil and tragedy. You are calling down curses on your life when use God's name in vain, and a cursed person cannot help but spread his or her curses around to those they come in contact with; just like an infectious disease.

Turn with me in your Bible to the Gospel of **Matthew**.

Matthew 12:36-37

In this specific context, Jesus is speaking about the words of unbelievers, but the general principle is clear that we must take extreme care when using words; especially in how we use God's name. Your words will either justify you or your words will condemn you.

Pastor and author, Jack Hayford, relates the following account while he was traveling with his family on vacation many years ago. He pulled into a tiny two-pump gas station and general store. The attendant came out and started pumping the gas. As he was filling the tank he looked down and noticed one of Pastor Hayford's tires and said, "I think you ought to know that your G-D tire is about to blow. If I were you I wouldn't risk the safety of your family with that tire like that.

Pastor Hayford asked if he could replace it and he said he did have that size tire in the garage. As he worked on changing the tire it seemed as if every other word coming out of the man's mouth was G-D. Finally Pastor Hayford couldn't take it anymore.

"Sir, I don't want God to damn my car so I wish you wouldn't say that."

Startled, the man apologized and continued to work.

Pastor Hayford continued, "You know, you work with tires and you spared me and my family from possible disaster by pointing the bad tire out to me – and I'm grateful. I am a pastor and I work with souls and I need you to hear what I am about to say to spare you from disaster. Taking God's name in vain is very expensive. You cannot use the Lord's name in vain without paying a price."

Some people continue to use God's name in vain because they think they have never been punished or because God doesn't do anything on the spot. But they also do not understand God's principle of sowing and reaping. If you plant a row of corn in the ground do you instantly get corn? No, you never reap in the same season in which you sow or plant. In the same way, the sins you commit today will not necessarily be punished today. But don't make the horrible mistake of thinking the punishment will never come. God is perfectly just, and being perfectly just means that the consequences of sin will be meted out in due time.

There is power in the name of God. There is power in the name of Jesus. Do you believe that? Do you believe that demons screamed and writhed and relinquished their hold on those they possessed at the very mention of Jesus' name? Do you believe that by the authority of His name blind eyes were given perfect sight, deaf ears were opened, crippled legs walked, and dead bodies came out of the grave? Then it is not beyond the principles of Scripture to believe that something gets set in motion when God's name is invoked even in a haphazard or casual way.

Proverbs 18:21 says, "**Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.**" And that is never truer than when that tongue speaks the name of God. Do you see what this Proverb is saying? Do you see that the words you speak will come back on you? Do you understand that God's law of sowing and reaping cannot be stopped? Does it make sense now that when use God's name in vain,

in a damning way that you will eat the fruit of damnation in some way, shape or form? Do you see that it is the love of God that commands us to not use His name in vain?

God is the source of all blessing, how could we purposely dishonor Him by dishonoring His name?

Turn with me in your Bible to the Book of **Psalms**.

Psalm 61:5

David is saying that all who honor and fear and love the name of the Lord will inherit a heritage – a heritage of those who have honored and feared and loved the name of the Lord down through the centuries since time began. It is a heritage of blessing and honor and fruitfulness and joy and godly impact on this world.

How could we not honor Him? For that matter, how can we stand idly and silently by when someone else drags His name through the mud? We have all seen people who resort to violence when something derogatory has been said about a wife or daughter or mother or sister. I'm not suggesting violence by any stretch of the imagination, but why don't we have that kind of passion for defending the name of God?

Why is God's name so precious and so important that it should never be used in a casual way?

Turn with me in your Bible to the Gospel of **John**.

John 20:31

There is life in the Lord's name – eternal life. **Acts 4:12** reinforces this same premise. Peter says, **"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."**

There is no other name. Salvation from an eternal hell comes from no other name; not Allah, not Buddha, not Mohammad, not Confucius, not the Pope, not Mary, not Moon, or any other. There is no other name in heaven or earth.

Some make the excuse, "Well, I grew up with that kind of language – it's all I know. I don't mean anything by it." But Scripture says on numerous occasions that the words that come out of our mouths are the very words and sentiments and attitudes that reside in our hearts. Whether you want to believe it or admit it, God says we only speak what is in our hearts. You can't have a clean heart and a filthy mouth – it is impossible according to the Bible.

When bitter, filthy, profane words are coming out of your mouth it is a symptom that points to heart problems; and by heart problems I mean spiritual problems. If sinful words come out of your mouth then sin resides in your heart. If you catch yourself lashing out at someone with bitter and hurtful words and then catch yourself by saying, "I really didn't mean that way" you are lying. You may not have meant to say it out loud but you did indeed mean every word.

When bitter, profane, hurtful words escape our lips we had better see that as a sign to immediately repent and ask God to create in us a clean heart, and to ask the recipient of our venom to forgive us.

And beloved, you don't have to have a blue vocabulary to take the name of the Lord in vain. Using God's name casually or invoking His name into your selfish prayers as some sort of magic formula to get everything you want is just as bad. Asking God for things contrary to the Bible and asking for it in Jesus' name is just as blasphemous as speaking His name profanely.

Can you imagine an angel in heaven approaching God and casually throwing His name around in an irreverent way? Then why do we think it's any different with us?

So quickly, what do we do?

First, recognize it as sin, confess it before God and repent or turn away from the practice once and for all. Ask God to wash your heart and mouth out with soap if necessary.

Second, accept His forgiveness and realize that all of your sins, past, present, and future were carried on His shoulders when He went to the Cross. Don't carry the burden of past sins that have already been confessed. If you slip up again, confess and repent again. God will eventually rid you of using His name in vain forever.

Lastly, practice God's presence in your life. He's always right with you. He hears everything you say, sees everything you see, and He knows everything you think. Living with the reality that God is with you at every moment of every day and night will effect your speech, your thoughts, and your actions.

Psalm 130:3-4 says, "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

Let's pray.