

S030203a – 06/28/26

“The Importance of the Lord’s Name”

Exodus 20:7

Introduction – Read Exodus 20:1-7

- This morning we continue our Sunday mornings in the book of Exodus
 - Now this Wednesday we will continue our chapter by chapter study of this book and in doing so we are going to finish up our look at the 10 plagues – there are couple of things that are fascinating to me about the plagues and one of those things is that each plague was an affront to an Egyptian god
- Most of you know that ancient Egypt was a polytheistic society where they had hundreds and hundreds of gods they worshiped
 - And so with each of the plagues this Wednesday night we will consider the Egyptian pantheon of gods and how with each plague God is saying, I am bigger and better than these false things you worship
- And then as we get to the final plague, it will bring on Passover which is a Jewish Biblical holiday that Jews still celebrate to this day
 - And yet as we see the origins in the book of Exodus, you will be amazed, I know you will at how it ties into the New Testament and what Jesus did for all of us – can’t wait to teach this study to you this Wednesday Night, more great slides, it will be so much fun! Hope you can be with us!

But this morning I want to continue our look at the 10 commandments

- And as we have seen, the commandments are something very important for us to study even in this age of grace we live in today – why the Lord put this series on my heart

I know some people think the commandments are outdated, that changes in culture and time make these laws something that don't apply anymore

- But we have seen that although you can make that case for certain parts of God's law, ceremonies and procedures that were based on the ways the Jews were to relate to God and approach God before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

But God's moral law of which the 10 commandments are certainly apart of, are based on God's holiness that does not change, they are based on our need to be like Him in the way we live our lives, and that need does not change

- I believe the 10 commandments are for all people at, all times – why again?

Why are the Ten Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

- When I see the standard of perfection that God requires, and I see how far I fall short, when I truly get that the wages of sin is death, well then becoming a Christian isn't just about bettering my life or making me feel good, it is saving me from sin and death and eternity apart from God – well then I see my need for a savior – and the law helps me get there – it shows me our need for Christ
 - But the law doesn't stop there, it also...

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

- The law also shows me how we are to relate to our fellow man and to God Himself

If we remove God's commandments as the standard to live our lives, then our heart becomes our guide and that is frankly why we are so messed up in Christian culture today

- We base things on our preferences, likes and dislikes rather than on the unchanging Word of God
 - so it is important that we give ourselves to the study of God's heart, God's commandments

#3 – The Law helps us Discover Christ

➤ You learn something about the Law giver from the laws
Some of the laws on the books in our city governments let us know that at one time someone making laws was not thinking everything through

- Last time we picked on Texas, let's stay in the south
 - In Alabama it is still illegal to wear a fake mustache to church to produce laughter
 - And it is also illegal to put an ice-cream in your back pocket, though next door in Georgia that is only illegal on Sundays
- Also in Georgia - You cannot keep a donkey in a bathtub – to which I say, where do you want me to keep my donkey?
 - And in Oklahoma – it is illegal to wash your undies in a bird bath – and all birds everywhere say praise the Lord!

Those laws tell you something about the lawgivers

- well the 10 Commandments are the same
 - and what we primarily will discover about God from His law is that He is love and His love for us
 - the apostle John said...

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” – I John 5:3

- As we keep His commandments
 - Not to save us, not to qualify us for His love - But just as we are directed in Christ - I experience His love for me

And we this today as we get to Commandment #3...

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” – Exodus 20:7

- Now I went over that introduction again, that God's commandments are because He loves us - because I believe we especially need to keep this in mind as we look at commandment number three

I mean I think all of us can agree – Idol worship is bad

- Murder is bad
 - Cheating on your husband or wife is bad
 - Stealing is bad – you get the picture

But there is strange exception to this consensus when it comes to the third commandment

- We tend to look at commandment number 3 and say, “is this really that important?” – not taking the Lord’s name in vain?
 - Is this really something God is concerned about?
 - But please notice with me

With the commandment “do not murder”, God adds nothing, with the commandment “do not steal” He adds nothings – and I think that is because we understand the importance of those

- but with the 3rd commandment, there is qualification, there is explanation – “I will not hold him guiltless...”
 - and I believe God says this because God knows us – and He knows we have a tendency to say – “now, that is not really a big one is it?, that is not really that important? - everybody takes the Lord’s name in vain every once in a while – this one doesn’t really need to be part of the big 10?”
- But in verse 7 God is saying, “Hold on – I am very serious about this – this is very important for you to think through and obey”

We have the tendency to say “what is the big deal?”

- so a person swears occasionally
 - so a person lapses and uses God’s name in vain
- What is the big deal, Is God so uptight about His name?

When I moved to Texas I had no idea how the title or name of “Pastor” was so important to some people. I was at my first city pastor’s meeting, and I had heard about this guy and so knew his name, and yet when I walked over to him and said, “Hey Bob, nice to meet you” (Not his real name) He said to me, it’s Pastor Bob – And I was taken back, I didn’t know the title was so important. Never was it like that around here with Pastor Rob, hey Rob, call me Pastor Rob!!! Never

Now don't misunderstand I understand the role is important, and I take the role and responsibly of a pastor very seriously, but the title? – “you do know the word means “shepherd or servant, right?” - And I had no idea how insistent some people were that you call them servant. “Call me servant, call me slave” – Listen I am an actual ordained minister, degree and everything, but if you feel you want to just call me Jason, I'm great with that – if you feel the need to call me Pastor or Pastor Jason, that is great also, doesn't bother me - But I was amazed how into titles some guys are.

But is God like that? – so uptight about His name, His title, that judgment comes when we use it in vain?

- “you call me God! I have earned the right!”
 - is that what God is like?
 - No – I think that is missing the point totally

And to get there first of all we need to understand what it means to “Take the Name of the Lord in Vain”

The phrase “To take” means “to hold up, take or use”

- And then obviously we understand what the name of the Lord is

And then “In vain” means “to use it in a way that produces an emptiness or to make devoid of meaning”

- So to take the Name of the Lord in Vain is when we hold up, or use the Holy Name of God in a way that makes that name, His name, empty or devoid of meaning
 - Now how can we do this?

How do we take the name of the Lord in vain?

#1 – Through vulgarity or profanity

- so entrenched in our culture is this willingness to when angry, or frustrated, to use the name of the Lord, or the things of the Lord as an expression of frustration or even excitement
 - and we think - “yeah that happens but again why is that a big deal?”

And the answer is “it is a big deal because when the Lord's Name is used to express frustration, when the Lord's name is used to even express surprise or adulation, what happens is there is a terrible trivialization of the name of God

When the Lord's name is used in a vain, whether it is in the Movies or on TV or on social media or by us, there is a trivialization that comes about

- and maybe you think – “I don't get it - what do you mean????”

Remember to take something in vain means to empty it of meaning

- and that is what happens
 - when the name of God, the name of Jesus is used in vanity, vainly – the powerful name of God, the greatest name that has ever been, “Jesus” – losses that power, that greatness
- Now not in reality of course, but it is in the ears and the hearts of those who are taking it in vain and hearing it being used in vain where it loses its power and in there lies the danger - His name is emptied of meaning to you
 - Others are desensitized to the name

Those who use the Lord's name in vain, those that are around it – when you come along and begin to share the wonders and the goodness of the name of the Lord

- it has less of an effect, it doesn't pierce the heart
 - and the reason is they have become desensitized to the Name – Jesus

That is why I believe Satan is behind blasphemy and profanity

- it is because it desensitizes our culture to the reality and power of the name of Jesus, God, eternity and even hell and damnation

You never hear some yell out – “Oh Buddha” when people hit their finger with a hammer

- You don't hear them say “Ahh, what are you doing?” - You don't hear it

It's only the name of God, the name of Jesus, the idea of Hell and damnation that is used

And that is not a coincidence - there is a reason, the enemy is trying to diminish the power of those words in our ears

➤ And it is working

It is interesting to think back in the late 1940's when the movie "Gone with the Wind (picture)" first came out – in that movie Clark Cable famous said, "Frankly my dear, I don't give a... and he said the d-word

That one statement back then caused great controversy

- sermons were preached, articles were written
 - and the reason they were so offended was because people understood what damnation really meant – and they were shocked it was used so flippantly in a movie
- and yet most of us parents who look up a movie kids want to watch up on screen it or whatever app you use and if it has only one "d" word, it must be Disney movie

And again this whole thing has been on purpose as Satan has been at work trivializing the name of Jesus, trivializing the name of God, trivializing the idea of Hell and damnation ever since then

- and today people speak freely using that type of language from comedians to actors, to democrats to Conservations, from heathens to Christians
 - and the name of God, the name of Jesus, the idea of Hell, and damnation have lost their power
 - though not their reality – and that is what is makes it the scariest of all
- We live in a day where there is very little fear of God, very little reverence for Christ and very little horror of Hell and judgment

And God is aware of this, so He says, the stakes are high – do not take the Name of the Lord in vain

- it is not about me being offended because I am some type of religious prude

It is about people not seeing the seriousness of hell and damnation, it is about people not being affected by the greatest name there has ever been

- because we have emptied it of its meaning and effectiveness – because we use it in vain

I remember it was years ago now, but I was watching USC verses Norte Dame and USC came from behind to win, – anyway – the Southern California play by play guy after USC had the last second victory started screaming - “OH my... and he used the name God, over and over again – now what was happening there?

- Pastor Jason, let me help you – it doesn’t mean He is worshipping USC, I know you don’t like it as a UCLA guy but it is just an expression of happiness and surprise OMG

It does not mean God

- exactly!!!! – It doesn’t mean God – the name of God – the only name by which man can be saved has been so trivialized – that it now carries no meaning at all

Do not take the Lord’s name in vain, why, well there can be a terrible trivialization – as we take the name of the Lord in vain through profanity, or vulgarity

- but there is another thing we need to consider, Solomon says in Proverbs 30...

“Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches – Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.” – Proverbs 30:7-9

- You see Solomon says, there are two ways to profane the name of the Lord
 - One with our words, but secondly with our actions
 - What do I mean???

How do we take the name of the Lord in vain?

#1 – Through vulgarity or profanity

#2 – Through hypocrisy

You see when we come to know the Lord, He in a very real sense puts His name upon us

- And He did this with the children of Israel before us, it says in Numbers chapter 6...

"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." – Numbers 6:27

- God put His name on the children of Israel and God has done that with us as well
 - we are called by His name, we take on His name

"Christian" means "little Christ or Christ-like"

- we take on the title of Christian, which is His name, but how we portray that name is very important!

You see to misrepresent the Lord it is serious thing

- We will read a story when we get to the book of Numbers, Numbers chapter 20, where the people of Israel are complaining as they always seem to do, but this time they are complaining because they are thirsty
 - And they come to Moses who goes to the Lord and the Lord says, "Moses speak to the rock, and I will give them water"
- And yet Moses goes before the people and says, "You Rebels, must I bring water from this rock for you" and Moses begins beating the rock with his staff

And God because He is faithful to His people, allows water to come from the Rock, but then he says, Hey Moses, Hey Mo, come over here

- You misrepresented me to the people – I am not angry with them, but you sure made it seem like I was with all your yelling and hitting the poor rock – the people think I am mad at them and I am not mad at them Moses
 - And because you have done this..., scripture says...

"Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." – Numbers 20:12

God says “Because you did not hallow me, and that word “hallow” is very important, it is the exact opposite of “vanity”

- Where as vanity means to make devoid of meaning
- “Hallowed” means “to lift up and set apart”**
- And God says, you haven’t done that Moses – you have not lifted my name up to the people and because of it, they have a wrong image of me and because of that you can’t enter the promise land – heavy, but it teaches us something important

It is a serious thing to represent the Lord

- Why? – again – to take the name of the Lord in vain – means to hold it in a way that diminishes the meaning
 - And what we do, when we take the name of the Lord and yet diminish its meaning by our lifestyle is we distort people’s view of God

People say, “oh that is what a Christian looks like”

- “That is the way they live and treat one another”
 - Well no thanks!
- we say a lot about who God is, as we take His name
 - and the lie of the enemy is – it doesn’t matter – everyone lives that way, everyone acts like that and the reality, that is not true, Jesus does not act like that!

For much of their history, the nation of Israel treated each other poorly, didn’t follow the ways of the Lord and this great plan that God had to bless the nation of Israel so the world would say, “I want to know their God because I have never seen a people so pure and true, for most of their history that fell by the wayside until one man did not take the name of the Lord in vain

- And the people were drawn to Him, His name was Jesus – and Jesus changed the world for many reasons, but one was absolutely because He properly represented God to them - He did not take the Lord’s name in vain

And as you and I, even though we not perfect, but when we are genuine, genuinely trying to follow God and the way He wants us to live, people will notice

- and when the world's heroes make their statements how all Christians are hypocrites and the world nods in approval
 - your family, your friends, the people you have met and impacted will remember – “no I know someone who did not take the name of the Lord in vain – but held it up with passion and truth and sincerity”

How do we take the name of the Lord in vain?

#1 – Through vulgarity or profanity

#2 – Through hypocrisy

#3 – By “taking it”

- maybe you would say, well I didn't need to be here this morning Pastor
 - because I don't use the name of the Lord in vain
 - I don't use His name in profanity

And I don't live in hypocrisy, at least most of the time

- And if that is true, I say amen, God bless you, you need to help the rest of us out a little bit
 - But there is another way, I think we can violate this command

You see maybe you don't use the Lord's name in vain

- it may be that you don't take the Lord's name to who you are as Christian, and then live in total hypocrisy
 - but maybe when others are using the Lord's name in vain - when the TV is using the Lord's name in vain
 - maybe you just sit there and take it

And listen, I know this is advance stuff this morning

- most of the Christian world would say, “No big deal, what's the problem, I'm not saying it, I'm not living in hypocrisy, what the big deal? But God's word says “do not take it” Don't take the name of the Lord in vain, and the advance class says, Don't take it anymore

When you hear someone using the Lord's name in vain, if the Lord leads, in love of course, but share with them

- I was out playing golf and someone I was playing with borrowed my driver and as he hit the shot he yelled the GD phrase, taking the name of the Lord in vain
 - And I just nicely said to him, hey, I have enough trouble hitting my driver straight, please don't ask God to curse my Driver
 - He said "I wasn't talking to God... and it opened up a great conversation between the two of us about the subject we are taking about today
- And that won't happen every time, I have similar things happen and the guy says nothing else to me the whole time, but either way – I don't want to take it
 - We are not suppose to take it

How about when it comes into your home?

- do you turn the show off and maybe talk to your children about why it is important that the name of the Lord is not diminished in our hearts?
 - oh Jason – be practical – if I turned off the TV every time I heard the phrase GD being used, I would have to be turning the TV off all the time and teaching my kids all the time – well bingo, what a novel idea that is

How do we take the name of the Lord in vain?

#1 – Through vulgarity or profanity

#2 – Through hypocrisy

#3 – By "taking it"

#4 – Having His name mean nothing at all to us

- finally and most importantly – maybe some of you here today, you are called a Christian, that is what you would identify as if someone asked you your religion, but for some of you I fear, that it is in name only, Christian is a title, but not your reality, you are not really trying to live like Christ

Some may ask you, what is your religion and we say well of course I am a Christian, I was an altar boy, my dad was a deacon, I went to church as a child or catholic school, of course I am a Christian – I am an American so of course I am a Christian

- But you know because you can sense it in your heart even as I am speaking, it's not true
 - And I am not saying this to condemn you, I am saying this because I love you
 - It is not enough to take on a title, it has to be reality, it has to be a relationship that you actually have with Jesus!
 - And maybe that is not where you are at today

But the Good news is that can change this morning

- You can decide I am not going to have the name of Jesus mean nothing to me any longer
 - I am going to ask Him to save me and change me and have His name effect everything I am and do – I don't want to hold it up in vain any more

The Lord warns us in this third commandment to not take His name in vain

- not because He is angry or mean, or is uptight about His name, He is saying this because with each of these commandments, He is saying, "I love you, these commandments are there because of my love for you!"

I don't want my name to be diminished in your home, with your kids, in your life – I don't want my name to lose meaning to you or your kids or grandkids

- I don't want your life to give people the wrong impression of who I am - I don't want you to take it
 - I don't want the fact you call yourself a Christian to mean nothing
- And I am telling you all of this because I love you
 - This is such important stuff – for us and the generation coming behind us – Amen? Amen!