

Dear Church Family,

This week we will be looking at the third commandment found in Exodus 20:7. This scripture gives us specific instruction on how to use God's name. We as followers of Jesus have a great responsibility to present God in a reverent, holy and loving way. Our attitudes and words about our faith reveal the depth of our relationship with God. How we speak His name brings to light our understanding of who He is.

God—no other three-letter name or word carries so much weight. Believers and unbelievers alike pause at just the sound of it. Angels, demons and all creation tremble in both fear and awe when His name is spoken. I have to ask myself, why is it those made in the very likeness of God need reminded with a command to not use the name of God in vain?

Exodus 20:7

⁷“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.”

The first word that caught my attention in this verse was *vain*. What definition best describes *vain*? I found this in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary:

“Having no real substance, value, or importance; empty words; void; worthless; unsatisfying.”

This made me wonder how many of my conversations a day are in this category. Whether with God or with people, our words are to have a purpose and have eternal value. Have you ever noticed that in the Bible there is no small talk? When Jesus taught in the synagogues, He didn't tell jokes and try to entertain the crowd, He met the people where they were and taught what they needed to hear. It is mentioned in the New Testament that Jesus knew the heart of men. Therefore, He knew their thoughts. This then is how He meets us where we are, even today. It starts with compassion.

In Matthew 9, we find Jesus teaching the people and having compassion on them. He used God's name to reach the people. Jesus called God *Father*, *Healer*, *Sustainer* and *Provider*, in the earthly definition as well as the eternal context.

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

I invite you to consider how we speak God's name to those around us. Our conversations are to be fruitful. This starts with our conversations with our Heavenly Father; examine your prayer life. Is it the same ole same ole words you might say at mealtime and bedtime, or might they become more personal? In our worship service we are there to honor and praise our Lord. When we come into the sanctuary do we have an attitude of expectation of being changed, or one of getting through just another Sunday? The hymns we sing are beautiful and are filled with great messages. Are we singing from the heart with an attitude of praise, or possibly out of habit?

Let us start looking at the Scriptures with new eyes. Read Jesus's prayers to His Father, and we will see a pattern to follow. Our worship is designed to honor God and build us up spiritually so that our use of God's name will have purpose by bringing value and substance to many lives.

Who does God say His name is? He says, "my name is I Am." He says, "I Am all things good," such as love, hope and peace. We are the workers that harvest what God has planted.

Join me in this: to stop chitchatting about God and get down to business!

Your Brother in Christ, Archie