

I.N.I.

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 30 2019
Exodus 20:7

In Christ Jesus, who has shown to us through His Word everything that God is, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In the Old Testament, the LORD God revealed Himself to His people by the use of His name. His name stood for Him. One name was Elohim, which meant “the Almighty God,” “the God of Creation.” Another name that God gave to Himself was Jehovah, the “I AM God,” the God of the Promise, the One who made the Covenant with mankind.

The Old Testament people looked upon this name with such respect and reverence that they never would say it. Whenever the name appeared they would substitute the word for “Lord” which is Adonai. So respectful, with such reverence the people looked upon this special saving name of their loving God.

How different it is today. It seems no matter where one goes, or in whose company one is in, the name of our precious, loving forgiving God is being dragged through the filth of swearing or cursing. The name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, is used millions of times a day, not in worship, but in a frivolous, sinful way. How often don't people call upon God to damn something or in anger to damn someone? Do they really know what they are saying?

God looks upon His name in such a special way for it tells us whatever we know of Him. His name tells us who He is, what He is and what He has done for us. So special is His name that He set this as His Second Commandment: **“YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD (JEHOVAH) YOUR GOD (ELOHIM) IN VAIN.”**

Much like the First Commandment there really is more that God wrote. The commandment continues with these words: **FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY WHO TAKES HIS NAME IN VAIN.** If someone is not held guiltless, that means he is held to be guilty. To be held to be guilty by God is the most horrible, fearful thing that could happen to someone. It means eternal death and damnation. The LORD will not look lightly upon the breaking of this or of any of His commandments. He will not overlook the sin of using His name to curse others, or when we swear by using His name either falsely or in a frivolous way. We will be held accountable, be held guilty for it.

Disgrace, defame, insult the name of God and we are not just insulting, defaming, disgracing a few letters of the alphabet, but we are insulting, defaming the God who created and redeemed us.

From our Scripture readings and our sermon theme this morning we can see that there is more to this Second Commandment than just cursing and swearing. Another way of transgressing this commandment is by practicing witchcraft or believing in superstitions. How does that fit in with the commandment?

God says, **“I AM THE LORD, THAT IS MY NAME, AND MY GLORY I WILL NOT GIVE TO ANOTHER.”** When we get into such things as astrology, fortune-telling, palm reading we are using the works of man or in some cases the works of the Devil to tell us what only God reveals and that is the future. We are giving the glory of revealing the future to man's own study of the stars. People cannot accurately predict what is to come, they can guess, but they cannot predict. Who knows what will happen this afternoon or tomorrow? Who knows if there will be a tomorrow? God alone does! To trust in the astrologer's signs and readings as your guide for the day is letting it be your God. This also covers such things as believing that certain things bring good luck or bad luck.

Truly believing in a rabbit's foot, four leaf clover, or a horse shoe bringing you luck may seem like innocent child's play, but it is not. It is not luck that we are to rely on in our life, but God. Yes, even for such small things as catching fish on your next fishing trip, or having a good day at work, or playing well at the baseball game. It is not good luck that gives you your good things in life and bad luck that sends you the bad things. Sin is the cause of all bad things in this life and God is the giver of all good things. God allows the good and the bad to come our way for His own special, (many

times) unknown reasons. We read in Deut. 18:10-12: **"THERE SHALL NOT BE FOUND AMONG YOU ANYONE WHO MAKES HIS SON OR HIS DAUGHTER PASS THROUGH THE FIRE, OR ONE WHO PRACTICES WITCHCRAFT, OR A SOOTHSAYER, OR ONE WHO INTERPRETS OMENS, OR A SORCERER, OR ONE WHO CONJURES SPELLS, OR A MEDIUM, OR A SPIRITIST, OR ONE WHO CALLS UP THE DEAD. FOR ALL WHO DO THESE THINGS ARE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD, AND BECAUSE OF THESE ABOMINATIONS THE LORD YOUR GOD DRIVES THEM OUT FROM BEFORE YOU.**

In our first Scripture reading this morning we heard of an example of another way this Second Commandment is broken: Lying by God's name—preaching false doctrine.

All of the false preachers and teachers in the world who every Sunday mount their pulpits, open the Bible and then say "The Lord says," but put in their own words, their own teachings, are guilty of lying by God's name. Teaching people that we must by our own good works earn or merit our salvation; teaching that there is one supreme church leader or church father here on earth; teaching that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper changes into Jesus' body and blood and that Jesus is being re-sacrificed for our sins—are all lies, saying "God says" when He did not say these things.

Teaching that Baptism must be by immersion and is only for those who have reached the age of discretion and accountability; teaching that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper only represents Jesus' body and blood and the Supper is only a memorial meal, not a meal dispensing forgiveness, life and salvation; teaching that we can make our own decision for Christ; teaching that Christ will return and rule for 1,000 years on this earth—are all lies, saying "God says" when He did not say these things.

Teaching that homosexuality is a godly acceptable, alternate lifestyle; teaching that evolution is the way this world came into existence; teaching that abortion is not murder but a woman's right; teaching that the Bible is not verbally inspired or inerrant; teaching that there are many ways to get to heaven and that there are many gods; teaching that adultery and fornication is not really wrong; teaching that we can worship and pray with whomever we want as long as they are sincere in their belief—are all lies, saying "God says" when He did not say these things. These are all ways in which this Second Commandment is broken.

In our second Scripture reading we heard of the last way that we can and do sin against this Second Commandment of our God—deceiving by God's name—practicing hypocrisy. That is when we put on the outward form of Christianity, when all along we really don't believe it, or don't care. How often aren't we plagued with this sin also? We may go through the motions of serving God, but without the heart. We may sing the hymns and pray the prayers but our hearts may be miles away. We may say the right words of worship to our Lord, but if our heart is not in it we are not doing it properly. We may show concern for others, but if it all show and lacks love, it is hypocrisy.

The Lord alone sees into the heart, as He did with Ananias and Sapphira. Jesus said this about the people who commit this sin: **THESE PEOPLE DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONOR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.** The Lord also says not everyone who cries out to Him, "Lord, Lord" will enter into His Kingdom, but only he who has faith in Him and in that faith does the will of His Father.

From this list we again see how many, many times we have broken this second commandment of our God—in the sinful words that have crossed our lips, in the loveless thoughts that have been in our hearts; and in our sinful actions.

Thank God that He sent His Son, Jesus who always used God's name properly; never relied on superstitions; never spoke any false teaching and always acted from the heart in His care and concern for others. He showed that by His sacrificial offering up of Himself on the cross as full payment for our sins against this Second Commandment. Yes, God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain, but thanks and praise be to this same God who laid all of our guilt upon the guiltless One, His Son, our Savior.

Now as redeemed, blood-bought and forgiven children of God let's look at the positive aspects of this commandment. Out of love for our God we will be moved to pray, praise and give thanks. The Lord says, **CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER YOU, AND YOU SHALL GLORIFY ME.** We will be moved to pray whenever we have needs or troubles, not only for our needs and troubles but for the needs and troubles of others. And not just in time of

troubles, but always, as the Lord encourages us when He says through the Apostle Paul, **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING**—that is at all times, anywhere and for anything. The Lord is our loving Father who has showered us with so many blessings and invites us, urges us to speak to Him, come to Him with our problems, with our needs, with our cares and our worries. He never sleeps, never is too busy, is always able and willing to hear and answer our prayers according to His will.

Hand in hand with asking is also the giving of thanks for blessings received. It is so easy to ask when in despair or trouble, it comes naturally, but to remember to thank after the Lord has provided the cure, the remedy, the solution, takes some thought—thinking about what God has done and then responding with a thankful heart.

And finally there is praise. To know God's name and His goodness to us and not worship and praise Him is just as sinful as using His name to curse, swear or deceive. We will praise our Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all that He has done for us and our salvation. And what better way to do that than by telling everyone what a fantastic God we have; to tell everyone what great things God has done for us and for all people that Jesus has come to save us all. We will do this with our lips; we can do this by supporting me as your pastor in my preaching the Word and supporting and volunteering to teach in our Sunday School or VBS; we can do this by supporting our missions and praying for the Word to be proclaimed in its truth and purity and to be received with hearts opened to the Gospel message.

Another commandment, another multitude of applications to our daily life. With the Holy Spirit living in us through faith in Jesus our hearts will be moved to give God the honor, respect and reverence due His name, and our lips will do so by confessing His name to others.

Amen.