

*UNEDITED DRAFT*

Dear friends in Christ,

With two weekends off, we resume our sermon series on the 10 Commandments. Perhaps the biggest myth about the 10 Commandments is that you should study them, and know them so that you can try to put them into practice in your life so that *through them you can get right with God*. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one can be declared right by God by their efforts to keep the 10 Commandments. We all fall short of the perfection God requires. So that's not the reason we are having this sermon series.

The real reason we really need the 10 Commandments is because when we look in the mirror, we have a hard time seeing our sinfulness. At first glance you might not see why that's such a bad thing. Isn't it good for self-esteem to think better of ourselves? Why would we want to be reminded that we're sinners?

Sin is dark. It's evil. It leads to death. Sounds like I'm describing a vampire, doesn't it? Dark. Evil. Leads to death. If there was a vampire standing behind you (humor me here), you'd want to know, wouldn't you? It would clearly be better to know than to not know. At least then you know you're in danger. You know something must be done! However, as I'm sure you're well aware, if you look into a mirror, although dark, evil death is standing right behind you, you won't see him. A vampire does not have a reflection in the mirror.

In the same way, we have a hard time seeing our own sins. We take a look at ourselves in the mirror and we think we're looking pretty good. God must like what he sees. He must be pleased... or at least okay with me. But what we fail to see as we look at ourselves in the mirror is the sin. The darkness, the evil, the death that is lurking. We have a hard time seeing our sinful pride. We have a hard time seeing our selfishness. We have a hard time seeing greed. We have a hard time seeing our laziness. We have no problem seeing the sins in others, but we have a hard time seeing our own.

So as we go through the 10 Commandments, first and foremost they are opening our eyes to see the dark, evil, death that is lurking around us and within us. It shows us our sin clearly. And this is good! Because if we don't see it, we will not believe that anything must be done about it.

Last time we talked about the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment. We came to see much more clearly that each of us are divine plagiarists. That is, we take credit and glory and acknowledgement that belongs to God and we give it to ourselves. Or we give it to someone or something besides God. This is dark. It's evil. It leads to death.

Today we look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment. You'll find it in your Bible in Exodus 20. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."

- 1) Why is this commandment 2<sup>nd</sup>? Isn't "Do not kill" more important? GOD's NAME. What it means. Why it's valuable.
  - a. A name stands for something. "Michael Ewart" is more than just letters or sounds. It stands for all you know about me.  
A name is your reputation. All you are, all your promises made and kept, all you've done. It's all wrapped up tightly in a name.
  - b. Just as a U.S. flag stands for and symbolizes our country, so also God's name is all

we know about him in capsule form.

- c. God's name: Exodus 3:13-15 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' " 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.
  - d. Exodus 34:5-7 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."
- 2) How do we break it?
- a. "Do not cuss." It means much more than that, but let's start there.  
Cursing. Cursing is when you use God's name to call down a curse upon someone or something. In a broader sense we use the word to describe all strong language and coarse talking. Now first, let's take note that there is a time and a place for strong language and even cursing. When a genuine enemy of God threatens you or one of God's people, it would not please God if they should succeed. To pray that God would foil the plans and finally condemn those who oppose him is not wrong. Listen to these words from the Psalms:  
**Psalm 55:15 "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave, for evil finds lodging among them."**  
Speaking of God's enemies, David says, "Psalm 58:6 **Break the teeth in their mouths, O God.**"  
Psalm 69:28 **May they [God's enemies] be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.** In other words, may they be condemned. The modern way a person says that is: "God damn them." Are there appropriate times for strong language and even cursing? Yes. But I would suggest to you that those times are exceedingly rare and only when a person or group has made it abundantly clear that they are God's enemies and endangering the eternal souls of people.  
Does this describe the vast majority of the strong language and swearing we hear today? No. A person working on a car just can't get it running. They get more and more angry. Then they're tightening something with a wrench, the wrench slips and they wack their knuckles and they start bleeding and the scream out: "G.D. it!!!" Which in essence is saying, "Lord God almighty, maker of heaven and earth, hear my plea and my cry for help. Please send this wrench and this wretched car in to the depths of hell and may it forever burn in eternal perdition." Is that a proper use of God's name, yes or no? No.
  - b. Swearing. Using God's name to verify the truth. Again, is there a time and a place for swearing? Yes. But exceedingly rare. Court. Public office.  
But how do we usually hear (or use) swearing? "I saw Jane at the mall. No way!

Yeah, I swear to God!” What are we doing. Lord God almighty, I hereby beseech you to bear witness with me that I speak the truth when I say the Jane was indeed at the mall.” Isn’t that a frivolous use of God’s name?

Even if it’s true, you shouldn’t do it. It’s not a meaningful use of the almighty’s name.

- c. To deceive. To use God’s name to back up your idea, scheme or plan.  
You can do this with someone else’s name too: “Dad said I could have ice cream!” But I didn’t. Would there be a punishment? Using Dad’s name to deceive is a crime in our family. It is in God’s family too.  
To use God’s name to defend slavery (this was done) is to deceive by God’s name. To use God’s name to defend the atrocities of the Crusades, or the witch hunts of times past... this is using God’s name in vain.  
Oral Roberts saying the Jesus told him to build a hospital is deceiving by God’s name.
- d. False teaching. This is another form of deceiving by God’s name. Saying God approves of what he does not approve of.  
Ex: What if a company uses a celebrity’s name as an endorsement... but it wasn’t given?  
The world is full of false teachers who say, “God said.” But he didn’t! They will be held accountable for their false teaching. A teacher is held to a higher standard by God and a higher accountability.
- e. False promises: Saying God promises what he does not promise. God will give you wealth. God will give you health. Using God’s name in vain to make promises God never made.
- f. To ruin God’s name by how we, his people, act. This one is especially condemning. We who are Christians bear the name of Christ. And when we sin, we contribute to ruining God’s good name. Some unbelievers will never set foot in a church, and will never seriously consider the Bible because they’ve known some people who called themselves Christians that did some horrible things.

Sin. We now see the vampire in the mirror. It’s not standing over us. It’s in us. We are sinful. But God does not leave us to despair. He gives us hope.

### Gospel.

- He was perfect. Always kept the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment.  
John 17:6 **“I have revealed [your name] to those whom you gave me out of the world... 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them.**
- Jesus, as the end drew near, prayed, John 12:25-28 **“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!”** Then a voice came from heaven, **“I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”**
- The name that saves. Jesus **“Before Abraham was, I am.”**
- The name of God, that is the reputation of God, the will of God, the purposes of God, the saving plan of God are all revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. So if you want to know God’s name and revere his name and come to respect that name, you must know

Jesus Christ. He is the Word made flesh. He is the revealer of the name of God.

- And what has he revealed about the name? *God saves us... he rescues us from the vampire that is our sins.* He saves us from our violations of his second commandments. The burden we must bear because we have used God's name in vain, and cursed, and swore, and lied and deceived in God's name, and failed to uphold God's name with lies of selfless service to God and others... Jesus saves us with his perfect life in which he always kept the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment. He saved us from our corrupt and evil selves when he took the full blame and penalty of our sins when he died on the cross for us. He proved to us the penalty was paid in full by rising from the dead on the third day. You are forgiven!
- And so know this: *To know God's name and believe in his name is to be saved!*
- EX: One time, Peter and John were boldly proclaiming the name of Jesus to crowds of people. They also healed a crippled man. They were later arrested by the temple guard, and after a night in jail were put on trial. And they were asked: **“By what power and what name did you do this? (Heal the man.)”** Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said, **Acts 4:10-12 “It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ... 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**
- To know God's name, his true reputation as it is revealed in and through Jesus Christ, and to trust in that name is to be saved.

Good news, right? Isn't it a relief to be assured your sins are forgiven completely? That God smiles upon you? That Paradise is your guaranteed eternal future? Doesn't it make you want to ask the question, “God, how can I thank you? How can I honor your sacred name that has saved me?”

And he says, “I'm glad you asked. There's this thing you have labeled the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment. Don't use my name in vain.” But every Commandment is not just a negative. There is also a positive. If taking God's name in vain, cursing, swearing, teaching falsely, deceiving... that's how you take his name in vain. How do you keep his name holy? How do you honor that name and uphold it?

We properly use God's name, when, in response to Jesus' forgiveness, we use God's name to pray, praise and give thanks.

How do we keep it? Pray, praise and give thanks.

- Pray.  
EX: Prayers before meals. Before bed. For needs. For others. You address God by with his name. And he is pleased!
- Praise: Acclaiming God for who he is.  
EX: When you sing hymns. When you speak words of acclamation to him. When you speak well of God to others. You are praising him. “Why were you so honest?” Give credit to God. “Why are you so calm?” Give credit to God. You make his name great. You praise him.
- Give thanks. You have gratitude for something God has done for you or others.  
EX: “Thanks for salvation. Life. Family. Peace. Health. Country. Etc.”

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” What's in a name? Everything! Keep God's name holy, set apart, using it only to pray, praise, give thanks and testify of Jesus. Amen.