

# The Protection of Yahweh's Name

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Good evening. It is a joy to be with you tonight. I must say I'm a little intimidated following John MacArthur from last week, but nonetheless I am very thankful to be here and I can now say, "Well, I followed John MacArthur at Truth Community." So it's a joy to be with you tonight.

I invite you, if you will, turn in your Bibles and we're going to read two passages and then we'll pray: Leviticus 10 and then we'll read also from the book of Exodus. I've been preaching through the book of Exodus and I spoke on that last time I was here, I think in December, some time last year, and I'm still in Exodus and so that's where my thoughts are and so that's what I want to speak on tonight.

Leviticus 10:1,

1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace.

Then turn if you will, to Exodus 20, well known for the passage where we have the 10 Commandments. Tonight I would like to focus our attention upon the third commandment which we find in verse 7 and it says,

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.

Would you please pray with me?

*Our Lord and our God, we come before you tonight and we thank you again for your grace to us even this day. As we began this day, we were greeted with your mercies that were new again today and goodness and mercy have followed us through this day, and all of that comes to us because of Christ. We are so thankful that in the Gospel you have*

*not dealt with us according to our sins, you have not rewarded us according to our iniquities. We thank you that your grace has abounded to us in Christ, and so we come with thankful hearts tonight again for the Gospel, for our Savior, for your grace to us. We thank you for your word. And Lord, we by grace are seeking to grow in grace and knowledge of you, and it is my prayer tonight as we consider this passage of Scripture that we would be characterized as a people who hallow the name of the Lord our God by our words, by our thoughts, by our conduct, by our worship, and I pray that you will give help both in the hearing and in the presenting of your word tonight. We are dependent upon you for that and so may you come by your Spirit and give aid to us. We are a needy people and we depend upon you tonight to do that. So bless this time in your word, we pray, and glorify your name, and we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

It was in 1967 when I was in the seventh grade, I attended Union Elementary School which is in Westchester, and I was in Mrs. Powell's homeroom class, and I remember very distinctly receiving our yearly photograph of our class. It was all one picture with all of our individual pictures on there and our teacher, Mrs. Powell, at the top, and at the bottom I noticed something that stood out to me and it said this, "This is the homeroom class of Mrs. Rosemary Powell," and that was a revelation to me because to me she was always Mrs. Powell, and I thought, "This is interesting. She has a first name and I now know what that name is." It was kind of a moment of being enlightened and I thought this was pretty neat.

Well, the next day I got into the homeroom class and I was sitting midway up the aisle and the teacher came in through the back door and as she is walking down the aisle, and just as she goes by me, I said, "Good morning, Rosemary," and I thought she'd turn around with a smile on her face and she'd be so excited that, you know, she would enter into the joy that I had learned her name, but I could tell by the look on her face, not the case. It was almost like a Mount Sinai experience. There was, like, these dark clouds and this thunder and lightning and I think the earth quaked, and she turned around and came back to me and she got right down in my face and she said five words, "What did you call me?" And I knew right then that I had violated some unwritten law that I knew nothing about, that you shall not take the first name of your teacher to your lips lest you cause trouble to your soul.

Now I wasn't, I don't think disciplined but I learned a lesson there and I had known this but I learned a lesson, you don't call your teacher by her first name, that there is to be an appropriate honor for her. She is the teacher, I am the student. You know, that's the way it is in the world in which we live, there are people that we are to give esteem to. Whenever the judge enters into the courtroom, we are asked, what? To stand up out of honor for the one who is entering in. In the fifth commandment that we have in Exodus 20, we have there that children are called upon to honor their father and their mother. There is to be this respect, there is to be this esteem that is to be given for them.

Now, if that's true on the vertical or on the horizontal level, how much truer it is on the vertical level. As we think of God, his character, his name, that there is to be an appropriate respect and appropriate honor for who he is and tonight we'd like to consider

this passage, the third commandment, and I think there is in my own life as I was studying this a few weeks ago as I was preaching on this, I realized in my own life there are many ways in which I really do not have the appropriate kind of honor and esteem for God in areas of my life that I should have, and I would dare say it's true for many in the church of Jesus Christ. So tonight I want to talk about this third commandment which I entitled this "The Protection of Yahweh's Name." The second commandment has to do with the protection of Yahweh's worship that, "You shall have no graven images." God is concerned about how we worship him. We must worship him in the ways in which he has commanded. We are not free to worship him however we please, and so there are no graven images. The first command is, "You shall have no other gods before Me." There is the protection of the unity of God. There is only one true and living God, but this command has to do with the protection of Yahweh's name.

We want to, first of all, examine this command that is given to Israel here and by extension to us as well, and the Lord says, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain." When we talk about the name of the Lord, it's more than a label; it's more than in the Bible just a means of identifying someone to us and distinguishing them from others. It stands for the whole essence of God's being, who he is. All that is represented in the name is all that God is: his nature, his works, his attributes. And we have many names in the Bible that are given of God. He is Elohim. The mighty one. He is El Shaddai. He is the Almighty. He is a God of all power and strength. In Exodus 3:14, as Moses is at the burning bush, he is saying, "Who shall I say to the children of Israel that has sent me to them?" "Well, you tell them that the 'I AM' has sent you. I AM THAT I AM. I AM, the self-existent, the sovereign God. That is who is sending you to deliver My people out of Egypt."

So it is associated with his nature and with all of his attributes. We might think of the whole panorama of God's attributes, that is all a part of his name and who he is and it represents his name. So it's more than identifying himself. We read there in Proverbs 22:1 that a good name is to be more desired than great riches, and it's not like, "I really like the name Paul. I really would like to have that name." No, a good name is a name, it's one's character, to have one's character to be that which is good as people think of us.

So you're not to take the name of God in a vain way. The word "vain" is a Hebrew word that has the idea of emptiness or nothingness, of vanity. It was used of idols in the Old Testament, that these idols are worthless, they are empty, they are nothing. It is also used with falsehood or deceit. People who speak deceitfully, they use empty words. They are vain words. They are hollow words. They have no truth in them. So to treat the name of God as nothing or as vain or as worthless or as of little value, and so it is this idea of profaning God's name. Webster defines "to profane" as this: to treat something sacred with abuse, irreverence or contempt. That's what my seventh grade teacher thought I was doing that day. To take God's name in vain in this manner is to bring contempt. It is to bring dishonor upon his name. And it's more than just speaking blasphemous words toward God, but it is also this idea of just simply thinking of him or speaking of him in very light trivial ways. God said to through Moses to Aaron, "By all of those who draw near unto Me, I will be treated as holy, as one who is set apart."

The word "glory" in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word "kavod," is a word that means "heavy." When we think about someone that had glory or honor, we use this word and it's used of God but it's also used of men in various places, it's the idea of being heavy, and sometimes we think of somebody in the community, we might say that, "They carry a lot of weight around here," there's a lot of power and authority that they have, they have a place of honor or esteem, and that's the word that is used in the Old Testament when it speaks about God's honor or God's glory. His name is weighty. It's not empty. It's not trite. It's not light. But there is a heaviness about the name of God, and when we do not treat him in that way, we treat him as common, as ordinary. David Wells, assessing much of the evangelical landscape of our day, he used this word to describe many in the contemporary church, he speaks about them having this weightlessness view of God. Weightlessness. There is no substance. There is no depth. There is no weightiness when they think about God and how they speak of him or how they worship him. There is this weightlessness. It's the trivialization of God, having small and trivial views of God by our words, by our conduct, by our worship.

The word that is used here, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain," the verb here, "to take," is the word "to lift up; to lift something up." You are not to lift up the name of God by your words, by your conduct, by your worship in such a way that you would bring contempt upon his majestic glory. So he says to his people here at Mount Sinai as those who were in covenant with God, and notice verse 7 he says, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God." This is your God who has redeemed you out of Egypt with a mighty hand. You are not to take your God who is entering into covenant with you here, you are not to lift up his name in such a way that would trivialize him, that would make him common and make him just to be ordinary.

In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, it asks the question about this commandment, it says, "What is forbidden in the third commandment?" And the answer is this, "The third commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known." So however God has revealed himself as he has revealed himself in his Son and in his word, or even in creation that declares his glory, this forbids all profaning and abusing of anything whereby God has made himself known to us. A. W. Pink said this, he said, "The name of God is to be held profoundly sacred. In our ordinary speech and in our religious devotions, nothing must enter that anyway lowers the sublime dignity and the high holiness of that name. The greatest sobriety and reverence is to be called for."

So here is a call to Israel and I believe a call that is given to us as well, that we are to protect and to guard the name of God, the revelation that he has given of himself, of his nature, of his attributes. We are to guard it from being profaned, being made little, being made insignificant in our own hearts and minds, as well as in the minds of others by the way in which we speak or act or live.

Sadly as we think of Israel's history, they often profaned the name of their God by the way in which they spoke, by the way in which they lived. We read these words in Malachi 1, the Lord says,

6 "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' 7 "You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.' 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.

God says, "You will give to Me this lamb as a sacrifice that you have no use for, it's broken, it's sick, it's got a broken leg, and there's nothing you can do with it. Let's give it to God. Would you do that for your governor? Would you show such contempt?" So it is with God, "Would you give Me the worst of your flock as an offering to Me? The lame, the blind?" God is jealous for his glory, isn't he? And it's not that God needs a healthy lamb but it's teaching his people that he is to be revered, he is to be esteemed. And by the way, what is that lamb pointing to? That lamb is pointing to the Father's Son who is holy and innocent and undefiled, and God will not even have the type to be marred, it must be a perfect sacrifice because his Son is morally perfect. So here is contempt that is being shown to the name of God and it was something that was done over and over again in the history of Israel.

Now, what are the implications of the third commandment? Negatively, the call for God's people is to protect the name of Yahweh from being brought down, from being trivialized, from being made common, but there's also a positive aspect of that as well, and positively it is the call for God's people to promote, not only to protect but to promote and to lift up and magnify the name of Yahweh. Again, the Shorter Catechism asks this question, "What is required in the third commandment? The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's name, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works." So there is, again, to be this holy and reverent use of the name of God and the worship of God and anything that is associated with God, and we find that in many of the saints of old. Think of Job who lost his children, he lost his wealth, he lost his health, and we hear this man saying, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away and," what? "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Last night my wife and I were reading the transcript from a devotional, a retreat that my niece who is married to my nephew, not my niece but she's married to my nephew, she had given a women's retreat message about two months ago and we were reading the transcript that she had sent to us. My nephew had been in a motorcycle accident and he was severely injured and he's now paralyzed from his chest down. They had just been married for about two years. Their whole life is in front of them. A lot of dreams and desires and all of that was changed that morning on June 15, and it has been a wonderful thing to see God's grace at work in not only Derek, my nephew, but his wife. She has stood beside him and as she spoke in this message that she was giving to this women's retreat, she was speaking about how God has used this in her life to get to know him

better and to treasure him, and that God was using all of this to help them to bring glory to his name. And my nephew said, "You know, I think God has brought this about so I can do that, that I can glorify God through my situation," and I was blessed to think of that as I read from Job's own testimony.

David says in Psalm 29, "Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength. 2Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 34:1, I read this early this year and I said, "Lord, help me to do that this year." And it says this, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be on my lips." I have failed many times this year to do that but I'm striving more and more to do that, to bless the Lord at all times and his praise to be continually upon my lips, that I will speak well of him. David again says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!" Forget none of his benefits.

How did our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ teach us to pray in that well-known prayer, the Lord's prayer? "Our Father who art in heaven," what? "Hallowed be thy name." Now that is not a statement. It is true, God's name is hallowed but that is a command. It's in the imperative mood and it is saying, "My petition, Lord, one of the first petitions is that Your name would be hallowed, that it would be hallowed in my life." And you know, I think as we think of this, this really is the prayer of a regenerated heart. This will be one of the signs of God's grace in someone's life; there is an ever increasing respect and honor for the name of the Lord and I want his name to be hallowed in my life. I want him to be consecrated. I want him to be set apart by how I speak of him, how I worship him and how I live. So this will be one of the marks of the heart that has been changed by the grace of God, I want God's name to be hallowed, and oh, for grace for that in our lives to do that.

I want to talk, thirdly, tonight about the application that is to be made from this third commandment. What might this look like for us? What might it look like for us to hallow the name of God, to not take it in vain? First of all, by dishonoring God by our words. Certainly it would include using the name of God in a profane way; profane the name of God in a cursing sort of way. Isn't it an amazing thing as we think of the culture in which we live, that men will take the name of God in such vulgar and degrading ways and it's common, isn't it? You watch TV, you hear it, movies, books. You hear it in the mall. You hear it in the workplace. You hear it in school, hopefully not in homeschools but in school you will hear it. In the locker room and sporting events. The name of God is taken in such vulgar ways where he is defamed, and often his name is taken in vain when people get upset, when they get frustrated and angry. They will take the name of God in a profane way. But also we realize that men will even take the name of God in vain in just common ordinary speech. They don't have to be upset and angry, mad, to take the name of the Lord God in vain. They just regularly just in common speech will speak the name of God and take it in a vain way without even thinking. They will drag the name of Christ through the mud.

I will never forget, I was in the sixth grade and I was on Mr. Ely's basketball team. Mr. Ely had a grocery store right on Main Street in Westchester, and we were there after our practice and waiting for parents to come and get us, and I remember for the very first time hearing a man speak the name of Jesus Christ in a way that I had never ever heard it before. I had grown up in a home where the name of Jesus was honored, spoken with reverence. I went to a church where we sang about Jesus, where the name of Jesus, again, was lifted up. We sang about Jesus. And as a young boy in the sixth grade, I heard this man use the name of Jesus Christ in a way I had never heard it before, and as I listened to him, this is something that shocked me because I knew he wasn't honoring Jesus Christ, and many people in our day take the name of Jesus Christ in such a way as that.

I recently heard someone say, and I haven't had the time to look this up, but they said in the ninth edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary, if you look up the word "Jesus" it gives this definition: an exclamation of surprise, irritation, or dismay. Then in brackets it says: also the founder of the Christian religion. But really that's how it is mostly used in the world in which we live, isn't it? It's used as an exclamation of irritation or dismay, surprise. Romans 3 says that all the world stands condemned before God, "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." It's like an open tomb. There is a stench. There is a smell by the way in which the words that they speak and many of which defame and curse the name of God. But you know, as we think of taking the name of God with our words in that way, sometimes Christians, I think, can be just as guilty. We can trivialize and bring God's name down by the way in which we speak, and we often hear, sadly, sometimes Christians just saying, "Oh my God," or, "Oh my Lord," in a trite way, and sometimes if you would ask them as they use it in that way, they might say, "Well, I didn't mean it in a derogatory way or a profane way. I really didn't think of it in that way." And the problem is they really weren't thinking, but that's to bring the name of God down in a trivial way, to use it in a trivial way.

So we can dishonor the Lord and his name in profanity but we can also use our words to dishonor God by speaking of him in a light and trivial manner. How many times do you hear people say something like, "The old man upstairs," or something similar to that? You know, when I was a boy, I never said of my father, "My old man." A lot of my classmates did. They would talk about their old man or their old lady, but I never spoke that way, and not because my dad commanded me not to do that but I knew it wasn't respectful. But sometimes as people speak of God, they trivialize his name and they speak of him as the man upstairs or they use the name of God in jokes and they belittle him and trivialize him, speak in trivial and lighthearted ways concerning God, his character, his person, and I think that comes under this command, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain," in this light way. We are to reverence and honor the name of God by speaking highly of him, to speak with respect, a sense of dignity of the weightiness of who he is. That ought to characterize us as Christians.

Jesus said that the mouth speaks out of what fills the heart, so if we want to know what's going on in our hearts, we can look at our words and how we speak in a lot of areas, but in this particular area. How do I speak about God when I speak about him? Do I speak of

him as being one who is to be revered and one who is to be honored? Because if I don't, that's saying something about what's going on in my heart.

We can also dishonor God not only with our words but we can dishonor God with our thoughts, and one of the ways that I think that we can dishonor God with our thoughts is this: that we just don't think that much about God. We have few thoughts about God which really does dishonor God, doesn't it? Isaiah 26, I think it says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is," what? "Stayed on thee." His mind is fixed upon the Lord. He meditates upon the Lord. He meditates upon the law of God. So one of the ways we dishonor God and really defame him is that we just don't think of him much. He is little in our thoughts. We don't set aside time to hear from him and to read his word, and so we have little thoughts of him, and we do not meditate upon his character and who he is and, again, that dishonors the Lord. It shows that we think little of him.

We also can dishonor him in our thought as we entertain low views of God when we do think about him, and we have views that are inappropriate of him. We have thoughts that are inappropriate of him. I think of Isaiah 40 where the Lord says to Israel, "Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: 'My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice that is due to meet escapes his notice?'" Having inappropriate thoughts of him that are not according to how he has revealed himself to be to his people. Or I think of Asaph in his struggle in Psalm 73. Asaph looks at the prosperity of the wicked, he sees that the wicked, their life seems so carefree. They've got everything that they want. Their eyes are bulging out with fatness. They have plenty to eat. All things are going well for them. And Asaph, it says, "It seems that I have cleansed my hand in vain. I'm trying to be holy. I'm trying to follow the Lord and look at me. Look at the situation that I am in." And you know as he wrestles through all of that, it comes out good on the other end, but he wasn't having high and holy thoughts about his God. Then he says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee and besides thee I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh shall fail but God is the strength of my heart. He is my portion forever. He has taken hold of me by his right hand. Oh, I am so blessed. The wicked are not to be envied. God has dealt graciously with me." But often we trivialize the name of God and we profane the name of God by having small views of who our God is and so we must be very careful about how we think about God.

A third way I think that we dishonor God's name is by our conduct. You know as Christians we have been adopted into the family of God. He has made us to be his children. What a blessing that is. If we have been baptized, we have been baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We have been brought into union with the Triune God, the name of God. We are sons and daughters of God and just as children can bring reproach upon their parents and the good name of their parents by their conduct, so we can bring contempt upon the name of our God, our Father, by our conduct and how we live. 1 Timothy 6:1 says, "Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor." Why? Why? "So that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed." You servants, or we might say you workers, you employees, live in a way with your employer, with your fellow workers, in such a way that you will not bring dishonor to your God; that his doctrine, that the Gospel



would not be blasphemed by how you live. Titus 2:5 says, "admonish women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet and chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands." Why? Why should you live this way? "So that the word of God may not be blasphemed." I want to honor the name of the Lord. I don't want to bring down the name of the Lord by the way in which I live as a wife. I want to live in a godly way that will honor him and not blaspheme his name or his Gospel. Psalm 138:2 says, "You have magnified Your word above all Your name." Lord, I want to honor your word. I want to live in accordance with your word.

So we can bring reproach upon the name of the Lord by our conduct but we are called to lift up his name, to lift up his name and not bring reproach to it but to honor his name. Another verse, Titus 2:10, "Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." We want to adorn the Gospel. We want to adorn the name of Jesus Christ so that we bring glory to that Gospel by how we live and by our conduct.

I was privileged last week to be able to go to the "Together for the Gospel" conference. After being here and being able to hear John MacArthur, I was able to hear him again later last week and many other fine speakers, and it was just a wonderful experience. 12,000 people in the center in downtown Louisville singing. It was a foretaste of heaven and what a glorious time it was. But I came home that night and I went down to my office and I was there about 10 o'clock and I was going through some emails, and I received an email from a church and they shared with me that this pastor that I have known for some time, who to me I have looked up to and revered and he had been such a humble man, they said we are sorry to tell you that we have had to discipline him and we have had to ask him to step down from ministry. He has been guilty of marital infidelity and he has been unrepentant, and my heart broke. I thought of this man who has been in the same church for probably over 40 years, maybe 50 years, and I thought what does this do to this Gospel that you have preached all of these years? This Christ that you have preached and you have made known? You are called to adorn the Gospel and this brings shame and it blasphemes the name of Christ. And it broke my heart but it also humbled me. "O God, keep me close to you. Keep me cleaving to you. Help me to guard my heart. Do not let me dishonor the name of Christ."

A fourth way I think that we can dishonor God's name is by our worship. You might think, "Well, how do we dishonor the name of God when we are worshiping? How do we profane or take his name in vain when we are trying to worship together? How do we dishonor it?" Well, first of all, in many places worship I think is so often man-centered in the culture in which we live in the United States. In many churches that you would go into, you would not think it's about God. It's about man and it's about me. It's a very man-centered worship which I believe dishonors the name of God, and often in worship there is almost this flippancy that you can see in many churches. They are not God-centered and in many places there is a lack of orthodoxy. There is this weightlessness feeling about the God that they say that they are worshiping and you can come into those churches and go out and not feel any sense of the weightiness of God and I think that's a

way that God is dishonored. I know that's not true here and I'm thankful for that, and I know that's why you come here, most of you, because there is this weightiness of the Gospel and the God that you worship and the God that you love, and I'm thankful for that and I pray for your church and I pray for your pastor as he preaches.

But on a personal level, I think we can take the name of God to our lips often in singing and reading of the Scripture, and even in the hearing of the word of God but our hearts are far from God. Our minds are elsewhere. We can go through all of the emotions, we can go through all of the motions of worship but our hearts are far from God. We can trivialize, again, the name of God by the manner in which we worship. Jesus said that, "This people honors Me," quoting from Isaiah, "This people honors Me with their lips but their hearts are far from Me." Does that not often happen when we worship together and we come together to seek to honor the Lord and to worship him but our hearts are far from him? We can be singing and singing great truths of the Gospel, again that our hearts are far from the Lord. We are treating God as if he's not that important. We are not hearing his word when it is being preached. We are thinking about something else. We are thinking about our grocery list or we are thinking about what we've got to do this coming week, and we can be singing hymns and our mind is somewhere else. I'll be the first to admit that, that I have found myself often singing hymns and thinking, "I need to put this point in my sermon," before I get up there to preach, and I'm not really thinking about this God whom we have entered into his presence corporately together to worship. I think we dishonor the name of the Lord when we do that.

A pastor named Brian Edwards, who is a pastor in England, said this, "We sing of his character and use magnificent words extolling the worth of our God, but our mind is a thousand miles away. We sing of deep and serious commitment, pledging our life, our soul and our all to the service of Christ, our King, but we have no intention of leaving the building any differently from the way that we came in. We sing of Calvary and the broken body of Christ on the cross and we can sing it 100 times while our mind is everywhere but on the cross. We make serious promises to God that we do not keep and often have no intention of keeping. We pledge to do all manner of things in the name of our God but fail to keep our word and it has been well said that Christians do not tell lies, they just sing them in their hymns." Boy, isn't that convicting? A lot of things that we sing in our hymns that we really are not convinced of in our hearts or they are not really affirming what is in our hearts.

We are to honor God's name when we worship together. We are to worship in spirit and in truth, Jesus said. We are to sing with grace in our hearts. We are to sing as unto the Lord, and we are to sing with one another. We are exhorting one another when we sing, don't we? We are speaking to one another these truths of the Gospel and the greatness and the goodness of our God. So there needs to be intentionality when we come to worship, that our minds are focused upon God. We don't want to treat him lightly. When we come together, we are coming to lift up corporately together the name of the Lord our God.

As we think of the first three commandments that have to do with God and who he is, the first four actually, the first commandment reminds us who is to be worshiped. He is the

only true and living God. He is Yahweh. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Triune God. So the first commandment has to do with who is to be worshiped, the second command has to do with how he is to be worshiped. There are to be no graven images. The third command that we've been looking at tonight has to do with the attitude with which he is to be worshiped. His name is to be hallowed. His name is to be lifted high. He is to be exalted. But notice, if you will, as we close tonight, that there is a warning that is attached to this command. Verse 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." Nadab and Abihu learned that, offering up profane fire, something that God had not commended, and fire came out and consumed them. They took his name lightly. They trivialized the worship of God coming into his presence. That's not the only occasion in the Bible where we find that.

We are reminded that as we worship and as we think of this God that we serve, that his name is not to be taken lightly. This is a pretty serious issue, isn't it? This is a very serious issue and there are warnings that are given here, but you know tonight we are thankful for the Gospel. I am sure every one of us here, we have taken the name of God in vain, we have treated him with contempt by our words, by our conduct, but you know, Paul tells us that the law was a tutor to lead us, where? To lead us to Christ. And here's the good news: that there is one who came into this world to save those who have taken the name of the Lord God in vain, and he died upon the cross. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." And if you're here tonight without Christ, I want to encourage you to run to Christ. Here's a Savior who is mighty and able to save those who have offended God.

When we think about sin, most people when they think about sin they think about the latter 10 Commandments, the last half of the 10 Commandments, "You are not to murder. You are not to steal," you know, those kinds of things, "You are not to commit adultery," but you know, the most serious ones are the first ones. You are to have no other God. You are to worship him and him alone in the way in which he has commanded. And you are not to take his name in vain. These are the serious sins and we are all in need of a Savior and we are so thankful tonight, are we not, of one who has come who was made a curse for us and he was the one who perfectly lived a righteous life, who always did the will of his Father, who always honored his Father, and in the Gospel his righteousness is credited to us, the one who is holy and isn't undefiled.

May God help us all by his grace that we will esteem the name of the Lord our God, that we will treat him as holy.

Would you please pray with me?

*Lord, I thank you tonight for the Gospel. Thank you for our Savior Jesus Christ who loved us and who was willing to give himself for us as a sacrifice. He himself, who was blasphemed by men, whose name was profaned, he willingly endured all of that that he might redeem us and save us from our own sins. And Lord, tonight it is my prayer that*

*you would help myself and all of us here, that we may esteem the name of the Lord our God, that we may hallow the name of the Lord our God by the way in which we worship together, by the way in which we think of you, by the manner in which we speak of you, and by the manner in which we live. Help us by your grace that we may adorn the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do all of this for your name's sake, we pray. Amen.*

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