

Revere His Name

What is the great business of your life? What is your personal mission? If I am honest, I have to admit that too often I live to make my name great. This is a great affront to the majestic God of heaven because the great and serious business of heaven is to make one name great: God's.

God's mission is to exalt above all things His name (Psalm 138:2). God raised up Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt to proclaim the greatness of His name in all the earth (Exodus 9:16). If this is the great and serious business of heaven, it certainly ought to become the great business of our lives.

The third commandment shows us how to do just that. We want to examine three questions from our text: How are we to revere His name? Why are we to revere His name? What has God done to rescue us when we fail to revere His name?

Exodus 20:7

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.

- I. **REVERENCE - How are you to revere the name of the Lord?** Four specific ways.
 - A. We revere the Lord's name by **speaking of Him respectfully.**
 1. One of the ways to translate the command: "You shall not take the name of the LORD in vain" is: "You shall not lift up the name of the Lord emptily."
 2. This confronts us all with one of the fundamental ways we break this commandment —profanity. We profane the Lord's name when we treat that which is perfectly holy as ordinary.
 3. Any time we use God's name in a way that expresses neither faith in Him nor worship of Him we take His name in vain.
 4. One of the sure marks of a converted person is that the Lord cleans up our mouths so that our words draw attention to how great and wonderful He is.
 - B. We revere the Lord's name **by thinking of Him worthily.**
 1. Text: "*You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.*"
 2. The specific name of the Lord here is YHWH which is the personal, covenant name of God by which He chose to reveal Himself to Moses (Exodus 3:13-14).
 3. His name doesn't just refer to this particular name for God, but also to everything that God uses to reveal Himself to His children.
 4. Therefore, we revere the Lord's name by using His names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works to think of Him worthily and truthfully.
 5. John Calvin: "*We ought to be so disposed in mind and speech that we neither think nor say anything concerning God and his mysteries, without reverence...*" (*Institutes*, 2.8.22).
 - C. We revere the Lord's name **by worshipping Him sincerely.**
 1. Text: "*You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.*"
 2. The word for "vain" can be interpreted "emptily, worthlessly." This commandment teaches us that all of us have handicapped hearts that cause us to draw near to God in worship with our lips when our hearts are far away.

3. This has been a struggle for God's people throughout time. The Lord says, "this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me." Jesus reiterates Isaiah's prophecy and says, "in vain do they worship" (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9).

D. We revere the Lord's name **by living for Him consistently.**

1. To take the Lord's name can also mean to carry and bear His name before a watching world.
2. When the Aaronic priests blessed God's people (Numbers 6:24-27), they put the Lord's name on His people. In the same way, we, as Christians, have the name of our Lord upon us. We bear His name in all that we say and do. This confronts all of us with our many sins of hypocrisy, for our conduct does not always match our creed.
3. One of the specific ways that we live consistently with our profession of faith is by working diligently to keep our promises. All promises are sacred and must be kept, whether they are marriage vows, church membership vows, or just simply doing what we say we will do. For a Christian, our word is our bond.

II. **RATIONALE - Why are you to revere His name?**

- A. God takes His name so seriously that He promises to judge all who persist in not revering it. The judgment of God rightly falls upon those who fail to revere His name.
- B. This discipline and judgment can happen in this life (See Deuteronomy 28:58-59). It can and also does happen in the next life (Romans 2:5). This is why the writer to the Hebrews said: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).
- C. Here is where the sharp needle of the law now makes way for the scarlet thread of the Gospel.

III. **REDEEMER - What has God done to rescue us when we fail to revere His name?**

How does Jesus transform this commandment? Three ways:

- A. Jesus is given the Lord's name of supreme worth and glory. His name is the name of God par excellence (See Isaiah 45:23 and Philippians 2:9-11). For this reason, when we call upon the name of the Lord, we are saved (Romans 10:13).
- B. Jesus is accused and condemned of breaking this commandment to free us from the guilt we have rightfully incurred for all the ways that we have broken it (See Matthew 26:65).
- C. Jesus fulfills this commandment when He glorifies His father's name by enduring His hour of suffering and paying the penalty of death for all our sins of irreverence (See John 12:27-28a).
- D. Therefore, it behooves us to heed the counsel of Robert Murray Mc'Cheyne: "For every one look at your sin...take ten looks at Jesus Christ!"

Discussion Questions:

1. Read the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and focus on verse 4 which explains why the people committed themselves to this building project.
2. Ask the Lord to show you where you are presently living to make a name for yourself instead of living to make His name great. Where are you seeking great things for yourself (Jeremiah 45:5) instead of great things for God? Confess this to the Lord and ask His forgiveness.
3. Take time to evaluate how you presently use the Lord's name. How are you doing at lifting up the Lord's name in your speech? Evaluate your speech patterns for ways that you may be diminishing or demeaning Him. Ask the Lord to show you how to speak of Him in a way that draws others to contemplate the greatness and grandeur of your God.
4. Is there any way that you are thinking of the Lord in a way that is not worthy of Him, ways that do not correspond to His Word?
5. How would you describe your present worship of God? Ask the Lord to show you what it looks like for you to worship Him wholeheartedly, fervently, and sincerely.
6. How are you doing at keeping your promises? If you married, how are you doing at keeping the vows you made to God? If you are a church member, evaluate how you are presently doing at keeping the membership vows you made. For example, are you doing everything in your power to promote the purity, peace, and unity of your church?
7. Meditate on the following and ask the Lord to fill your heart with thanksgiving for Jesus:

The perfectly innocent one who always delighted to revere His Father's name
 was condemned and charged with blasphemy so that you might be forgiven
 for the ways that you have taken the Lord's name in vain,
 for the times that you have cursed and sworn,
 for the times you have failed to keep your promises,
 and for the times your worship has been offered thoughtlessly from a cold heart.

For Further Reflection:

Proverbs 18:10 says that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous run to it and are safe." Take a few moments to reflect on all verses that highlight some of the privileges that are yours in Jesus and reflect on how precious the name of Jesus Christ is to you. (John 1:12, Acts 4:12, 8:16, 9:14; Philippians 2:9-11).

Another important way that we revere the Lord's name is by blessing instead of cursing those made in His image. Read James 3:1-12 and answer: how would I live and speak differently if I really believed that my spouse, my kids, my friends, and my work associates were true image bearers of the living Lord of heaven?