

I. Text: Exodus 20:7:

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

II. Major Objective: Devotional

III. Central Idea: God's Name is sacred and to desecrate it brings Divine judgment.

IV. Subject: Reverence for God's Name

V. Thesis and Goal:

1. Proposition: God has commanded that His name be held in reverence and not to be used in a vain, empty manner.

2. Specific Goal: To bring respect for God's name and mindfulness of daily living so as not to break this commandment.

VI. Introduction: Man has developed a new standard of living. In this progressive, intellectual and enlightened day, not only have old methods of living been put aside, but also the old morals. A new philosophy has swept its way to the place of recognition so swiftly it would make an office-aspiring politician envious. This "new" philosophy of living is, "Life apart from sin isn't worth living." Actually, this is not a new philosophy. It is as old as the fall of man. This hideous philosophy from the kingdom of darkness has plagued man in some form or another throughout the course of human history.

VII. Body The basic and underlying affliction which causes such an "advanced" scheme of thinking is man's desire to become a god. He lifts himself up, and seats himself on the throne of his heart and follows no dictates but those of a lower nature. So this "new" way of living is not new; rather it is the same trail left by the same serpent as he challenges heaven for the control of man. One has only to open his eyes to see how this has affected our time. There has never been in history such moral decay as now exists, and it is hidden by a mask of enlightenment and advancement. The very foundation of healthy living has grown rotten under the attack of this "better way." Men's hearts are still dissatisfied; souls are still empty; lives are still bound in despair.

No matter how much man may progress there are eternal and fundamental laws which though very old, are the secret of a "life worth living." God's standard of holiness and morality has never gone out of date. It are as applicable in this day as in the day of Moses. The Ten Commandments are God's standard for successful living. These are eternal commandments. God's moral law has never been passed away by the age of grace. And when these commandments are broken they bring tragedy.

I have chosen the third commandment because its violation is so prevalent today. It is being broken not only by the godless but by the churchmembers who profess godliness. A revival of the sanctity of God's name and reverence for it would be a revival indeed. May it start here.



VII. Body:

II. God Attaches A Divine Penalty for the Violation of

I. God Prohibits Vain Usage of His Name. (Exodus 20:7)

The word means, "empty," "insincere," "lifting up in a frivolous manner." It can readily be seen that the wide meaning of the word gives wide prohibition.

is a solemn assertion that God will pronounce "guilty"

1. God's Name is taken in vain by profanity.

those who violate His sacred name.

This is the most popular interpretation of the

1. commandment. There is no temptation to this sin; it is not only sinful, but senseless.

2. It is a sin of the heart. God looks on man's heart  
God's name is taken in vain by perjury.

as he prays and worships; he judges his daily life. Only  
This is using His name falsely, pledging his character  
God knows if it is sincere.  
to a lie.

2. God himself inflicts the penalty because it is

3. God's name is taken in vain by triviality.

directly against himself.

There is an abundance of jokes employing God's name  
The man who curses God or breaks this commandment in  
and other sacred things. This is being familiar with  
any other way, not only insults and ignores God, but  
God....calling Him the "Man upstairs."  
defies and dares God. God will not leave such pride

4. God's name is taken in vain by insincerity and

hypocrisy.

VIII. Conclusion (1) Insincerity in worship. Being broken countless

times (2) Hypocrisy in daily living. Lives of Christians.

Our Jesus denounced eight woes upon the hypocritical

Pharisees who broke the commandment in this manner.

vain. How can this be overcome? Jesus summed up the

Additional Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:19  
whole law in two words: love. There is only one thing

that will keep you from misusing God's name.-- love.

II. God Attaches A Divine Penalty for the Violation of this Commandment. (Exodus 20:7)

This could be translated, "The Lord will not hold him to be clean that taketh his name in vain." The test of moral cleanness is one's attitude toward the name of God. It is a solemn assertion that God will pronounce "guilty" those who violate His sacred name.

1. God himself inflicts the penalty because only He can see all of its violations.

It is a sin of the heart. God looks on man's heart as he prays and worships; he judges his daily life. Only God knows if it is sincere.

2. God himself inflicts the penalty because it is directly against himself.

The man who curses God or breaks this commandment in any other way, not only insults and ignores God, but defies and dares God. God will not leave such pride unpunished.

VIII. Conclusion: This commandment is being broken countless times every day in the hearts and lives of Christians. Our lives are to be one long worship and service. But in many lives it is one long act of taking God's name in vain. How can this be overcome? Jesus summed up the whole law in the word love. There is only one thing that will keep you from desecrating God's name.-- love.

We do profane one whom we love. We do not lie concerning a loved one. If God were as real to us as He ought to be; if we realized His love to us; if we were cleansed from this sin -- then it would no longer be second nature to use His name in exclamation or in any other vain manner.

This sin must be confessed and there must be genuine repentance. Through the surrendered heart the love for God can control the mouth, the head, the temper, and the life. "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Donald Dunn  
February 25, 1967  
Dr. Scogder