

That Name's Holy

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, if you'd like a little more information, you can check us out at FCCGreensburg.com or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.
- But listen, we're so thankful that you have tuned in today and our heart is simply this. We want to get into the Word of God, but most importantly, let the Word of God get into us and transform these hearts more and more into the image of Jesus.
- Now, I want to start off today kind of talking to men or husbands. And imagine for a second your wife or maybe your mom or your sister asks you to hang up some pictures for them in their house.
- So like a typical man, you'd take the stud finder and you'd go, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. Oh, look, I found a stud, as you put it on yourself.
- And every woman rolls her eyes in unison. But you find the real stud, not you. You grab the nail and you start to hammer away. And then it happens.
- [1 : 0 6] You miss and you hit your thumb. And what flies out? You go, ah, Jiminy Cricket or Julius Caesar. No, no. Ah, Jimmy Carter.
- No, that's not what you say. Sadly, what you hear too often is Jesus Christ. Or maybe we say God followed by dang it, but not always dang it.
- So let me give you another example. Have you ever met someone who literally cannot say a sentence without two or three cuss words in it? And they usually don't even realize it.
- A lot of times don't even mean anything by it. It's just become such a habit. But a friend of mine told a story about a man who lived in our community, who passed away several years back.
- This anonymous guy cussed about every other word. And I remember as a kid, he would come to my dad's auto repair business, just throwing out every cuss word in the book.
- [2 : 0 7] So much so, if he were on a TV station that beeped out profanity, you would have thought it was a demonstration on the Morse code. But years ago, this man was doing some work for a person in our church.
- And of course, he knew this guy in our church was a sincere follower of Jesus. So they get talking. And this elder, who now is in heaven with Jesus, had a sick family member at the time.
- And this guy with the colorful language, who always had, really had such a big heart, he said to this church member, Well, let's pray right now for your family member. And he proceeds as his head is bowed in prayer before the Almighty to launch out some unnecessary expletives.
- And this Christian man couldn't help but just shake his head as he heard the name above all names, followed by the word, worse than all words. Now, welcome back here to week four in our series called 10.

If you want to grab your Bibles, you can go ahead and do that. Open up to Exodus chapter 20. Exodus is really easy to find if you're new to the Bible. It's the second book, Genesis, and then you come to Exodus.

[3 : 17] So Exodus, go to chapter 20. And we are, in fact, looking at the Ten Commandments, seeking as disciples of Jesus, how can we live in such a way that glorifies our God?

And we don't just want to talk the talk on Sunday. We want to live it out all week long. And I bet that many of you could probably guess how I started this message that we're going to talk about today, commandment number three.

And Exodus 20, verse 7, actually puts it like this. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Now, I opened today by sharing about a couple extreme examples of breaking this commandment. And now I want to share the extreme on the other end. Now, as you may know, if you understand your Bible a little bit, you understand Old Testament, that there was a priestly line that descended from Aaron that would be Moses' brother, and they were called the Levites.

And one of the jobs for some of these Levites was to transcribe the text of the Torah. And when I say Torah, I'm talking about the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

[4 : 37] But I have to tell you, they took this role very serious. They would take a scroll that had the Torah, and then they would meticulously copy it onto another scroll.

And there was no margin for error. This was God's Word. They were so very careful. They even put safeguards, or what we would call accountability, in place to make sure everything was perfect.

An older Levite would actually come by at the end of the day, and he would randomly check different spots of the text to make sure everything was just right. And if even one very small mistake was found, they would tear it up right there, and he'd have to start over.

Well, another thing about this process, let's say this Levite is copying the text from Exodus chapter 20, where we see the Ten Commandments. And when he came to the name for God, four consonants, so not even vowels in this, Y-H-W-H, which we pronounce as Yahweh or Jehovah, he would stop, he would put his pen down, he'd leave the room, go into another one, take off his outer garment or robe, he would ceremonially wash, and then he'd put a new clean outer garment on.

He'd go back in the room, he'd very, very carefully write those four letters of the name of God. When he was done, he would then destroy that writing utensil, leave the room again, take off what was just a clean outer garment, he would do his ceremonial washing again, he'd put on another new outer robe, and then he'd go back to copying the text.

[6 : 16] And do you know what he did the next time he came to this name for God? The exact same process. Why? Because the name of God is holy. And while I think that's a pretty extreme example, you could even see it kind of go towards legalism, but listen, I appreciate the respect, honor, and reverence given to the name of our awesome God.

So let's answer the why question today before we get into the how. But why would I, as a recipient of God's amazing grace, of his forgiveness, his mercy, his love, why would I never want to misuse or take the Lord's name in vain?

Why? Well, here's the answer. Nothing else compares. I would even say it like this, because he is God, and I am not. And while that may seem restricting or offensive to the world, to those of us who are in Christ, man, that is freedom when we know who he is, and who we are as a child of God.

And so, let's look at a couple passages here, and I want to take you to the book of Isaiah. We're going to start in Isaiah 40, verse 18, where God the Father puts it like this.

He says, With whom then will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? And then this goes back to what we talked about last week. As for an idol, a metal worker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it.

[7 : 50] A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. They look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple. And then it says, Do you not know?

Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers.

And then we look at Isaiah 55, verses 8 and 9. For my thoughts, God says, are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. So, we see this clear distinction between us flawed human beings and the one who is awesome enough to speak the universe into existence.

Now, I can tell you, after almost two decades of ministry, I have not always made everyone happy. As you can probably imagine. And that can be tough.

[8 : 53] I mean, every one of us, in some way, have at least a little bit of a people-pleasing side, right? And it can be hard when you know that you've disappointed folks at times.

I can say that my heart has always been to build the kingdom, to do it with excellence, to try to honor the Lord by staying true to His word, to try to love the people that God has put under my care.

But there are probably those who have not liked every decision I've made, who've not agreed with me on some things. And I'm very aware that my name has not always been spoken of with exuberance and respect.

And listen, I probably deserved it a few times, because sometimes we do mess up. That's when you swallow your pride, you apologize, and you try to do better next time. But listen, as imperfect as you and I are, there is one who is perfect in every way.

And while my name does not deserve in any way to be lifted up or magnified, there is one that deserves our respect and our praise. And I love how the New Testament puts this in Philippians 2, starting in verse 9, after talking about our servant-hearted Savior that went to the cross to take the punishment that you and I deserve because of our sins, in his amazing love and grace for you and me, then God's word says this, therefore, God exalted him to the highest place, gave him the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[10 : 33] And as you get into the word of God for yourself, you're gonna discover even more about who he wants to be in your life, just how awesome he is, that he is the Alpha and the Omega, the author and perfecter of your faith.

He is the bread of life and the living water. He's that chief cornerstone, the good shepherd, and he's faithful and true. He's the head over the church, the great I am, and Emmanuel, God with us.

He is that indescribable gift. He's the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the judge. He's the light of the world, and he's the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He's Messiah, he's hope, and he is our rock.

He's the creator, the Savior, and the word. He is the way, the truth, and the life, while also being my wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

He's my Jesus. And I love this important detail that's shared in John chapter 18. See, this is when Judas betrays Jesus, and he brings all these guards or these soldiers to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane, and as they come to apprehend him, it's nighttime.

[11 : 52] And so they got their torches in their hands so they can see, don't quite have the streetlights that we have today, so it's a little harder to identify someone than it would be in the daylight.

And he asked them, well, who is it that you want? Jesus of Nazareth, they said. And that's when Jesus speaks the name of God. And just like God spoke to Moses when he said, whom shall I say is sending me to Pharaoh?

And God says, I am who I am, and we've kind of shortened that to I am, then Jesus speaks to these people coming to get them, and he says, I am he.

He says, I am God. And because there was such power in that name, they couldn't help but fall to the ground as he claimed to be God.

See, that name's powerful. So, why would I not take the Lord's name in vain? Or another way to ask it, is this really that big of a deal? And the answer is yes.

[12 : 55] His name is holy. It's sacred. And too often in our attempts to make the Lord more relatable, we have the tendency to throw that holy fear and reverence for the Lord out the window.

I mean, yes, he is personal, and I can have a relationship with him, and Jesus calls me friend, but never forget, while he is that God that you can have an intimate relationship with, he's still the all-powerful creator of the universe.

And listen, he's awesome in his majesty and glory. His power is beyond comprehension. And he loves you and me so much that he went to that cross to endure awful suffering, to take our place and say, child, I love you this much as his arms were spread out, giving his life for you.

Nothing compares. No other name is deserving because that name's holy. Now, let's wrestle a little bit with the question how.

Okay? How do I live this commandment out in a way that shows my love for Jesus? Because isn't that the goal? To be more like him? And the first and obvious one is this.

[14 : 09] Don't misuse the name of God. Don't take the Lord's name in vain. Now, as we look at this word vain and what that meant in the original language, it means empty, nothing, worthless, or of no good purpose.

So, it literally means not to take the Lord's name in a way that is wicked, worthless, or empty. So, let me use this illustration that I have a feeling that you IU fans are going to enjoy way too much.

But I am a diehard Purdue Boilermaker fan, have been pretty much all my life. I am thankful for these four years of Zach Eady as a basketball player.

Yes, just like you, I was disappointed with the few words that came out of his mouth during the interviews. But honestly, overall, just a great young man who has done some incredible things and even signed thousands of autographs for children.

But for them to make it to the championship game, that was fun. And this team has a lot to be proud of. Now, I wish we could have won it too, but as they say, it is what it is.

[15 : 12] But I feel pretty safe that my fellow Boiler fans probably struggled with the UConn game as much as I did. And I'd also imagine, I mean, I don't think this is a stretch, that God's name was probably taken in vain by a Purdue fan, by at least one, but probably a whole lot more than that.

How easy would it be for someone to be frustrated about Purdue never making the adjustment and still trying to fight over the screen instead of going underneath of it and the guard was wide open for an 8-12 foot jumper every time.

Someone could have easily thrown out our Savior's name in that moment. Or to have all these wide open three-pointers that Purdue had and we missed most of them and then the opponent goes down and knocks down most of theirs.

It would have been so easy to take the name of God and say it in frustration. And yet I'm not here to pick on unbelievers because listen, I learned a long time ago that you can never expect someone who doesn't know Jesus to live and act like they know Jesus.

And we could give a hundred examples of life circumstances that just make us so frustrated, so disappointed that even as believers we could probably find ourselves taking the name of God in vain and yet we can't because that name's holy.

[16 : 31] Instead, I choose to let his name speak of his wonders. See, Bill Bright once put it like this, God's name is so important that in heaven the very mention of it evokes worship.

Now, have you ever thought about how many people you encounter every day who don't know Jesus as Lord and Savior? They could have all kinds of ideas about him, some may even see him favorably but just maybe not understand like I did when I was lost that he wanted a relationship with me.

Others may have been hurt by those in the church who are terrible examples or maybe given a completely wrong view of Jesus by some crazy church experience they had when they were around 12.

I've even heard of kids who grew up only hearing the name of Jesus when they did something wrong and grandma or whoever just told them that they were going to go to hell and now their only view of Jesus is this one who wants to throw down lightning bolts every time I do something wrong.

But imagine the opportunity that you and I have every day. When we speak the name of Jesus we can do it in a way that magnifies that points others to him. Maybe even helps to kind of unravel some of that baggage.

[17 : 46] Have you noticed with your co-workers how easy it is to get close when you go in every day do life together go through the ups go through the downs through the regular days together and they hear you praise Jesus in the good times maybe they hear you listening to that kind of Christian praise music but more importantly they saw you when you lost that family member and how you clung to Jesus and even the hope that you had in such a hard time it just didn't make sense to them and the day comes for them when things are all of a sudden turned upside down for them and sadly that's often what happens to make people receptive and then you have the opportunity to speak the name of Jesus and what he's done in your life.

See no one can argue with your testimony of God's goodness and power and as the Holy Spirit leads you you may have the opportunity to kind of steer them to the Messiah to discover hope for themselves or maybe even get them connected to a Bible based church where they can learn and grow in that direction.

So what happens when you buck the norm of God's name being taken in vain and you start to speak truth and love as you magnify and you lift up the name above all names and some of you just thought that you were in this awful workplace to make money to support your family.

Well that's true life is expensive you got to take care of your family but God wants to use you wherever he has placed you and when you speak the name of God let it be done in complete reverence in all of how awesome he is and let it tell others about the wonders that he has done.

Now here's the second thing don't make empty promises. That's another way we can break this commandment don't make empty promises. I bet you can relate to something that I remember doing as a kid.

[19 : 46] When you said something and another child said well that's not true or you won't keep your promise I would usually say and I'm not saying this is right this is definitely not right but I would say as a kid I swear to God I'll do blah blah blah.

Now I may be aging myself a little bit because back in the 90s that would have been most of my childhood there or a big portion of it back in the 90s that that carried a little bit more weight when you threw God's name in there.

Now today it may not but when you said that it was like okay I mean things just got serious I don't think he's going to lie to me if he's going to say I swear to God and I can tell you that while I was taught always keep your word there were probably a few times that I used the Lord's name in making that oath and then I broke that vow.

See Leviticus 19.12 even says this God says do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God and then he says I am the Lord.

And even in Matthew chapter 5 we see Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount taking it to a new level looking at our heart motives basically saying why do you need to make oaths and swear by the things of God anyways?

[21 : 01] Let your yes be yes and your no be no. In other words be a godly person of integrity. When you give your word on something man that should be a guarantee as a child of God that you will fulfill it.

That should be enough. And once again just like when you speak the name of Jesus with reverence and awe when your word means something and there's not a fear of an empty promise that shows that you are a child of the Most High it shows that the name of God is holy not only on your lips but in your heart.

Okay so you've heard me if you've heard me preach a few times you know that I'm all about being practical. Yes we dig into the context we make sure to properly interpret God's word but at the end of the day I want to know what's the big picture?

What are you walking away with that's going to make you pursue the heart of Jesus more and more? And to even expand beyond this third commandment and kind of talk big picture with our speech I would ask you and me both this tough question and this is the big picture question Do your words reveal that you belong to the King of Kings?

Let me ask you that again Do your words reveal that you belong to the King of Kings? You know a couple years back I was on Facebook and saw a post from a guy that I went to Bible college with we both went to college in St. Louis there and we were both on the basketball team and he was a year ahead of me so we ended up playing together for three years and probably around a hundred games together but I was surprised to see his profanity-laced rant on social media Now I knew that ministry didn't last long for him and he had switched and became an insurance agent and I think he's done pretty well but I was still surprised by the words he was typing I just never thought being a follower of Jesus the way that I knew him that he would do that so I decided to jokingly have some fun with him but also maybe give a little bit of a gentle nudge that hey man man God wants better from you he wants to know you deeper and he wants your words to honor him and before I tell you how I responded to his rant

[23 : 18] I need you to know that I felt like I had kind of deposited enough in that friendship that I could do this okay I know I had a good relationship with him we didn't hang out a lot we weren't best friends or anything not much out of basketball but I'm telling you we rode in a 15 passenger van together for probably hundreds of hours all around the Midwest and anytime you get beat in a basketball game by 50 at least 8 to 10 times together there's a bond that's going to form there of course we hadn't talked in a few years being separated by about 250 miles but with a smile on my face here's what I typed back to his cussing that he was doing there on Facebook I said do you kiss your mama with that filthy mouth and I forgot what he jokingly said back but my prayer was that God would use my relationship with him to draw him back to the Lord and listen I've had moments too when I needed someone a friend an elder at church a staff member that I work with

I needed a friend to lovingly point me back to holiness in Christ but what this comes down to is the heart and in Luke 6 45 Jesus says a good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart and then he says an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart for the mouth speaks what the heart is full of or maybe you've heard it that last part put this way for out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks whew man I gotta tell you that verse hits me right in the conviction every time right because if I'm honest if we're honest we each probably have words that come out of our mouths that don't honor God that don't build up those made in his image and Lord forgive us when our insecurities take priority over our pursuit of holiness see while this command is all about honoring our God and showing him the reverence and love due his name it's also a great reminder that our words matter and like Proverbs teaches us our words have the power of life and death and so I hope as we close out this message that you will join me and make Psalm 19:14 your prayer see

King David put it like this he said may these words of my mouth and may this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight Lord my rock and my redeemer let me pray that one more time may these words of my mouth may this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight Lord my rock and my redeemer so yeah that name Yahweh that name Jesus yeah that name's holy and may I honor it with everything that I am pray with me heavenly father we just thank you we just thank you for how good and awesome and holy and righteous and majestic and fair and I mean you are just beyond what our words can even do justice and so father thank you thank you for this reminder today that we don't need to get flippant about your name we don't need to take your name in vain but your name is the name above all names and your name is worthy of our respect and our honor and our lives just living all out for you and so father help us to do that help us to never just make your name just like another name that we would speak at work help us to always show that respect and that honor that your name is due as we worship you for the awesome

God that you are and lord we just thank you that you are a God who forgives you are a God who sets us on the solid rock who takes our lives us broken vessels and uses us in ways that we could never imagine you are awesome in power and so right now we just ask that you'll take these tongues that obviously are controlled by our hearts and that you will purify these hearts so that the words that come out of our mouths will truly honor you magnify your name and build into others pouring life over them so father thank you for how you've spoken to us today through your word we pray all of this in Jesus holy name and God's people said amen and amen hey I want to just give you a quick invitation maybe you're listening to this and you have some God questions and you just like someone to listen and maybe help you answer those and think through those a little bit we'd love to walk you through what scripture teaches because that's the only thing that matters and so maybe you're also just thinking about okay I'd like to give my life to Jesus what does that look like

I mean what does that mean what do I do we'd love to come alongside you once again First Christian Church Greensburg Indiana my name is Ray Sweet I'm the lead pastor and I would love to come alongside you just like the rest of our staff would so you can reach out in a couple ways you can call our church First Christian Church at 812-663-8488 or you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com hey we truly appreciate you tuning in today we pray you are blessed by the word of God and we hope you have a great week God bless