

# Exodus 20:1-7, Philippians 2:5-11

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     The following sermon is from Grace and Peace Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grace and Peace is a new church that exists for the glory of God and the good of the northeast suburbs of Hamilton Place, Collegedale, and Ottawa.
- You can find help more by visiting [gracepeacechurch.org](http://gracepeacechurch.org). Okay, I think that's it.
- Sarah, will you come and read God's word for us? In fact, why don't we, as is our custom, why don't we stand for the reading of God's word? Good morning.
- Our scripture today comes from Exodus first and then Philippians. And God spoke all these words saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.
- [ 1 : 0 7 ]     You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- 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. And then in Philippians.
- Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.
- Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
- [ 2 : 1 7 ]     Father. Please take a seat. All right.
- We are continuing on in our series looking at the Ten Commandments. I wonder if you remember, do y'all remember that movie?
- It came out in the early 90s, I think. It was called The American President. It starred Charlie Sheen and Michael Douglas, Annette Bening, even Michael J. Fox was in it, which I had forgotten, but Michael J. Fox.
- So it's basically a West Wing-styled rom-com, and actually, I didn't realize this, but I went back and was watching some of it. It was actually produced by Aaron Sorkin, who later produced The West Wing, and so it actually feels like The West Wing, but Martin Sheen is not the president in the movie.

He becomes president, which I just thought was kind of cool, because The West Wing is clearly one of the best television shows ever. We can disagree about that later. So the whole premise of this movie, of The American President, is that Michael Douglas is President Shepard, and he is single in the White House, and he starts dating Annette Bening, who is a senator for the opposition political party.

[ 3 : 37 ] So it's this nice kind of rom-com theme. But one thing about the movie that I really like is how it portrays the dignity of the presidential office.

It feels really different than a movie that might come out, like right now, because it's funny, but it's not cynical. It's not cynical about the respect that the office deserves.

You know, these days, if somebody makes a movie about the president, it's probably, you know, the president is some sort of a, you know, a heel. He's, you know, a buffoon of some sort.

There's something cynical about how we look at the office. There's one scene that I really like in this movie where the president, you know, what's his name?

Michael Douglas and Martin Sheen. Martin Sheen is his chief of staff, and they were lifelong best friends, and, but in this new role, it demands a different way of them interacting.

[ 4 : 37 ] And so Martin Sheen, it's at the end of the night, and he's leaving the Oval Office. And so Martin Sheen says, good night, Mr. President. And President Shepard turns to him, and he says, hey, you know, call me Andy.

You were the best man at my wedding. Just call me Andy. And chief of staff smiles, and he looks at him straight in the eye and says, whatever you say, Mr. President. And it's a great moment, because it does feel like in our world, we have, we have in all manner of ways become more casual in the way that we interact with people.

You know, in the ways we dress. I'm a preacher, and I'm wearing jeans and boots. In the ways that we, in the way, language that we use with one another. In the way that we address our elders.

The way we act in business settings. Some of you, I know some of you, you've worn pajama bottoms while you've worn a dress top on Zoom.

I know how that works. I've even got this friend who has instructed his kids to address adults by their first name. And, you know, I gotta confess, I'm a pretty casual guy.

[ 5 : 50 ] You know, I'm okay with that kind of casual thing. But that's been hard for me over the years. For my friends' children to call me Benji.

I'm like, I don't know. It makes me uncomfortable in some way. And so as we look at the third commandment, we have to ask, what's really going on with this commandment?

Is this, you know, is this command kind of like me with my friends' kids? That I'm, you know, it makes me a little bit insecure. That I just kind of want them to show me a little more respect.

Is this commandment, don't take my name in vain. Is that God being a little bit insecure and being like, hey, you know, recognize who I am here. I deserve a little more respect than you're giving me.

Is that what's going on here? I'm not sure. I think there's more. So when you look at it, don't take the name of the Lord, your God in vain. The NIV translates this a little bit differently.

[ 6 : 51 ] It says, don't misuse the Lord's name. What that means is, is don't treat God's name as though it is worthless or that it is empty. Why?

What's the rationale for that? Well, it may sound odd to us now, but names in the Bible are a big deal. I mean, nowadays, you know, we choose names that just sound cute or different or unique, but they really don't have any fundamental meaning typically.

But in the Bible, it wasn't that way. They were, names were used to capture something true about someone. Maybe it was a, maybe it was something about their family heritage. Maybe it was something about their physical appearance.

Wouldn't that be odd? You know, to be named after your physical appearance. People don't do that anymore. It could be a name that represents something about your character. Jacob was known as the deceiver.

It says something even about their faith, but to use someone's name in the Bible was to, to know them, to honor them, to honor the whole of who that person is.

[ 7 : 59 ] See, what the Bible says is that to take God's name seriously means that you take God and who he is seriously. Jesus said, out of the heart, the mouth speaks.

You remember that? Our words reveal what we believe about God. The way we talk about God says what we actually believe about God.

So I want to suggest that the third commandment is laying out for you a route by which you can actually take God more seriously in your life.

When you take God's name seriously, what you find is that you take his character. You take his, his person more seriously. And when you begin to take God more seriously, here's what happens.

It changes you. It changes your soul. It changes what you expect from God. How many of you have had the, had the, had the experience where, you know, something's come along in your life and somebody's said something, you know, that you've hoped that God might do something, but you're just not really sure.

[ 9 : 11 ] You feel like your faith hasn't grown into your life very well. I think the third commandment gives us a route by which we can expand our expectation of how God is at work in and through us.

So I want just to look at three ways that we violate this command. Three sins, because I think it's going to take us to the very heart of this.

So the first one is the sin of informality. The sin of informality. Go back to the American President movie for a minute. That, you know, even though President Shepard and his chief of staff were lifelong best friends, there was a respect that came with that, the office of the president.

We can say it this way. The chief of staff was going to serve the president and serve our country better if he acknowledged the title of the president.

If he had respect for the office, it was going to equip him to do his job better. You know, it wasn't a way for him to kiss up to his friend. It was formative for the chief of staff.

[ 10 : 22 ] You know, we have this wonderful tradition in the U.S. that even if you didn't vote for a president, even if you don't particularly like that president, there's an expectation of speaking of them respectfully, of honoring the office that they hold.

And, you know, when that respect diminishes, it actually is bad for all of us. We become unserious. I would say that one of the markers of our public life is that we've got a lot of unserious people.

And in our increasingly casual culture, that may seem counterintuitive. You know, why do we need that formality? Why do we need any of that? Well, the reason why is that formality is formative for us.

It changes us when we show honor to those who are due honor. You actually see this in the New Testament. The disciples almost never called Jesus, Jesus.

They addressed him as teacher, rabbi, or Lord. In fact, Jen Wilkin is a writer. I've mentioned her before. She wrote that she spent an entire day just going through and counting up in the New Testament letters, in Paul's epistles, Peter's epistles, James, in the epistles, the letters, how the New Testament talked about Jesus.

[ 11 : 46 ] And here's what she found out. 28 times he's addressed as simply Jesus. 28 times. Seems like a lot. Except for the fact that 484 other times he's addressed as Lord or Christ.

Now, we do remember that Christ is not Jesus' last name. It's a title, right? Jesus Christ is, Christ is the, it means Messiah. It's God sent one.

So, what that means is that 95% of the time when the gospel writers speak of our Lord Jesus Christ, they refer to him with his title as God's Messiah or as the king over all kings.

What a, why? Is that just like a cultural difference? You know, they were formal, we're informal, no big deal, it's all the same. Well, I don't think it's that simple.

The formality of speaking about Jesus has the power to transform what we actually think and believe about Jesus. We should pay attention to the fact that the New Testament writers took incredible care to speak of our Lord Jesus with that kind of honor to which he's due and we should pay attention.

[ 13 : 00 ] Here's what Jen Wilkins says after this. We enjoy friendship and intimacy with Christ. You know, I said earlier, he's the friend of sinners. We enjoy friendship and intimacy with Christ, but we do not share equality with him.

He is not our peer. Jesus may be your elder brother, but he is not your peer. And so, when we speak, or sometimes in our modern worship context, when we sing frivolously about our Lord, we come dangerously close to diminishing his transcendence, his transcendent and eternal glory.

Now, I don't want to actually pick out some offensive worship song because it's probably one that one of you loves and that's okay, but we can, when you begin to look for it, you see it.

Here's a better example. I was at a gathering in my neighborhood this week with a bunch of guys and we were sitting around on the back patio of this guy's house and just, you know, clowning around and telling stories and jokes and things like that.

And I found myself on the day that I was writing my sermon, I found myself using God as a punchline to a joke. As soon as it came out of my mouth, I was like, oh, huh, it's right here in me.

[ 14 : 32 ] It was my natural reaction to do that. It was so easy and it is sin. You know, you and I need to pay attention to the information formal catchphrases that we use to the casual ways that we talk to the, you know, even the profane ways that we talk.

You know, one of my favorite little catchphrases is bless her heart, which means, bless her heart, there is something deeply wrong with her. There's so many of them though.

Just those casual ways that we find ourselves talking. I want you to take note of those things. Here's the other thing. When we do this to God, we necessarily, like we talked about last week, when we diminish God's image, we diminish His image in one another.

We are His image. So oftentimes, the casual way that we think and talk about God bleeds into the ways that we think and talk about His image bearers. Duke Kwan is a pastor in Washington, D.C.

and he says this, it's impossible to love someone you disagree with if you secretly believe they need Jesus more than you do. Isn't that right? You know, we kind of talk nice about people, but there's a cut there that reflects our heart's attitude that someone is just a little bit worse off than we are.

[ 16 : 06 ] Bless her heart. She's a mess. I'm sure her mama loves her. So, the sin of informality.

We need to watch the way we talk about people and talk about our Lord. Second sin is the sin of misattribution. That might be a new word for you. It might be made up.

I don't know. What I mean by misattribution is this, is that when I use God and His word to get legitimacy for my agenda. You know, how frequently do we call something, we label something as Christian or biblical without any attempt to really align it with actual biblical priorities or to take God's name in vain.

When we do this without attempting to align them to biblical priorities, we use God's name in vain, right? There are whole store, you know, lines of stores that have made a living on taking something and just slapping a Bible label on it.

I don't know if you remember when, you know, so-called witness wear was a big deal, you know, where people would take kind of a secular image and make it Christian.

[ 17 : 25 ] So, like, there was, this was, I'm dating myself, I realize this is the 90s, but there was a line of clothes that took the picture of a Budweiser beer bottle and instead of it saying this bud's for you, it said this blood's for you, John 3.16.

This was a thing, I did not buy this, I made fun of this because I thought I was better than those people, but, but that kind of taking something and slapping something Christian onto it is not a way that we are to honor who God is in the name of God.

We, it is a way that we diminish the reputation of God. Now, I just got a frivolous way, but we do this in other ways. There are obviously evil ways.

There's a, there's a long history of this. The racist interpretation of the curse of Ham in Genesis chapter 9 gave foundation, gave theological foundation for the long history of chattel slavery in the West.

Totally racist interpretation was not biblical and yet it was called Christian and biblical. Nazi Germany used an anti-Semitic interpretation of Jesus' death as justification to exterminate millions of Jews.

[ 18 : 47 ] They called it Christian. Now, more frequently, we do this in lesser and, and frankly, often well-meaning ways.

people aren't intentionally trying to do something bad, but we do this all the time when we attribute, one way we do this is we attribute God's blessing to be the thing that we just wanted to do in the first place.

You know, God told me I should break up with that boy. Really? Okay, sounds like you just want to break up with him. That's fine, you can break up with him. I don't know why we have to say that God told you to do that.

I prayed about it and I really don't think I should serve in that ministry area this fall. Okay, like that's fine to not serve, but like, is that what God told you or you just like got a lot of stuff on the schedule?

That's fine. We do this in other ways. We, we blame God sometimes for the things that have gone wrong in our lives. Just like Adam in the garden, you remember the woman you gave to be with me, she's the one who gave me the fruit and I ate.

[ 19 : 54 ] It's her fault, it's actually your fault for giving me her. The wife you gave me makes me so mad that I lose my temper. The job you gave me, they disrespect me so much that I deserve a little extra cash off the top.

This body you gave me makes me feel better than other people. Or, this body you gave me makes me hate myself. See, when we misattribute something to God's intention, what we do is, it is like a distraction or a smoke screen that frees us from somebody judging us negatively.

And it frees us to do what we want to do and we get to feel pious about it. We just slap a biblical label on it, we come up with a Bible verse, no real, you know, way of thinking through it.

We put a Bible verse on it, we can do whatever we want to do and we call it biblical. I think it, the worst of this happens when we do this in our public life. I think we regularly attribute God's blessing to political figures, political agendas, sometimes even political outcomes.

And look, I'm not picking anybody out, conservatives and liberals do this and probably everybody in between. You know, we talk about God's president. We talk about the biblical position on immigration.

[ 21 : 21 ] Whatever the issue is, if you hang around enough Christians, there's going to be a biblical or a Christian way to think about it. The problem is, and let me just clarify a little caveat, that does not mean that there aren't positions that match biblical priorities.

There are. There are rights and wrongs. I'm not saying everything's equal, but too often, we see people claiming certainty of the certainty of God's name over issues where Christians can legitimately disagree.

Michael Horton, who was writing in 1992, so this is not something, he's not responding to our day and time. 1992, he said this, when we confuse the kingdom and aims of this world with God's kingdom and God's aims, we bring shame and dishonor to the name of God.

When we confuse the temporal politics and objectives with God's eternal kingdom, we should be very careful with the things that we label as Christian and biblical in respect to God.

We're wrong when we let our leaders do that. When we get motivated by our leaders saying, hey, this is the biblical way you need to think. The biblical candidate.

[ 22 : 45 ] The Christian whatever. We can't give in to that. We allow ourselves to be captured by that misattribution and we dishonor God. The reality is, as Christians, we can't be captive to the world in that way because, here's the reality, is Jesus right now sits as king over all kings.

Jesus is not worried about the outcomes of the midterm elections in the United States. Jesus has already been at work in and through those things.

By his holy and sovereign will, he will work in and through and among and within all of those outcomes. He is the one to be trusted. Okay, that's the second thing.

Sin of misattribution, if that's a word. Third, the sin of hypocrisy. So, all of this, that informality, that misattribution is leading up to this, this ugly reality that we need to talk about.

And that's this, that taking the Lord's name in vain means that we are, as one writer has said, we're speaking hallowed or holy words while living hollow lives.

[ 24 : 03 ] Holy words, but hollow lives. You see, when we use God's name without taking it seriously, its weight, its reality, we not only dishonor God, but we use God's name to make us look better.

Michael Horton again says this, self-righteousness is the greatest sin of all, but it rendered even, it's rendered even more grotesque when it combines with hypocrisy.

What he's saying is, self-righteousness, like being better than other people, is the great, is a great sin. And it gets even worse when we pretend that we're not doing it.

When we take God's name and use it to make ourselves better, to seem better than other people, we are stealing God's glory to use for our own benefit.

Jen Wilkin, she provides a couple of examples. I'm just going to read this. She says this, this is the parent who requires her child to apologize, but never apologizes for her own missteps.

[ 25 : 16 ] It's the mentor who dispenses godly wisdom to a younger believer that he has not himself learned to employ. It's the woman singing praise songs at the top of her lungs, eyes closed, and hands extended, who has not cracked open her Bible in months.

It is the man who prays publicly with great piety and eloquence, but whose private prayer life is non-existent. It's the greeter at the front door of the church, smiling broadly and shaking hands, who earlier that morning berated his family for being slow to get in the car.

It's the preacher who exhorts others to repent while harboring an unrepentant heart. In each of these cases, a person uses their words to indicate a relationship with God that is inaccurate.

Ouch. Ouch. Last week, we talked about images. We talked about worshiping these images.

I think it is an okay extrapolation to say that sometimes the image that we are most prone to use is the image that we have created through our own words.

[ 26 : 37 ] The image of ourself. See, using God's name in vain actually is a recipe for greater judgment by God.

Matthew 7, one of the most haunting passages in the Bible, Jesus says this, On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Didn't we cast out demons in your name?

And do many works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me. What Jesus is talking about is professing Christians who have used their words, used His name to gain legitimacy for whatever it is they wanted to do in order to make themselves look good.

In order to create an image of themselves that would be what they want to give their lives to. words were divorced from an actual relationship with God through Christ.

Yikes. Yikes. You see, this third commandment, we tend to just kind of blow right by it and we think, you know, as long as I don't cuss, as long as I use, don't use those two or three bad words, that's not what it's talking about at all.

[ 28 : 10 ] You know, we're going to say bad words. You know, y'all ever see that lady who was on, she was on Ellen all the time, an old lady who would call in and she'd be like, I love Jesus, but I like to drink a little.

I kind of think about that whenever I think about cussing. I love Jesus, but I like to cuss a little. You know, that's kind of how we operate and that's actually not the point.

The point of this is to see the ways that you are using your words to diminish the glory of the almighty God who lives and reigns forever and ever over all people in whose image you were created and you take that and use him to create for yourself your own image.

That's what this is talking about and that's why the end of this, don't take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Do you see what he says after this? For the Lord will hold him, will not hold him to take his name in vain.

See, here's the thing. God is not, will not allow himself to be diminished forever on the altar of your self-righteous reputation. He ain't gonna do it.

[ 29 : 29 ] When you dishonor God with your words, you worship yourself instead of worshiping God as supreme. That's the first commandment, right? To worship God as supreme. Second commandment is to not diminish him in your worship and the third one here is don't diminish him in your words because your words reveal your heart.

They show what you really worship. Here's a question. How does God use his words towards you?

Does God tell the truth about you? I mean, listen, you know, the ways he talked about Israel, he called them stiff-necked, rebellious, hard-hearted.

He told the exact truth about who they were. And yet, he also spoke to them words of grace. He gave them names.

He called them his people. He called them his children, sons, and daughters. Even as we just said right here, child of the covenant, son, daughter of promise, little Ruthie, little Gabe.

[ 30 : 39 ] See, God's heart is one of speaking true things. Not to diminish us, but to bring glory to himself through his grace.

God, God's words take you seriously. seriously. And what he's demanding is that your words take him seriously.

You see, we've betrayed God's name. So repentance needs to be part of the way that we deal with this. But there is hope here as well. And the hope is that even though we have betrayed God's name, God will restore his own name.

Did you notice what Sarah read a couple of minutes ago? Let me just read this passage. It's fascinating. Philippians 2, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ, that though he was in the form of God, did not account equality with God a thing to be grasped, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness, being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Okay, that's the story of the gospels. God is doing what we in our sin could never do.

[ 32 : 00 ] God exalted him, bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

there will be a day where you and I and everyone in this world will speak the name of Jesus Christ the Lord and it will force us on our knees.

We will speak the truth and the truth will form us into worshipers as we were meant to be. We will be changed by his name, not his name being forced upon us, but did you know what we do?

So that the name, so that at his, the name of Jesus, we will confess his name. That's the hope, is that God will put his name on your lips.

That he will be the one at work in you. That he will be the one to enable you to obey. That he will be the one who keeps you because of his promises. The way to respond to these commandments is to actually allow yourself to repent.

[ 33 : 18 ] You know, to, to, to take stock. I actually think the more you think about this and the more you look at your own life, the more you're going to see. And I encourage you to do that.

And to come back and repent because when we do, we find ourselves brought back to the truth of the gospel. So here's what we're going to do. I'm going to lead us into our, our time of confession here.

And remember, we're using the Westminster catechism and larger and shorter, larger Westminster confession, larger and shorter catechisms. And the reason we're doing this is because they're old.

They're a little foreign and they say some things that we wouldn't normally say. I also have these reflection and response questions, but I'm going to, I want us to confess this together, to read through this together.

And then I'm going to give you a chance just to pray silently and confess your sins to the Lord. And then I'll bring us back together with an assurance of God's grace.

[ 34 : 20 ] And then we'll have Josh come and pray for us. So, Christians, what are the sins forbidden in the third commandment? The sins forbidden in the third commandment are the following.



Not using God's name as is required and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mention.

Using his titles and attributes, ordinances, or other works, other ways by blasphemy, perjury, all sinful curses, oaths, vows, and lots.

Violating our oaths and vows, if those vows are lawful, and fulfilling them, murmuring and quarreling at or misapplying God's decrees and providences.

Misinterpreting, misapplying, or perverting the word in any way or in any part of it. Profane jests, unprofitable questions, vain disputes, or maintaining false doctrines.

[ 35 : 32 ] Using the name of God, his creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, for charms or sinful lusts and practices, aligning, scorning, reviling, any way using the name of God, his creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, for charms or sinful lusts, practices, aligning, scorning, reviling, or in any way opposing God's truth, grace, and ways, making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends, being ashamed of God's name, or becoming ashamed to it by inappropriate, unwise, unfruitful, or inoffensive ways of life, or by turning from God's name.

There's a lot there. And I just want to encourage you to take one thing that you saw, or one thing in this reflection up at the top, and allow that to be your confession.

So would you confess to the Lord silently? the Lord?

Lord, we confess that it's hard for us to see our sins sometimes.

It's hard for us to know the depth of the ways that we have dishonored you for our own benefit. And Lord, I pray that you would reveal that to us over time. But I pray more than that, that you would show us the grace that you have for us in Christ.

[ 37 : 40 ] So would you hear the confession? And for all who confess their sins and turn to you in faith, might you grant them forgiveness and life out of your goodness, we pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Friends, hear these words. The Lord is merciful and gracious. He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Come on. There you go. Amen.

Amen. Amen.