

Respecting God

Text : **Exodus 20: 1-17**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Have you ever heard the phrase, “Written in stone?”

1. The phrase declares its object to be unchangeable and non-negotiable.
2. The origin of this phrase dates back to God’s giving of the Ten Commandments.

B. It’s no accident that God chose to give His law to His people written on stone.

1. God’s laws are not negotiable. (**No amendments**)
2. Like stone, God’s laws are ridged and unyielding.
 - a. None of God’s laws can be removed. (**One cannot erase stone.**)
 - b. God is absolutely sovereign. (**His laws don’t need approval, just compliance.**)

C. God intentionally set the bar high. (“*YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*” **Lev 19:2**)

1. Since no man ever kept the Law perfectly, Jesus demonstrated it was possible to do so.
ILL.- At carnivals men would try for hours to beat a ring toss game before declaring it impossible, but the worker would demonstrate it easily.
2. Jesus explained the Law set the bar even higher than men thought it to be.
 - a. Men tried to restrict the Law to physical actions, but Jesus explained that it included the thought process which leads to the physical acts.
 - b. Jesus explained that to think evil was just as much a sin as to commit a physical act.
 - 1) **Matt. 5: 27-28** ... Adultery includes lusting
 - 2) **I John 3: 15** ... One who hates another is guilty of murder. (**ongoing murder**)
 - c. Any evil a man commits originates in the heart.
 - 1) **Matt. 15: 17-20** ... That which proceeds out of the heart defiles a man.
 - 2) **Matt. 12: 34-** “**You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.**”
 - 3) **Prov. 23: 7-** “**...For as he thinks within himself, so he is. ...**”
- *3. God wants His people to be truly holy, not just externally compliant to rules.

D. The Law reflects God’s purity and holiness. (“**Be holy for I am Holy.**” **Lev 19:2**)

1. The Ten Commandments set the standard for the people of the Holy God.
2. They instruct God’s people in how to be pure and holy. (**How to Love !!**)
3. The penalties for violation are strict and severe.

In the Ten Commandments God starts off demanding an exclusive relationship. I alone am God, be faithful to Me and to Me alone. Then He instructs His people : Honor and respect me for who and what I am. You can’t even comprehend Me so don’t try to make a

physical representation of Me. Now, He warns them to treat Him with the proper respect, saying : - **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. (Exodus 20: 7)**

I. Man's relationship with God must be based upon man's respect for God as sovereign.

A. Man must recognize God as being far above all else.

1. God's position and authority demand respect.
 - a. Of necessity there must always be an element of trembling as one approaches God.
 - b. Respect affects the way we use a person's name.
 - c. Notice the second half of the verse : **for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. Deut. 5: 11b**
2. God wants an intimate personal relationship with man.
 - a. **READ ... Exod. 19: 4-7**
 - b. Regardless of the relationship man must treat God with the proper respect.
 - c. We would not dream of calling our parents by their first name. **WHY ?? Respect !!**

B. Why would God give such a command as this ? (# 3 on the list = important)

1. We tend to view this command very superficially.
 - a. "I know, it means don't curse."
 - b. This is included, but it runs much deeper.
2. How do we apply this command today in our modern lives ?

C. People today don't have the same concept of the word "vain."

1. We commonly understand "vain" to mean someone who spends too long in front of a mirror. (ILL.- **Friend who talked to the mirror.**)
2. NIV has a more understandable translation of this command : **"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."**
3. The word "vain" literally means :
 - a. Having no real value
 - b. Silly, foolish
 - c. to no end, void
4. This is the common biblical usage of the word. (e.g.)
 - a. **Mark 7: 7- 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'**
 * **When we bind our worship traditions our worship is empty, it is of no value.**
 - b. **Psa. 31: 6- I hate those who regard vain idols, But I trust in the Lord.**
5. The word "take" literally means "to pick up." (Don't pick up the Lord's name foolishly.)

II. What's so special about a name?

A. One's name is more than a label.

1. It's a reference to his person.
2. When one picks up the name of God, he is making reference to the awesome ruler of the entire universe. (**the one who holds their life in His hands**)
3. Names mean more than we attribute to them in our present society.
 - a. One's name is a very intimate reference to his person as opposed to all others.
 - b. When one's name did not match his life or status, it was changed. (e.g.)
 - 1) Abram to Abraham
 - 2) Sarai to Sarah
 - 3) Simon to Peter
 - 4) Saul to Paul
4. Even today new parents agonize over what to name their children.
 - a. They will not name the child a name with which they have bad connotations.
 - b. How many children do you know named :
 - 1) Jezebel
 - 2) Adolf
 - 3) Fido (**ILL.- Filipino named his illegitimate grandson "bogart" { = fido } to make a point.**)

B. When God appeared to Moses, Moses asked His name.

1. **Exod. 3: 14-** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (YAHWEH)
2. **READ ... Exod. 33: 18-23 , 34: 5-7a**

C. Names become intrinsically linked to the essence of the one they identify.

1. When I hear the name of my father, I immediately picture him and our relationship.
2. The name "Satan" calls up an entirely different concept in our minds.
3. When we say God, His awesomeness and holiness should come to mind.

D. While teaching us to pray, Jesus also taught us to honor the name of God.

1. **Matt. 6: 9-** Our Father who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
2. The name refers to all that God is.
3. The way we use that name reflects the way we view all that God is. (**respect or no**)

III. How do we apply this command in our life ?

A. Do not use the name of the Lord to curse those at whom you are angry.

1. **First**, the Christian must avoid anger.

James 1: 19 - This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; **20**- for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

2. **Second**, the Christians cannot allow himself to loose control when he is angry.

Eph. 4: 26- Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27**- and do not give the devil an opportunity.

3. **Third**, the proper response to abuse is not abuse, but to bless the offender.

Matt. 5: 44- But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Rom. 12: 14- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

4. One who invokes God's name in anger, violated this command.

- a. They use God's name in a way that is contrary to His character.
- b. They seek to use God for their own ends.
- c. They are disrespectful to God.

B. Do not use God's name to express shock or amazement. (or in any flippant way)

1. This is one of the most common abuses of God's name today.

- a. News Paper Headlines on 911 ... "Oh My God !!!"
- b. My grandmother's saying, "Lord have mercy, I've never seen to beat ."

2. Followers of a large "Christian" sect call on what they refer to as the "holy family."

- a. "Jesus, Mary and Joseph"
- b. Filipinos shorten it to "Sus, Maria" or just "Sus."

3. Imagine someone using the name of one of your loved ones in such a flippant way.

- a. "Good Clara ! Did you see that."
 - 1) Kenny would be rightfully offended if we disrespected Clara's name like that.
 - 2) People do that same thing to God every day.
- b. **ILL.- I illustrated this to a translator by using the name of his child. offended**

C. The most common way Christians take the name of the Lord in vain is in the lives they live.

1. The Christian takes the Lord's name in vain when he sins.

- a. Christians wear the holy name of Christ. (**It goes wherever we go.**)
- b. Whatever a Christian does, affects the reputation of the Christ whose name he wears. (**good or evil : Loving & Benevolent or greedy & dishonest, immodest, gossip**)
- c. **The honor of the family name depends upon those who wear it.**

2. When a Christian sin's Christ's name is attached to that sin.
 - a. People are quick to say, **“And you call yourself a Christian.”**
 - b. **I Pet. 4: 15- Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16- but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.**
3. Jesus anticipated that His followers would be credible witnesses.

John 17: 19- For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. 20- I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21- that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.
3. Clearest teaching on this subject found in the holy scriptures is in :

Rom. 2:17-24 ... READ

*** Don't drag the name of God / Jesus through the mud.**

ILL. - Soldier being court-martialed by Alexander the Great .. change your name.

CONCLUSION :

- A. **This is what it means to take the Lord's name in vain.**
 1. It all boils down to respect.
 - a. The way we use His name reflects the way we feel about him.
 - b. The care with which we carry His name reflects our respect for Him.
 2. Those who love and respect the Lord will seek to honor His name, **not** :
 - a. Use His name to further their own causes.
 - b. Use His name to express surprise or anger.
- B. **Everyone of us has violated this command. (All of them.)**
 1. Thank God that Jesus has rescued and set us free from Law.

Col. 2: 13 - When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14- having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
 2. The Law is still the standard by which men will be judged, but there is now an option; in Christ man can choose to trust Him and rely on His grace rather than their own ability to live righteously works, **i.e.,** to keep the Law.

INVITATION :

Have you sanctified the Lord God in your heart. **1) God wants your whole heart, exclusively. 2) He wants you to accept and to worship Him for who He is. 2) He wants your respect.**