

Sermon Series: The Decalogue

Sermon title: "The 3rd Commandment"

Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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Introduction:

I've got on the screen here some famous **Trademarks**.
A Trademark is *a symbol or words which represent something else*.

Do you know which companies these Trademarks belong to? Can you guess?

[Pepsi, MasterCard, World Wide Fund for Nature, Unilever, Twitter]

Trademark Infringement is a big thing. It's when another company takes THE NAME or Likeness of a usually famous company and uses it for themselves.

It is saying, *"We represent this name"*.

And it says, *"Certain characteristics, qualities and ideas encompassed in this NAME are found here."*

But in fact, they are fakes and don't really represent or belong to that name or symbol.

See some examples on the screen.

Well, what comes to our mind when we see the word GOD?

Better yet, when we see the name Jesus Christ....what comes to mind?

When someone takes the name of Jesus Christ onto themselves.....ie...a Christian....what qualities or attributes should be displayed?

Is it possible that as Christians we are like that fake McDonald's, taking THE NAME on ourselves but displaying something totally different?

Let's pray.

I used this Trademark illustration to try to help us understand the 3rd Commandment today.
May God help us to understand this.

Turn in your Bibles to **Exodus 20:7**

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.

First, we want to try to understand what this means.

I. What this commandment means.

In Hebrew, this commandment says that we are not to 'take up', 'lift up', (*Nasa*) the name of the LORD God (Yahweh) in vain....falsehood, vanity, or uselessness.

Note first that it doesn't say that people shouldn't take the name of the LORD.....we just aren't to do it in vain.

God's NAME here relates to his attributes, his qualities and who he is. Your name may be like that. Your parents may have given you a name that they wanted you to be like.

His name = his trademark. When you hear his name or see his name....it should represent his qualities, his attributes.

So, in that sense...the third commandment is a prohibition to take God himself lightly.

Positively, it's a call to worship God and live for him in a way that is in line with his attributes.

If the 1st Commandment= **Worship the right God.**

And the 2nd Commandment= **Worship God rightly.**

The 3rd Commandment= **Worship God sincerely.**

Let me give you a few paraphrases of this 3rd Commandment from some other sources.

Faith Life Study Bible- "God takes offense to any affiliation or association with him that denigrates his character or reputation."

Christian Standard Bible- When we 'take God's name in vain'...."It amounts to lying about who God is."

Here is my big idea for this passage:

"God commands that those who claim him as their God, live in a way that reflects his attributes."

We will keep seeing what it means as we look at some examples from past and present.

II. How Israel broke this command.

The Jews were his chosen people.

His name wasn't just on them per se.

They were a kingdom of priests who were to display his glory to all the other nations.

Yet, they didn't live in a way that honored the LORD's name.

I'm just going to give us one Old Testament passage.

Ezekiel 36:16-23

16 The word of the Lord came to me: **17** "Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. **18** So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. **19** I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. **20** But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' **21** But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. **23** And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

So, we see that Israel 'took the LORD's name in vain' ... they profaned his name among the nations with their bloodshed and idolatry...and God had to punish them in order to uphold his own reputation.

If you will accept this illustration..., God franchised out his Trademark to them, his NAME, to use as long as they did things according to his standards and reflected his qualities...

But they took his name and made it a cheap product. They took his name in vain....made it worthless.

It would be like someone taking on a Dan Ryan's franchise and selling 7 Eleven fish balls on the menu.

III. How we might break it.

Now, let's turn to ourselves for a bit.

Is there any way that we might break the Third Commandment?

Any way that we depreciate or devalue the Almighty God of heaven, we are breaking the 3rd Commandment.

1. Literally- with our **mouths.**

Most people think this commandment is a prohibition against using God's name in cursing or a careless manner.

Obviously, anyone who uses the name of God without any respect at all...is either ignorant of its misuse or has a low view of God.

So, let me just remind us in case some of us don't know.

OMG..."*Oh my God*" is something that you as a person who believes and reveres the one true God and his Son Jesus Christ...should remove from your vocabulary.

"God", "Oh my God", "Jesus Christ", "God damn"....all are inappropriate.

Just ask yourself this question,...

Does it honor God to use his name flippantly?

Or, ask yourself this question...."Am I numb to the misuse of God's name?" Does it even bother me? In times past, a movie would never think to say "*God damn it*". Then only once...then a few times...now many....and we aren't even turned off by it.

Another way that we can take God's name in vain is by what I call 'Preacher talk'.

Using God's name..not in a profane way..but in a good way...yet....just to make ourselves seem religious.

"Praise the Lord"..."

"Amen...amen...amen"

"If God wills"

If we are sincere....great.

If we are not sincere, we are faking religiosity to impress others and using God's name....misusing God's name.

Lastly, with our mouths...if we speak '*false prophecies*' we are taking the name of the LORD in vain.

"Thus saith the LORD"...or "God told me....."

We should not just throw God's name around lightly with our mouths whether in cursing or blessing.

2. *Figuratively*- ...in our hearts.

Matthew 15:8-9

8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; **9** in vain do they worship me,

Jesus says that it is not just with our mouths that we can worship him in vain....take his name in vain...but when our hearts are not right, we take his name in vain.

Remember our big idea:

"God commands that those who claim him as their God, live in a way that reflects his attributes."

Are you a Christian?

What does Christian mean?

It means we take the name of Christ on us.

We bear the name of Christ!

"I follow Christ!"

His name is on me.

It's dangerous to call ourselves Christians because in doing so we are asking for people to think of Christ what they see in us.

When we take Christ lightly..when we take our commitment to Christ lightly in our hearts....we are taking the name of Christ in vain.

IV. Why it is important.

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.

All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We have all taken his name in vain.

And for breaking the 3rd Commandment we deserve to be judged.

If you're not a Christian, you will stand before God one day at the judgement and give an account for not revering and respecting God and for taking his name in vain.

But there is Good News. There is a way to be forgiven of breaking the 3rd Commandment.

Romans 15:3 says this, "**3** For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place to bear the sins of all those who would believe in him.

So, there is forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

But now that we Christians are forgiven....those of us who bear the name of Christ on us...are to live in such

a way that honors the name of the one who loved us and died for us.

“God commands that those who claim him as their God, live in a way that reflects his attributes.”