

A very warm welcome to our service on the 28th of June 2020. Before we begin our service I'd like just to mention a few notices for those who aren't aware of our online services and may want to join us on another occasion. This evening we have a service at six o'clock. Look online where all our main meetings are detailed:

www.taborbaptistchurch.co.uk

On Tuesday at 7:30pm we have a weekly prayer meeting via zoom, and you're welcome to join us. If you are not able to join zoom we have an alternative service online also at 7:30pm. We are looking at the "Fruit of the Spirit." And on a Wednesday evening at 7:15pm our brother Henry has a growth group for men. We are studying the attributes of God in a small group. You're very welcome to join the online meeting. On Thursdays at two o'clock in the afternoon we have a ladies zoom meeting. They're studying together, week by week, the book of Nehemiah. And then on Thursday evening at 9:15pm the young people meet again via zoom. And then on Friday morning at 10:15am we have another growth group for men. So do join in one of these meetings if you're able to... and also a reminder that Sunday afternoons at four o'clock Alun and one member of the church has a special Sunday school for children.

Well, we're going to read the Word of God. So I invite you to open your Bible to the book of Psalms, and we're going to read Psalm 8:

O LORD, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth,

Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

²Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants

You have ^[b]ordained strength, Because of Your enemies,

That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

³When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

⁴What is man that You are mindful of him,

And the son of man that You visit^[c] him?

⁵For You have made him a little lower than ^[d]the angels,

And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;

You have put all things under his feet,

⁷All sheep and oxen—

Even the beasts of the field,

⁸The birds of the air,

And the fish of the sea

That pass through the paths of the seas.

⁹O LORD, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

We thank God for the reading of his Word. Shall we seek Him in prayer.

Ever blessed God in heaven, we thank you that we can come before you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come because of his perfect merits, and His perfect righteous life. We come because of his glorious work on the cross in our place, paying for our sins.... taking all those sins to himself and being punished for us. And we come because he rose triumphant from the dead. And now He sits at your right hand. Father we lift up our heads, before you, though we are sinners. We confess that we are nothing in your sight and smaller than insignificant. Yet Lord you have given us dignity and worth in our Lord Jesus. We thank you Heavenly Father that we've been raised from the depths of sin. And we are now seated with him in heavenly places. We thank you that all of his law keeping was for us, and we're treated as if we have kept that perfect law of God. Around us is his robe, the robe of righteousness. Oh Father in heaven we thank you that we can now call upon you as our God and our Father. We have access into your presence, and Lord we pray that you would help us day by day, to seek your face. Forgive us for neglect. Forgive us, Lord, that we're so busy with the things that we have to do. And sometimes we're just concerned with our selfish pursuits, and we do not seek You as we ought. You have said, "Seek my face and live".. Oh that we would seek your face.

Father in heaven we pray this day, that as we look into your word, that you would give us understanding of it; that you would enlighten our minds; that you would warm our hearts' and that you will move our wills to obey your truth. We pray that all distracting thoughts will go from us. And Father, that we will concentrate ourselves upon you. We are such unworthy sinners but Lord we thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit who takes of the things of Jesus Christ, and reveals them to us. So may the name of Jesus be precious to us this morning. Speak to our hearts we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

I invite you to pray. The Lord's prayer together... Our Father who art in heaven...

Well, we're looking at the 10 commandments. This morning we're continuing in our series, and we've come to the third of the 10 commandments. We've looked at, "You shall have no other gods before me," the first commandment. And then last week we considered the second commandment. "You shall not make any graven image." So we've considered firstly the object of worship: "no other gods before him". Secondly we've considered the manner of worship: "no graven images," rather worshipping "in spirit and in truth." And now we come to the name of God. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." The name of God reveals something about him. The name of God is synonymous with his character. We read his name is holy because God in himself is holy. We read that his name is eternal, because he himself has no beginning and no end. We've read that his name is Jealous because he will not share His glory with another.

Now when you think of names for human beings your name doesn't necessarily signify anything about you. We have to get to know you as a person in order to understand your characteristics. But in order to understand God you need to know his name. His name is a self-revelation of who he is. Now when Moses was told to go

back to the Israelites to deliver them from bondage in Egypt, he wanted to know what God's name was. He asked God, "Tell me what is your name? I need to know who is sending me." The Lord said to tell them that, "**I am** has sent you." There at the burning bush God revealed himself as "I am who I am". He showed himself to be the eternal self-existent one, whoever was, whoever is, and whoever will be. And then later in Exodus chapter three, he says, tell them this also. It is the Lord God of your fathers who is sending you. It is the Lord Jehovah. It is the Lord, YAHWEH. It is the LORD, the covenant God. It is the one who is in covenant with his ancient people who is sending you.... The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, it is. He who is sending you back. So Moses wanted to know his name and God says two things. My name I AM signifies the eternal glorious ever present God, and my name LORD signifies that I am the covenant keeping God. The one who is in covenant with his people.

Now we have the name of God given in many ways in the Old Testament. He is called "Adonai." He is called "El Shaddai." Each name has significance. But we also have the names of Jesus in the Old Testament too. Isaiah 9:6 "*And his name shall be called Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*" It would be good to do a study on the names of God if we had time...in order that we might understand more of the majestic being of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Now when God says, "You shall not take my name in vain" he's saying '*Do not treat me lightly, remember my name speaks about myself. It's a revelation of who I am. Don't be trying to use it in any old way; don't use my name in an empty way; in a worthless way. Don't take it in vain.*' He is saying, '*Don't take my name upon your lips lightly or frivolously, and don't profess my name and disobey my commands fragrantly. Don't take my name in vain for I will not hold you guiltless but I will charge you. There'll be a penalty for taking my name in vain.*'

This is the seriousness of this command. Now let's look at three things today.

- 1) What does the command mean in terms of prohibition?
- 2) What are the consequences of misusing God's name?
- 3) How do we honour the name of God?

1) The meaning of the prohibition

(i) **Expletives:** What is the meaning of the prohibition? Well I'm sure your mind immediately goes to those three words that are used commonly throughout our population and throughout the world. OMG. I don't even want to repeat those three words. There are derivatives of it; "Oh my gosh." It's a common expression. The expletive is used when people are surprised. They use the expression but they don't think about God. Sometimes it's used when people are exasperated, and sometimes it's used even as a curse or a swear word. For example, using Jesus's name or the Holy Ghost name in swearing. Now, we need to educate people. You see people today are not realising that such expression are wrong & are ignorant of the 3rd

commandment. It's lovely when our daughter Amy was in primary school that one of the teachers in year six, when he heard children taking God's name in vain, he would ask them to stop and explain why. He was a Christian in a church school and felt it was his responsibility to educate children to respect the name of God. In the past in Great Britain many a time in the workplace non-Christians wouldn't take God's name in vain when a Christian was present. There was respect. But now it seems that nobody cares. And sometimes we find ourselves, don't we, defending the name of God when somebody takes the name of God in vain. So that's one way to break the commandment OMG – as an expletive... Perhaps the most common way of breaking the command.

ii) Trite usage: Let's consider a second misuse of the name of God. Any form of lite or trite usage of God's name is included in the prohibition. For example a car bumper sticker with the words "Smile Jesus loves you". This isn't the gospel message. This isn't the truth that the world needs to hear. The Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day. The Bible says that the wrath of God is over all who who don't believe. Our message is not "Smile Jesus loves you" for that isn't the message of the Bible. The message of the Bible is much greater. Yes there's a great God of love who loves sinners, but there's also the truth that all who do not believe are condemned. They need to find salvation. You see a trite usage of the name of Jesus on a bumper sticker is taking the name of God in vain. But then, we need to also consider this, if a child of five or six has a sticker "smile Jesus loves you." on their pencil case I don't think that's taking God's name in vain. Or if we sing with toddlers, "123 Jesus loves me" that is not trite. Doesn't Jesus love all the little children? Our children's songs may be very simplistic words, but they are appropriate for little ones. But if we were to use such songs as the staple diet for adult church services then this would be to dishonour God and bring His name down. We need to be careful, don't we how we use God's name.

iii) Hypocrisy But then there is a more serious way to break the command. It is when we profess to love God and profess to be holy but live a double life. If we're hypocrites; professing the name of God and yet deliberately disobeying His Word we are taking his name in vain. When Paul wrote in Romans chapter two he said to the Jewish leaders: *'You preach, do not commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You preach do not steal, but do you steal? ... "You see, because of you the name of God is blasphemed amongst the pagan nations."* Now that happened when David committed adultery. Nathan the Prophet came to him and said, "You've given an opportunity for our enemies to blaspheme the name of God." Brothers and sisters, the Bible says *"Let him who thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall."* Oh how we need to be vigilant, so that we will not muddy the name of God through falling. Pray for church leaders, pray for evangelists, pray for those on the front line. Pray for yourself. What a bad witness at work if you were to fall. What would it say about the name of Christ? What about the witness to your family if you were to act in an ungodly way? How would it be considered by the people in your street if they saw ungodly living and at the same time know you're a church goer? Would they not blaspheme the name of God?

iv) Insincere worship is another way in which we can take God's name in vain. When we sing hymns, but we don't think about the words that we're singing, this too is taking His name in vain. When we don't think about God but just sing because we like the tune we dishonour His name. For if we worship Him with our lips but our hearts are far from God we are taking his name in vain. And when we come before God in prayer, if it's just vain repetition, for example saying the Lord's Prayer without even thinking of the words, this too is taking His name in vain. If we use set phrases over and over we are not really praying. And when we pray without faith, praying about something but not believing or trusting, it is breaking the 3rd commandment. It is unbelieving and insincere.

v) A veneer of spirituality in order to cover up failure. The Jews were often guilty of this and Jesus noticed it. For example in order to cover up not supporting elderly parents and giving support and monetary help, some Jews would excuse themselves by saying, "Well, we've dedicated this gift to the temple." And they had a special word for this: "Corban." If they pronounced that word "Corban" then the money was for God, it was for religious use, for the temple and it couldn't be used for anything else. And Jesus said that by doing this they'd neglected the law of God. They'd neglected the Fifth Commandment: "*Honour your father and mother.*" It was a pure smokescreen, giving the impression to others that they were spiritual when they did not care even for their family. Now we need to ask: 'Am I in any way like that? "pretence"... giving the impression I do this, or I don't do that; saying things in a certain way that people will think that your spiritual, when in fact you're covering up your true self. All this is taking God's name in vain.

vi) Swearing falsely: Rather than your "yes" being, "yes" and your "No", "No" you go beyond that. You make a promise or a vow, but you're not sincere... you swear falsely. You're thinking of a way out if it doesn't work out so that you do not need to be bound by your promise. Your "yes" is not "yes." You look for a way to wriggle out of the promises that you've made. You're double minded and not straightforward. The Jews were often like that. They would say things like this "Well as long as we swear by the temple if we don't fulfil the promise, it doesn't matter. It would be worse if we swore by the gold of the temple, then we would have to keep the promise." Or they would say, "If we swear by the altar that's okay. We don't have to fulfil the promise. But if we swear by the offering upon the altar then we are bound by that." (Matthew 23). Jesus saw through their hypocrisy. Leviticus 19:12 says this, "*You shall not swear by name, falsely, nor shall you profane the name of the Lord.*" God is saying that every promise is made in His presence and if you've made a promise or a vow you must keep it. The Bible says it's better not vow than to vow and fail to keep your promise. God is testimony. God is witness to all the words that we speak.

vii) Scorn There's another way of taking God's name in vain: mocking God. You jest about the things that are in the Bible. You jest about Christian people, and about their God and their spirituality. Comedians do this all the time. This is taking God's name in vain. This scorning is alluded to in the Bible isn't it? "*Where is the promise of is coming?*" ...'You preach that Jesus is coming again. Where is he? It's not gonna happen. It is a load of rubbish.' That's taking God's name in vain. We need to be

careful when we use satire. There's times when we can use satire in its right setting. There was a time when Elijah did that with a false prophets of Baal. He mocked their god: 'If your God is alive, let him show himself. Maybe he's gone to take a rest. Maybe he he's gone to the toilet.' Why did he do that? Because of the seriousness of the situation: God's people had bowed down to this false god, and he had to show them that it was no god at all. But we need to be careful in this area especially if our satire is directed at other Christians. We may just be taking God's name in vain.

viii) Presumption When we say, "God told me to do this and I have peace about it." We may well be misusing the name of God. If it's an unwise decision, a decision that has badly affected the church or badly affected the family it is clear that God has not told you do make the decision. Any peace that you have is false peace. God doesn't give private individual revelations to people. You come to decisions on the basis of the principles of God's Word. You come to decisions in consideration of your family and your church. In the multitude of counsellors there's wisdom, it's not a private hotline that you have with God. To say "God told me to do," without reference to anyone else, is presumption. It is taking God's name in vain. But before we point the finger. Is it not also presumptuous to make our plans without any thought of God? To say "I'm going to this city; I'm going to do this or that. I am going on this holiday and next year, I'll be there. If we leave *God out of the picture, James says it's arrogant. James chapter four verses 13 to 16.. 'You say you will go to the city buy and sell spend a year there but you should be saying, "If the Lord wills, we shall live, just live! If the Lord wills we shall live, and shall do this or that" Anything beyond this is evil. All such boasting is evil.'* You see there are many ways in which we can be presumptuous as Christians. Another way is to name and claim things in the name of Jesus. This is taking the name of Jesus in vain. If I want something for my selfish purposes and name it and claim it, I am dishonouring God. For example if I believe that God is going to give me a new car and I claim it in the name of Jesus I have taken his name in vain. All such prayers are presumption.

So brothers and sisters, we thought of various ways in which we can take God's name in vain.

- (i) Expletives.
- (ii) A trite usage of God's name.
- (iii) Hypocritical living.
- (iv) Insincere worship.
- (v) A veneer of spirituality in order to cover up sin.
- (vi) Vowing and not fulfilling or vowing falsely with no real intent of keeping
- (vii) Mockery.
- (viii) Presumption.

2) What are the consequences for taking God's name in vain?

God is not indifferent. He will not hold us guiltless. There will be consequences. But first let me say. God isn't vindictive, and he's not capricious. He doesn't say that 'if you take my name in vain I will strike you down immediately' (although reading a book by Thomas Watson on the 10 commandments there are three examples of

people who had been blaspheming and their lives suddenly ended). That's not the normal way God acts. If that was the case that God would wipe out populations immediately. God is not like the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, who puts out a fatwa against Salman Rushdie in 1989 says, 'Because he's blaspheme the holy name of Muhammad, he must die.' God isn't like that. He is long suffering. He's wanting people to repent. His law is given that we would consider how far short we've fallen, so that we will cry out to God and ask him to forgive us. So we will come in repentance for breaking his laws and misusing his name and will know the washing of our sins. But, but if we fail to repent and continue in our rebellion God has said that he will not hold us innocent. In fact every idle word including blaspheming will be brought into judgement. For those who have denied him and those who hate Him and not loved His name they will be in darkness forever, without God and without hope in hell. But what will be the consequences for the Christian who has taken his name in vain? Yes his sins have been forgiven, but they'll be loss for any inconsistencies. His works not done for Christ will be burnt up. But he will not lose his salvation. He will be taken into the presence of God and by grace go to his eternal reward.

3) How to honour the name of God

Let's consider how we ought to reverence and honour the name of God. Surely it's the delight and the joy of every Christian to utter the Name of God, and to speak of his Lord. This is not just when we come on to church on Sundays. And it's not just spending 15 minutes in prayer with him each day. No God is at the centre of his everyday life. Remember Boaz in the book of Ruth. He came to the workers in his field, and said "The Lord bless you." He meant it. He wasn't taking God's name in vain. And they weren't taking the name of the Lord in vain when they replied, "And the Lord bless you Boaz." They really meant it. God was in their daily life.

We love God. We love his name. You love the name of Jesus. If you look at the book of Acts, you'll notice how much the name of Jesus is mentioned. In fact the whole of the New Testament is full of Jesus. Why? Because Jesus is the revelation of the Father. He says, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." As we look at Jesus we see all the attributes of God. In Christ we understand peace for He is the Prince of Peace. If we want to understand the faithfulness of God again we look at Jesus Christ. He reveals the character of God to us. And the apostles preached the name of Jesus because He is the only mediator between God and man. *"There is no other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved except the name of Jesus."* How are people saved? By calling upon his name...the name of Jesus. And on that last day and on that final day *"At His name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."* We will bow before his name. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

He is everything to us. "Oh, how I love the Saviour's name the sweetest name on Earth." Can you say this? And "how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believers ear; it soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds and drives away his fears." He is our Shepherd. He's our prophet. He's our priest. He's our King. He's our friend. He's our elder brother. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He is Jesus, the one who saves his

people from their sins. He is Saviour - oh how we love his name. In the Old Testament, God placed his name in the temple. Solomon made a house for his name and there above the mercy seat God's name was revealed. But the temple is gone, and the name of God has been revealed in Jesus Christ. So how do you to keep that third commandment? By honouring the name of Jesus; by living a life of trust in Jesus: A life that pleases Him.... by keeping His commandments; by worshipping Him; by extolling him; by yielding your life to Him. He is the express image of the Father.

So I finished by quoting some passages from the Old Testament, reminding us of the holy name of God. Psalm 99:1-3

The LORD reigns;

Let the peoples tremble!

He dwells *between* the cherubim;

Let the earth be ¹moved!

²The LORD *is* great in Zion,

And He *is* high above all the peoples.

³Let them praise Your great and awesome name—

He *is* holy.

Oh that the nation's would come to bow before God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is holy, his name is awesome. Oh that men would come to God through Jesus Christ. We pray in the name of Jesus, because it's through him we come to God the Father. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous run to it and are safe." (Prov 18:10) It's the name of safety as our Saviour is our Lord. Moses said:

For I proclaim the name of the LORD:

Ascribe greatness to our God.

⁴*He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect;

For all His ways *are* justice,

A God of truth and without injustice;

Righteous and upright *is* He. (Deut 32:3-4)

Oh that we would proclaim the name of the Lord, and delight in His name. Our desire is as the psalmist "*So let it be established, that your name is magnified forever.*" Amen.

May God bless you: May he be with you and may you be able to extol, His name forever.