

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Second Commandment

**Date:** August 8, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Exodus 3:1-6,10-15

**Epistle Reading:** 1 John 3:1-10

**Gospel Reading:** John 8:31-47

**Sermon Text:** Exodus 20:7

**Sermon Title:** The Second Commandment

**Introit:** Psalm 145:2-7; Antiphon Psalm 145:1

## Hymns:

LSB 579 – The Law of God Is Good and Wise

LSB 581 – These are the Holy Ten Commands

(v. 1, 3, 11-12)

LSB 655 – Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

LSB 849 – Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

LSB 865 – Lord, Help Us Ever to Retain

## Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p. 184

## Songs:

Lord I Lift Your Name on High

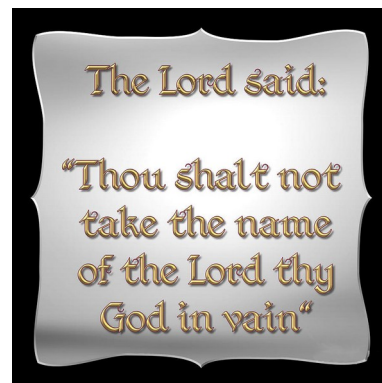
Raise A Hallelujah

El Shaddai - Amy Grant

Good God Almighty - Crowder

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: Exodus 20:7**

“Never use the name of the Lord your God carelessly. The Lord will make sure that anyone who carelessly uses his name will be punished.

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Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Second Commandment is:

**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Of all of the commandments this is probably the one that is the easiest to skip, or forget. That's because, in general, we don't think we have broken this commandment. We look at Luther's explanation and we think, "I haven't practiced witchcraft, or worshiped Satan. I don't lie using God's name to convince people that the lies are true." We think we haven't done those things so we believe that we have not broken this commandment. With that, we might be inclined to think that we can just skip this one and move on to the Third Commandment.

God's name is in fact something that should be used only with reverence and respect. God's name is holy, and should be used only in holy ways. We have a responsibility, as Christians, of wearing and bearing, His name as we live in this world.

Remember the words spoken at your Holy Baptism:

Receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your ✝ forehead and upon your ✝ heart, to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.<sup>1</sup>

That word 'mark' is the same word as the word 'brand.' Your head and heart have been seared with the name of God. In Isaiah chapter six we see that happening. Isaiah six is where the prophet is explaining how God had called him to proclaim God's holy and sacred name. He is, like the people of Israel last week, standing in the presence of God. The sounds are deafening as the Seraphim sing out one to another:

Holy, holy, holy  
is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of His glory!<sup>2</sup>

The ground shakes and the blast of sound pounds in his chest, and like the people of Israel last week, Isaiah knows he is in the presence of the Lord God of righteousness. He is about to die.

Listen to him as he stands in the throne room of God.



1 LSB p. 268

2 Isaiah 6:3

Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts!<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah has not always used God's name reverently. He, and the people who live around him, have disrespected God, and dishonored God's name with their words. Now Isaiah stands before the one, true, holy and living God. His sin condemns him.

How will you stand in that place? This side of Heaven's gates you can put on a show. You might even convince some that you are a good person, even a righteous person. You may even convince some that you are, by your own actions, a Christian; a Christ-ian; a Christ-person. One who has been seared with the name of God on your head and your heart. This side of Heaven's gates you can put on a show.

What happens when reality strikes? What happens when the facade falls and the searing gaze of God falls upon you? What happens when the lies are revealed and you stand exposed before God? You know what you have done. You know who you are? This has happened to others. It will happen to you. That day will come for you. There is nothing you can do to dodge it or avoid it. You, like Isaiah, will stand before God.

How will you respond when you stand utterly vulnerable and exposed before God?

Adam said "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."<sup>4</sup>

Last week we heard:

The people said, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."<sup>5</sup>

Look again at Isaiah's words in Isaiah six:

Woe is me! For I am lost;...  
for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!<sup>6</sup>

How will you stand? People have tried to capture this in song:

Surrounded by Your glory  
What will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for You Jesus  
Or in awe of You be still?  
Will I stand in Your presence  
Or to my knees, will I fall?  
Will I sing hallelujah?  
Will I be able to speak at all?

3 Isaiah 6:5  
4 Genesis 3:10  
5 Exodus 20:19  
6 Isaiah 6:5

I can only imagine  
I can only imagine<sup>7</sup>

It will happen to you. That day will come for you. There is nothing you can do to dodge it or avoid it. You, like Isaiah, will stand before God. How will you stand?

For those who defiantly, arrogantly, rebelliously spit in the face of God with their lies, slander, and false show the show will end. For those who claim to be pure and refuse to repent, condemnation will come. Your peace will forever end. However...

For those who repent, for those who admit their weakness and sin, there will be peace. Jesus said:

Well done, good and faithful servant...  
Enter into the joy of your Master.<sup>8</sup>

As Isaiah stands before the throne of God he knows he is lost. Yet he stands there admitting his sin. Not like Adam who fled and hid. Not like the people of Israel who wanted to run, wanted to never hear God's voice again. Isaiah stands repenting.

Look what happens in Isaiah 6:6

One of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."



The very next thing you read is God speaking. His instruction to Isaiah is to speak God's name, God's Word, and God's message to an unbelieving people. People who will not hear, will not see, with calloused hearts and minds. Still, God's name was seared, branded, onto Isaiah's lips.

Open your Bibles to John chapter eight.

Jesus refers to us as His flock. We are the sheep of His pasture.<sup>9</sup> We bear His name everywhere we go. As we learned last week, there are only two flocks. There are only two brands by which you can be known.

(Open your Bibles to John 8.)

You are either a child of God or a child of the Serpent.<sup>10</sup> We are either slaves to sin, or children of God.

7 "I can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me

8 Matthew 25:23

9 Psalm 100:3

10 Genesis 3:15

If you are a child of God you bear God's name, just as any child bears the “last name” of their earthly father. That name is on you, and it identifies you with your family heritage. Your heritage as a child of God is one of eternal blessings and eternal honor. We should bear that name with integrity and dignity. Before we get to John 8 look at page 67 of your Catechism. The Second Commandment is found there. Let’s read it together:

**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

You might say, “I have not used ‘satanic arts.’”

Look at John 8:44. Jesus said:

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.<sup>11</sup>

Satan’s “art” is to lie. Have you ever lied?

When we go out into the world claiming to be Christians, but using God's name in disrespectful ways, it tells others that we think God our heavenly Father is a joke. It tells people that we think God is weak, powerless and useless. It shows people we think God is a fool.

The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is [people who claim to be] Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle, [their words and actions]. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.<sup>12</sup>

My friends: Steve, Nancy, Diane, Alphonso, and sadly, very sadly others, are in Hell right now for this very reason. They are in Hell right now, and they will never get out, for this very reason.

“People who claim to be Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their life...”

My friends...

That is in fact what an unbelieving world simply find unbelievable. That we would, as a people who worship God, disrespect God so much in what we say and what we do.

<sup>11</sup> John 8:44

<sup>12</sup> dc Talk’s song “What if I Stumble?” quoting Brennan Manning

That we, as people who worship God, tolerate such contempt for God among us. That is what they find unbelievable.

We should never use God's name in a way that makes sin look like something good. If we use God's name to back up or support a lie we are misusing His name and engaged in “satanic arts.” When we use God's name, along with our sins, we are bringing God in on our sin. We are trying to make God out to be a sinner. When we sin, and use God's name as an excuse, we are guilty of calling God a liar<sup>13</sup> and a fool.<sup>14</sup> It is never wise to call God a fool.

The same is true when we say the Bible says something it does not say. The Bible is God's Word. It has God's name on it. When someone claims the Bible states something it does not say, they are calling God a liar, and they are dragging God's name down with their lies. It is “satanic arts.”

What if someone did that to you? What if someone accused you of doing all sorts of bad things, and dragged your name through the gutter; dragging your name and your reputation down with their words. How would you feel. Would you think that to be something good? If it is wrong to do that with your name, what do you suppose it means when we do that with God's name?

In our Old Testament reading we heard Moses ask God what His name is. There are many names for God in the Bible, but all of those names describe something about God. Moses knew many of those names but that wasn't good enough for him, he wanted to know what God's name actually is, so he asked.

They were speaking Hebrew back then. That was about 3,500 years ago, or more, and English hadn't been invented yet. So God said His name to Moses in Hebrew, because that is the language they were speaking. God said His name is יהוה [YaHWaH]. Now if you translate God's name from Hebrew into English you can find out what God's name is in English. In English God's name is I AM.

Now the people, when they learned God's real name, יהוה [YaHWaH], were afraid to say it out loud. They held God's name in such high reverence they would never speak it out loud. Not even the priests, not even the High Priest, who served in the Temple, would speak God's name out loud. Whenever they would read the Bible and see God's name they would not say it. Instead of saying יהוה [YaHWaH] they would say a different name. They would say Adonai אדוני {AH-doe-n-eye}, which means LORD.

They did that because they had so much respect for God's name that they were afraid to say it out loud, even in Church. They had a lot of respect for God's name. Do we respect have for God's name today? Some would use God's name to cover their sins. Some say, by their words and actions, that God approves of their sinful conduct.

13 1 John 1:10

14 1 Corinthians 1:25

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.<sup>15</sup>

That is not an excuse. It is an accusation, and one that condemns you. That makes some of you feel guilty. To you, who feel convicted, I have good news. What does God do with us when we apologize; when we repent? He forgives. He covers our sins with His name. What happens when God uses His name to cover our sins? Does that soil His name? Of course not. In fact not only is it not wrong, it is absolutely necessary. We don't cover for our sins with God's name. God covers our sins with His name.

When you apologize, when you repent, God promises to forgive you, and He does. When you apologize to God He puts His name on you. He covers your sins with His name. When He does that, what does He see when He looks at you? He sees His own name, on you. He sees you as His own child. A child He loves, a child He is proud to call His own. As proud as I am to call my children my own! As any loving parent does.

That is what happens to us, when we read the Bible. When we read God's Word, God places His name on us and grows faith in us. Faith that makes us His children. When you were Baptized God's name was put on you, along with water, and you were made His child. When you were Baptized you were washed clean of your sins by God's name. When you come to the Lord's Supper you have God's name put on you. God's name is given to you with bread and wine and in that you receive Jesus true and present body and true and present blood, and you have God's name placed on you.<sup>16</sup>

As a Christian we should do a lot in God's name. We live, love and serve in His name. We worship in His name. We have our sins forgiven, and we forgive others, in His name. We are Baptized, confirmed, married, and buried, all in God's name. We dine at His Holy Table in God's name. As Christians everything we do has God's name on it. Everything people see us do, and hear us say, has God's name on it, so we must use care to use God's name respectfully and honorably.

We do that because God has placed His name on us, and because He loves us. May God grant to us the awareness, and wisdom, to use His name for the spreading of His name, and the extending of His Kingdom throughout all the Earth.

In His name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**



<sup>15</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>16</sup> John 6:51-58