

## Week Two – February 5, 2018

### The Second Commandment

Commandments are statements which direct us to do or, not to do something. Martin Luther tries to help us look at The Ten Commandments using positive language, as this is how we are to come to know the loving nature of God.

#### THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive using God's name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God.

#### Pastor's Commentary

Many of us grew up hearing this commandment as "You shall not use the Lord's name in vain", and I was taught that this meant that we should not use God's name when cursing. But there is more to it than that. The Oxford Dictionary tells us that the origin of this word "vain", in the Latin, means, "empty, or without worth". Hmm... to use God's name in an empty or worthless way...

In the story of Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3), Moses asks God to reveal God's name to him, so as to legitimate Moses' mission to the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. And so, God tells Moses the name, thereby giving substance and authority to Moses' leadership.

- 1- Has your boss ever told you to go and do something, and when you went, met resistance until you said that "the boss" sent me to tell you this, or to do this? What was that like? How did using "the name that wields power" help you accomplish the job you were given to do?**
- 2- Would it have been harder to accomplish your mission without the authority of your boss behind you?**
- 3- How could you abuse the privilege of using the boss's name?**

When you tell someone your name, you are offering to them access into your life... deepening a relationship from where it was the moment before. In the Bible, God does not reveal His name until the Burning Bush in Exodus 3... thousands of years into the biblical narrative. But here, God is changing the nature of the relationship, not just with Moses, but with the Israelite slaves. God is now giving them His name, much as in a wedding covenant a groom gives his name to his bride. And so, just as in a wedding, God and Israel are joined together into one family. Giving your name to someone has great meaning. Receiving someone's name also has great meaning.

Luther teaches us that God is our God in that He creates us, and in our baptism, God is giving us His name so that the whole cosmos will know of our family relationship. This is a relationship to be cherished... a relationship of mutuality and intimacy... a relationship of faithful belonging.

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In Luther's explanation, he not only explains how not to bring "shame on the family name", but how to honor it and let the name shape us into becoming a better partner with the One who loves us, and the whole world, beyond all measure.

### **Ponder This**

- 1- How does using God's name in wrongful ways, such as Luther describes, damage our relationship with God? Think of some ways in your own life.
  
- 2- How does using God's name in proper ways, such as Luther describes, helping us to know the loving nature of God, and thus draw us closer to God? Think of some concrete ways you can apply this in your daily life with others, in Sunday worship, and in prayer.

### **Luther's 4 Strands of Prayer**

- 1- *What is God trying to teach me here?*
- 2- *What does this passage make me thankful for?*
- 3- *Where have I fallen short and need God to help and guide me?*
- 4- *Pray.*