

No.3: Watch Your Words

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this morning, if we could turn to the book of Exodus. The book of Exodus and Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20.

We're continuing our study in the Ten Commandments, or house rules as we've called them. As we were saying to the children, we're on commandment number three.

So Exodus chapter 20, that's at verse 7. Page 73 in the Pew Bible, if you're using a Pew Bible.

Exodus chapter 20 at verse 7.

Where the Lord says, 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.

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.

[1 : 09] What's in a name? What's in a name? There's a lot to be said about a name. Because names, as you know, names have meaning. I've mentioned before that my name, Murdo, it means mariner.

And Campbell, or cow, Biel, means squint mouth. So I'm a mariner with a squint mouth. But you know, when it comes to the Bible, lots of names in the Bible have meaning.

Adam's name means man, because he was the first man. Eve, the name Eve means living one, because she is or was the mother of all living.

The name Abraham means father of many nations, because the Lord promised that he would be the father of many nations. The name David means beloved, because he was the man after God's own heart.

And Jesus gave Simon the name Peter, which means rock. Because Jesus said to Peter, upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

[2 : 17] So what's in a name? What's in a name? Because names have meaning. And that's certainly true when it comes to the name above all names. The name of Jesus Christ.

It was the angel who said to Joseph, call his name Jesus. Call him Savior. Call him salvation. For he shall save his people from their sins.

But as you know, he's Jesus Christ. Of course, Christ is not his surname. That's his title. Because he's the Christos. He's the Messiah.

He's the anointed one. He's God's king in God's world. And our Bible tells us that at the last day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess the name that is above every name. So what's in a name? Because names have meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the name of Jesus Christ in two ways.

[3 : 26] Number one, it says, the man that Christians believe is the Son of God and on whose teachings the Christian religion is based. Number two, the name Jesus Christ is a swear word that many people find offensive.

And it's often used to show that you're angry, annoyed, or surprised. And of course, that's the second definition that we're considering this morning. That when God's name is misused, it's what we would call, as we're saying to the children, it's a swear, it's foul language that many people, as the dictionary says, many people, including God, finds offensive.

Because God says, in verse 7 there, 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.

Now, as you know, we're going through the Ten Commandments. We call them the house rules. And they're house rules because they've been given to us by our holy and heavenly Father. And they've been given to us as his children.

They've been given to us not to hurt us or to harm us, but to help us. These Ten Commandments have been given to us out of love because our heavenly Father wants to look after us.

[4 : 46] And as we said before, we need house rules. We need these Ten Rules because without rules, there will be recklessness. Without laws, there will be lawlessness. Without commandments, there will be chaos.

Which is why we've discovered in these Ten Commandments that commandment number one is number one because God needs to be number one. Commandment number two is number two because as we saw last week, God is not number two.

And then this morning, we see as we were saying to the children, Commandment number three is number three because we need to watch our words. Commandment number three is number three because we need to watch our words.

Because our words are important to God. and we need to watch our words when it comes to foul language and foolish language.

We need to watch our words when it comes to foul language and foolish language. There are two headings this morning. Foul language and foolish language.

[5 : 48] So first of all, foul language. The Lord says in verse seven, 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.

As many of you know, I can't speak Gaelic. I've tried, but I can't do it. Alison can. She went to a Gaelic school in Inverness. Our children are learning Gaelic in the Gaelic medium here in Barvis, but I still haven't managed the language of heaven.

And yet I'm always envious of people who can learn and who can speak Gaelic or any language really. Because language, language is a gift. Language is a gift from God.

Because language, it encourages us and it actually enables us to communicate with one another as human beings. And we communicate not only with words, as you know, but also with our body language.

And for those who have a hearing impairment, they communicate using their fingers, using sign language. And you know, it's amazing. There are over 7,000 languages in the world.

[7 : 00] Over 7,000 languages. And of course, English is the most well-known or the most well-spoken language in the world. And so undoubtedly, language is a gift from God.

But as with everything in life, even our language and how we communicate with one another, that has been tainted and tarnished by our sin. Because there's not only something we call spoken language and body language and sign language, there's also something we always call as foul language.

And as you know, foul language, it's offensive language. It's distasteful language. It's coarse language. It's filthy language. It's vulgar language. It's unpleasant, uncouth, and unclean language. And as you know, you don't teach, you don't need to teach children foul language. They easily pick it up from the TV or the internet or social media or the playground or even listening to adult conversations.

But a good parent, a good carer, a good teacher will speak to children about their use of foul language. And that's what our Heavenly Father does here in House Rule Number 3.

[8 : 15] As a parent who wants to prevent and protect us from hurt or harm, our Heavenly Father in verse 7 speaks to us.

He speaks to us as a church family. He speaks to us as His children. And He reminds us that we're to, number three, watch our words. We're to watch our words.

And of course, sometimes when it comes to our friends and family or workplaces, our workspaces, we can't evade and we can't escape foul language. It's all around us.

Nowadays, as a minister, most people are on their best behavior around me. Not all, but most, to the point that they watch their P's and Q's and they always tone down their foul language when I'm around.

Maybe as a Christian you experience the same as maybe in your workplace. You have this, you could say as Jesus says, a salty or a preserving influence because there's an element of respect towards you as a Christian.

[9 : 19] They know you're a Christian so they watch their words around you. They watch their words around you as maybe as family or friends or even work colleagues. They don't want to cause offense.

But for others, it's hard when you're being exposed every day to foul language. I remember when I was an electrician, the tea shed was the worst place for foul language.

And I know some of you probably can't imagine it, but before I was converted, before I became a Christian, to my shame, foul language was the norm for me.

That's why I always find it amazing to be standing in a pulpit. Of course, like many, I would watch what company I was in. I wouldn't swear in front of my parents or grandparents or people you respected.

But on the work side, among friends, foul language was the norm. And I'll be honest with you, I thought I could never become a Christian because my language was so bad.

[10:21] I thought I could never kick this habit of always swearing. And so when I was actually seeking the Lord and salvation, when I wanted to become a Christian, when I was asking the Lord to be saved, it was something I was really praying about because my prayer was not only create within me a clean heart, it was also create within me a clean mouth.

Create within me a clean heart, Lord, and create within me a clean mouth. And thankfully, the Lord answered my prayer, both in salvation and helping with swearing. But the thing is, I knew that the Lord had answered my prayer.

There was one time in particular, I was working on a loft clipping cables, as you do as an electrician, and I absolutely leathered my thumb with a hammer. Instead of doing the usual shouting and swearing that would come out of my mouth, that day, there was silence.

You know, the Lord had helped me keep my tongue. And it was through that, I knew the Lord was then working in my life. It might seem like a small thing, but for me, it was massive.

And of course, it didn't happen all the time. I would let one slip now and again, but the goodness and grace of God, this is the thing, the goodness and grace of God is that we can always go back to Him. We can always ask for forgiveness.

[11:38] We can always say to the Lord, create within me a clean heart and create within me a clean mouth. We can always go back to the Lord and ask for forgiveness. And you know, it's because of this that I love that psalm we were singing earlier when the children went out to Sunday school, Psalm 141, where the psalmist said, keep watch, Lord, on my mouth and guard my lips, I pray.

Let not my heart to evil thoughts be drawn and led us straight. It's a great prayer, isn't it? Keep watch, Lord, on my mouth and guard my lips, I pray.

Let not my heart to evil thoughts be drawn and led us straight. The psalmist prayed and we should pray that the Lord would watch our words, that He would keep our mouth and guard our lips.

We should pray that the Lord would watch our words, keep our mouth and guard our lips because foul language, as you know, foul language is unholy.

But God's name, as we've been emphasized in this commandment, God's name is high. God's name is holy. The Lord says that He is high and lifted up.

[12:53] His name is holy. And you know, it's something we actually pray about every week in church. We all pray the Lord's Prayer, or I hope we all pray the Lord's Prayer, either spoken or silent.

We all pray, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Holy is Your name.

Every week when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are all as a body of God's people, as a church family, we are all appreciating and acknowledging that the name of our Heavenly Father is high and holy.

It's a name which is sacred. It's sanctified. It's a name that is set apart. Therefore, to use foul language or to take God's name in vain, the Bible teaches us that that devalues God's name.

That diminishes God's name. That desecrates God's high and holy name. And what's remarkable is that the Israelites, as a people, they would never say or speak the name of God.

[14:02] Every time they read the Bible and they came to God's name, they would always say Adonai, which is the lowercase form of Lord in Hebrew.

They would just say Adonai. They wouldn't want to take God's name upon their lips for fear that they would devalue it or diminish it or desecrate God's high and holy name.

And yet, in our day and generation, the name of God is regularly used and utilized as a cuss or curse word. And it's not only in our homes or work sites or the office.

We see it on the TV. We hear it on the radio. It's all over social media. It's part of the internet. But, you know, we also see it on our food. We also see it on our food.

Did you know that you can buy Cadbury's chocolate brownies that are called OMG Amaze Bites? Maybe you've seen that before. OMG Amaze Bites.

[15:04] I mean, I love chocolate, but there's no need to call them that. But it just shows how much God's high and holy name has been devalued and diminished and desecrated.

However, our Heavenly Father, He not only wants to warn us about the use of foul language, He also wants to warn us about the use of foolish language, which is what we see secondly.

Foolish language. So, foul language and then foolish language. Foolish language. Look at verse 7 again. House rule number 3. 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.

I'm sure we're all familiar with the playground poem. The playground poem, Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Names Will Never Hurt Me. It's a familiar playground poem, but it's not true.

Not that sticks and stones don't break our bones, but that names do hurt us. Names do hurt us. Name calling does hurt.

[16:19] And name calling hurts God. And that's because, as we said earlier, names have meaning. But also names have value. Names have value.

And we know the value of a name when it comes to brand names. We've all heard of brand names. There are so many brand names on the market today. And all these brand names, they have value. We saw that in the news recently with Twitter. The brand name that Elon Musk bought was Twitter. It was a brand name that was worth \$44 million.

It was a brand name with value. But you know, I love, I always love the Wix advert. I'm sure you've seen the Wix advert on the telly. Their tagline as a DIY shop is Wix.

It's got our name on it. Wix, it has our name on it. And it has their name on it because they place value upon their name. And it's a name that you can trust.

[17:17] It's a name that's reliable. And we see that with other brand names. I'm sure some of you are wearing brand names today. But sports brand names are Adidas, Nike, and Puma.

They're popular names. There's Mercedes and Ferrari and Honda. They're reliable car names. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada. It's not in my wardrobe, but they're expensive names.

They're names that are value. They're names that are reliable. They're names that you can trust. And that's what's been emphasized in this third house rule. That God's name, it not only has meaning, God's name has value.

It's a name that's reliable. It's a name that you can trust in. It's a name that's high and holy. It's a name that's different and distinct. It's sanctified, sacred, and set apart.

Therefore, to take God's name in vain, it not only devalues, diminishes, and desecrates God's name, it also attacks the character of God. Not only the character of God, but the congregation of God's people.

[18:23] The congregation of God's people. And I say that it attacks both God and the congregation of God's people. people. Because as a congregation looking out at you, many of you, I'm sure, you bear God's name.

You have all been branded with God's name. And you bear God's name and you were branded with God's valuable and reliable and trustworthy name when you were baptized, probably as a child or as an adult.

You were baptized in God's name. You bear God's name and you were branded with God's valuable, reliable, and trustworthy name when you were baptized in God's name.

You remember when Jesus gave the great commission to his disciples? He said to them, go into all the world. He said, and baptize, go into all the nations and baptize them in the name.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And so, if you've been baptized as a child or as an adult, if you've been baptized, then you bear God's name.

[19:38] You have been baptized and branded with God's high and holy name. And you know, this is what I think we often misunderstand about baptism. Baptism isn't some magical and mystical sprinkling ceremony that guarantees our salvation.

Now, as we'll see in a couple of weeks' time, I think it's on the 12th of February, we'll have a baptism service. We'll see that when people present their child or even when some present themselves before God to be branded with God's name and bear God's name, they're being

branded and they're bearing God's name, a name that's high and holy, a name that's distinct and different, a name that's valuable and reliable and trustworthy.

And when you are someone who has been branded with God's name, when you bear God's name, God has put His name on you and He teaches you then and God tells you in His Word.

And what does He teach you and tell you? There is no other name under heaven given among men by which you must be saved other than the precious and personal name of His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you know, my friend, that's what your baptism is all about. God is branding you. He's, you are bearing His name in order to know all about His Son, Jesus. Because the promise of Scripture is that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, whosoever calls upon in the name of Jesus Christ will be saved.

[21 : 17] And so what's in a name? Names have meaning. Names are important. Names are precious. And house rule number three, it calls us and commands us to watch our words when it comes to God's name.

Because God's name is precious. There's no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And so we're to watch our words, we're to keep our mouth, we're to guard our lips.

But we're to watch our words, keep our mouth and guard our lips not only when it comes to God but also when it comes to those who are made in the image and likeness of God. We're not only to watch our words and keep our mouth and guard our lips not only when it comes to God but also when it comes to those made in the image and likeness of God. And that's why we read in the New Testament in James chapter 3, because James was tackling and telling us about the tongue. And he said that like the bit in a horse's mouth or the rudder of a large ship, a small rudder in a large ship, he says the human tongue is one of the smallest muscles, but it can create some of the biggest messes.

The human tongue is one of the smallest muscles, and yet it can create some of the biggest messes. Because like the smallest flame, said James, the smallest flame from a match, it can destroy an entire forest. So also, says James, so also the tongue is a fire.

It's a world of iniquity, so much so that it's able to defile our whole body. It'll defile our character, our conduct, our conversation. It's set on fire, and it sets on fire the entire course of our life. Why?

Because it's set on fire by hell. And as we read, James, he has all these stark and these solemn statements in James chapter 3, where he says, and he gives us great illustrations, he says, every beast of the field, every bird of the air, every fish of the sea, you can tame them. Every beast of the field, you can tame the horse. Every bird of the air, you can have a falcon on your arm. Every fish of the sea, look at the dolphins and the whales in aquariums. They can all be tamed. They can all be tamed, he says, but no one, no one can lock the lips or muzzle the mouth or tame the human tongue.

[24 : 05] Why? It's an unruly evil, he says, full of deadly poison. And then James says, and this is what I find hard, even as Christians, we might praise God and bless his high and holy name, and yet from the same mouth, curse those made in the image and likeness of God. Solemn. As Christians, we might praise God, as anyone, we might praise God and bless his high and holy name, yet with the same mouth, the same tongue, curse those made in the image and likeness of God. We might even curse those who bear and have been branded with the name of God at baptism. And what does James say? These things ought not to be so.

These things ought not to be so. My friend, house rule number three, it calls us and commands us to watch our words, to keep our mouth, to guard our lips, because our words can create worship or cause war. Our words can be helpful or harmful. Our words can bring peace or persecution. Our words can bless or blaspheme. Our words can build up or bully. Our words can reconcile or ridicule. But one that we're all good at is godless gossip.

One that we're all good at is godless gossip. Whether as a church, a congregation, or a community, we're all guilty of godless gossip. We're all guilty. I'm sure we're all familiar with the old cliché, gossip the gospel. And yet, sadly, many of us find it easier to engage in godless gossip rather than gossiping the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the thing about godless gossip is that it's not so much a problem of the tongue. It's actually a problem of the heart.

It was Jesus said that out of the mouth, the heart speaks. Because Jesus says, from the heart come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, pride, foolishness.

[26 : 41] And then lastly, he says slander, which is gossip. Slander is gossip. All these, says Jesus, come from within. They are what defiles a person. They are the heart of the problem, which is, as my good friend J.C. Ryle often said, it's the problem of the heart. It's, you know, it's such a solemn and searching and sobering statement.

That's why we not only need to ask the Lord to create within us a clean heart, but to create within us a clean mouth. Keep going back to the Lord. Lord, I am sorry for my mouth.

Asking the Lord. You know, as you know, I love Psalm 51, but that's what it brings us back to. We not only need to ask the Lord to create within us a clean heart, but also to ask the Lord to create within us a clean mouth.

Because as we said, house rule number three, it calls us and commands us to watch our words, to keep our mouth, to guard our lips. It calls us and commands us to watch our words, keep our mouth, and guard our lips.

And so when it comes to foul language and foolish language, commandment number three teaches us to say with the psalmist, Psalm 141.

[28 : 05] This should be our prayer as we leave here this morning. Psalm 141, Keep watch, Lord, on my mouth, and guard my lips, I pray.

Let not my heart to evil thoughts be drawn and led astray. Keep watch on my mouth.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, that we give thanks to Thee for the precious name of Jesus, and that it is a name that is above every other name, and that it will be at the name of Jesus, that every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

O Lord, that Thou wouldest keep watch on our mouth, that we would not misuse or abuse the name of Jesus, but that we might use our mouths to praise God, to praise God, as the psalmist says, for He is good, for still His mercy's lasting be.

But Lord, that we would also praise our fellow man, that we would encourage one another, that we would use our tongue for good and not for evil. O Lord, help us, we pray, to love one another, to love like Jesus loved, to speak words that are encouraging and enabling, and words that, Lord, build up and not break down.

[29 : 38] Watch over us, then we pray, keep us, we ask, create within us that clean heart, and create within us that clean mouth, that we would use our mouths to the praise, honour, and glory of Thy name.

Do us good, then we pray, go before us, and keep us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for His sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 40. Psalm 40, we're singing from the beginning down to the verse mark 4. Psalm 40, page 259 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 40, from the beginning. So you know, this psalm, or the opening verses of this psalm, they give to us the testimony of everyone who comes to faith in Jesus.

everyone who comes to trust in the Lord, and what he says about his mouth in verse 3, he put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify, and when you're singing about God from your mouth, many see it, and they'll fear, and they too will come and rely upon the Lord.

[31 : 09] Even your example of praising God will draw others to know about Jesus. He put a new song in my mouth.

Has he put a new song in your mouth? Do you know this, Savior? I love Psalm 40. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay, and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

Down to the verse marked 4 of Psalm 40 to God's praise. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear and led to me and to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from, Micah, above all He set my feet, especially my dikkat, change my way.

[33 : 03] He put a use open my mouth.

Our God to magnify many shall see it and shall be earned.

And on the Lord we lie. O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord we lies.

We expect in yod the power for such as turn aside to lies.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

[34 : 27] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Marche.