

God Says To You, “I Will...”
Ezekiel 36:22-28

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What is the 2nd Commandment? I learned it as, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. In 1986, they modernized the language and now the kids learn it as: 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.

What does it mean to curse? Sorry, wrong answer. Cursing is **NOT** what you think!

What does it mean to swear? Sorry, wrong answer again. Cursing is **NOT** what you think!

Neither cursing or swearing are how most people define them today. If someone says that one word that everybody seems to get all bent out of shape about that starts with the letter “F,” that is neither cursing or swearing. It really has more to do with the 6th commandment than it does the 2nd.

Cursing is the desire that someone have great troubles in their life. Wording that “curses” someone would be phrases like, “Go to hell!” Or, “I hope you die!” Or, the worst one, “God dammit!” Those are curses.

And swearing is the use of God’s name as evidence to the truth about that which you claim, “That’s the gospel truth, I swear to God.” Or, “I swear to god, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.”

When God gives the 2nd commandment, He is telling us that we are not to curse someone, desiring evil upon them, especially by use of His name. Nor are we to swear by His name. That means we are not to use His name as the evidence of our truthfulness, “That’s the truth, I swear to god!”

The use of satanic arts would be things like astrology, tarot cards, psychic reading, use of mediums, and such things. These things are all a denial of Him, His name, and lack of trust in Him – and as one who bears God’s name, to use these things is to profane the name of God.

Anytime we use God’s name in any way other than in prayer to Him, praise of Him, or giving thanks to Him, we are using His name in vain. Yes, as I have said on multiple occasions, that phrase which so often rolls off the lips of so many people without thinking, “Oh my God!”, is a violation of the 2nd Commandment. In fact, using God’s name in vain, that is, for no purpose is called blasphemy. Not only are all these a sin against this commandment, they were all sins deserving of death in the theocratic state of Israel.

Why? Because these are a manner in which God’s name is profaned by His people, these are the ways in which Christians make themselves unholly, and even more importantly to God it is how

we make God's name unholy in front of others.

God's name needs to be kept holy. We are to make His name holy at all times by what we say and do. How do we do that? God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it.

Dearly beloved of God, God's name is indeed holy by itself, and He wants it to be kept holy. That is why God explains His attitude about His name in our text. *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. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them.* (vv. 22-23)

These are words that God commanded Ezekiel to speak to His church, the house of Israel. These words were not to be spoken to unbelievers, but to those who are a part of God's church. They were spoken to God's chosen people – to those people who bore His name. That means that it was believers who profaned God's name. It was those who bore God's holy name, who had made God's name unholy – who profaned it – among the nations of the earth.

Dear friends, in our sinfulness, we often profane the name of God – sometimes in our actions, sometimes by our mouths, and sometimes with our silence. Dear friends, we need to repent of this. We need to know that God's name is profaned by things we say or do, and we need to avoid saying or doing such things.

And yes, we fail! We know the severity of this sin, for we know that the punishment for profaning God's name was death by stoning.

But God does not leave us there, accused of our sinfulness and without any hope. Even more desperately we need to remember the rest of the message that Ezekiel was commanded by God to speak to His chosen people.

Did you hear our text? I want you to listen to it again, remembering that it is God speaking. Also know that I have inserted the words 'I will' where it is alluded to in the text. In doing this, there are 15 statements in this text which God proclaim HE WILL be doing things for His people.

(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 **(I WILL)** vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

I will **(I WILL)** take you from the nations and

(I WILL) gather you from all the countries and

(I WILL) bring you into your own land.

I will **(I WILL)** sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will **(I WILL)** cleanse you.

And I will **(I WILL)** give you a new heart,

and a new spirit I will **(I WILL)** put within you.

And I will **(I WILL)** remove the heart of stone from your flesh

and (**I WILL**) give you a heart of flesh.

And I will (**I WILL**) put my Spirit within you,

and (**I WILL**) cause you to walk in my statutes

and (**I WILL cause you to**) be careful to obey my rules.

You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will (**I WILL**) be your God. (15 I will's)

Did you hear it? God will vindicate the holiness of His name, **He** will clear His name from all guilt, and blame and suspicion, **He** will uphold the holiness of His name against all argument.

That happened upon the cross of Calvary. All sins were paid in full by the righteous and holy Son of God Himself. There, God vindicated His holy name, the suffering and death of Jesus purchased forgiveness for all those who have profaned His holy name – God Himself did it.

Now His holiness is the possession of all those to whom His Spirit bestows faith in the work of Christ. God's holiness is what God graciously imparts to those whom He calls to bear His holy name. His Holy Spirit works holiness in those who bear His name, so that His holiness might be seen by all nations.

What is it that is most holy about God's name? That He is a gracious and loving God. He chooses those whom He calls His children, and blesses them with His gracious love and forgiveness, even when they are disobedient. Just as He has bestowed that unconditional love to mothers – as they love even when children seem to be unlovable. The entire Old Testament is a testimony to the faithfulness of God to His chosen people – especially in their rebelliousness to Him.

You are a living testimony to the faithfulness of God, for He makes His name holy in you. You are baptized into Christ's death, your sins put to death and buried with Christ. As He foretold in our text, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses."

This is what God does. You are cleansed as you are baptized into Christ's resurrection – He makes you holy so you live a new life in His holy name. He gives you a new heart, and a new spirit He puts within you.

God said, "**I will** remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will** put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." Whenever you gather at the table Christ sets before you of His body and blood, as you eat and drink, Christ gives you His heart, even as He removes your heart of stone. In this meal, your faith is strengthened, and Christ dwells in you, so that you walk in His footsteps.

All these things God does to you and for you. And He does them for you, for the sake of the holiness of His name. His name is made holy, when you are made holy in His name. When you are holy, you are a living witness to the gracious nature of God's holiness.

Today, you have gathered in God's house. Do you do so because you already are holy, or do you do so in order that God might again refresh you in His holiness? That is it exactly!

He makes you dwell here, in the land that God gave to your fathers, and He makes you His people. Here is where God is your God – God for you – that you might go out from here as living witnesses to His holiness.

God has done this all to you, so that on the last day, His words to Ezekiel might be fulfilled. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and **I will** be your God. And in thankfulness to God's name being made Holy in us and through us, as God's beloved people, we respond, "Hallowed be Thy name." Amen.