

Where God Places His Name (Part Two)

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Please turn, if you will, to Exodus 20, obviously the chapter with the commandments.

Exodus 20:7 "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."

God's name must be pretty important to Him if the third of His great commandments concerns the use of His name. In fact, His name is so central to what He is, what He does, that the third commandment contains a threat within its wording. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." In other words, the Lord will consider a person guilty.

Let us put it in the positive rather than the negative. He will consider that person sinful, He will consider that person blameworthy if he takes God's name in vain. *The Emphasized Bible* by J. B. Rotherham translates this as, "For Yahweh we will not let him go unpunished who do uttereth His name for falsehood." He is pretty serious about His name, and we should be too.

So what is taking God's name in vain? What does it mean? Most commentators and translators, using only a literal letter of the law approach, explain it simply as speaking God's name lightly or frivolously or profanely, or using it to swear falsely, just as they see it, just the plain wording of the of the scripture there. To them, this commandment is purely about speech, bad speech, saying words—God's name, Jesus' name, and those other kind of profanities. And while that is certainly there, we cannot deny that that is part of it, it is, sadly, quite incomplete an understanding of this commandment because there are far greater levels of depth and complexity in this very simply-worded commandment.

Young's Literal Translation of the Bible renders this verse, "Thou dost not take up the name of Jehovah thy God for a vain thing, for Jehovah acquitteth not him who taketh up His name for a vain thing." Well, it is a literal version, so it is kind of around your elbow to. . . however that saying goes. But it really does not tell us a whole lot to look at it that way.

It is the verb "take," though, that we need to look at most closely for the moment. It is Hebrew *nasha*. When it is transliterated it looks like NASA, the space administration, but pronounced naw-sha. And it means "to lift" or "to carry" or "to take." That is a good literal translation. Or "to bear." Some say it means "to lift up." As a matter of fact, that is how essentially *Young's* did it. He used the word "take up" but lift up. But they mean it in terms of lift up your voice or to lift up with the voice. But that is adding a little bit to the text because this commandment does not really say anything specifically about the voice. It just says, "Take God's name in vain."

Now it speaks specifically about lifting up the name of God, which can be done in several ways. Here, I believe that the word bear makes the most sense. "You shall not *bear* the name of the Lord your God in vain." In this way, using bear, the commandment covers not just speech, but all behavior in bearing or carrying God's name.

That was *take*. What about *name*? What about this word? Now it covers many of those same ideas that we saw in my first sermon on the first day of the Feast. Certainly in terms of God, it covers God's being, God's character, God's instruction, and His very possession of us as His children. He is our Father, right? So, as a father possesses his children, they then take his name. As signatories of the New Covenant, we bear His name. It has been written on us. We are His children, so we represent Him wherever we go, we bear His name wherever we happen to be.

The idea is very similar to being a witness of Him in the world. Wherever we go, whatever we do through our speech, demeanor, attitudes, behavior, decisions, advice that we give to other people, even our dress and grooming, among other things, is a part of bearing His name. Everything we say,

everything we do is tied in with bearing His name. A person with even a little bit of knowledge of God and His way should be able to look at us or hear us speak and say, "This is one of God's children. I see the resemblance."

Now, what about the words *in vain*? This word is *saw* in Hebrew. It looks like, in regular English characters, saw, but it is pronounced shov, and it means "emptiness," "vanity," "falsehood." It designates anything that is insubstantial, unreal, or worthless, whether it is a material thing or a moral thing. Well, I should just mention this right here. Solomon is famous for saying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." in Ecclesiastes 1:2. What he means is in the Hebrew and the very illustrative language that it is, that everything is a vapor. Everything is a breath. Everything, as my dad put it in one of his sermons on Ecclesiastes, is like the film of a soap bubble. It is that insubstantial. How soon does the film of a soap bubble go away? We have kids blowing bubbles all the time and you watch the bubble and it bobs away, and then it hits a piece of grass or it hits a tree or something, and it immediately explodes. And all that is left is this little itty-bitty residue.

Everything is vanity. Everything is about as worthless as that little bit of residue. Everything is ephemeral.

And surely God's name cannot be described that way. We could never think of God's name as a vapor, a breath, something insubstantial, worthless, and ephemeral. Putting this into action, doing something in vain can imply doing it thoughtlessly, that is, in a very careless, light, worthless, or rote manner, meaning we are doing something mechanically, we are using muscle memory rather than really thinking things through. But doing something in vain can also suggest doing it unrighteously. That is, in a false, unworthy, and sinful way. So it has both those levels, either the thoughtless thing that we do in reference to God's name or the actual unrighteous thing that we can do in reference to God's name.

Now, as my dad, John Ritenbaugh, has taught us in his sermons on the third commandment, this commandment deals with the *quality of our worship*. We are not supposed to come before God in a light, worthless, disrespectful, false, unworthy, and certainly not sinful manner. God has called us out of all these billions of people on the face of the earth, and we have decided that we agree with His way, we have agreed to the covenant, and so we bear His

name. So our response to God, that is, our worship of Him, must be of the highest quality befitting the perfect righteousness and holiness of the God we represent in the world.

This commandment says that we must not bear God's name in a false, worthless, uncaring, or unrighteous way because it is sin. It is sin to do so. Certainly it breaks this particular commandment, the third commandment, and God will hold us accountable for the times we do this. It is very seriously, very clearly stated in verse 7, that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." God's name is a *precious* possession to Him, and we must in no way sully it by speech or by behavior or by attitude or by demeanor. Or by however. Our lives are supposed to show God's name the highest honor and glory.

In this sermon, we are going to continue to investigate the idea of God placing His name and specifically where He places it. Last time we saw that He placed His name in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and that is where Solomon built the Temple and God's glory filled that Temple. They could see that. The Holy Place was surrounded by a cloud or a mist, and the priests could not go in to do their duties. So His presence was there in that Temple in the Holy of Holies, the Holiest of all.

But that is not the end of where God places His name as you probably picked up from my introduction. Please go with me just a few pages forward to Exodus 33.

Exodus 33:12-23 Then Moses said to the Lord, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." And He [God] said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses replied to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people

and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."

Then the Lord said to Moses [This is an interesting conversation that they are having with one another. It reflects what was said this morning about God speaking with Moses face-to-face. They had real conversations.], "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." And he said [it is kind of an interesting thing to reply to what the Lord had just said], "Please show me Your glory." [That is bold, very bold.] Then the Lord said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, when My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

What this does, this really neat conversation between God and Moses, is it brings up a question. Moses raises it to Him essentially. And this question is: How can a holy God, as wonderful and glorious and pure as our God is, be in the presence of a sinful nation? How can these two coexist? One is perfectly righteous, holy character, and He is supposed to be in the midst of these very sinful, very hypocritical, as was explained earlier, up and down people who at times could not care less about God. They showed that through the whole wilderness journey, that they forgot Him, just like that [snaps fingers]. And then He had to kill 26,000 or 22,000 or whatever to get their attention. So how can a holy God be in the presence of a sinful nation?

What God does, in this passage, is that He makes a very careful distinction between His presence and His glory, on the one hand, and His name and His goodness on the other. He kind of divides them into two separate categories. So on the one side, you have His glorious presence and His holiness and everything that is just so profound and awe-inspiring and dramatic when we

see it. And on the other side, we have His name and His character typified by the word *goodness*. Goodness comes from God. God is the originator of goodness. So what is good originally meant what is godly.

We will just break it down. You have glory on the one hand, all this bright effulgence from God, and on the other hand, you have His name. His glory, His presence, is holy, awesome, and unapproachable. What does He say? "No man shall see My face and live." He had to cover Moses' face while His glory passed by and then he could see His back. He could see the backside of His glory, as it were, but not that front side, because no man could see His glory and live.

Sinners, even as righteous a man as Moses was, have to be shielded from exposure to His glory. Moses did not have what it took to see His full glory, even though he asked for it. Moses was really reaching when he asked the question, "Show me Your glory." As if he and God had such a good relationship that God would open that up to him. And God says, "Not yet. No. This is not the time. I'll let you see the backside of My glory. But I have something more important to tell you for the time being." God reassures Moses, though, that as a weak mortal human, he could experience the name and goodness of God, but not His glory, not His full presence. Full presence would be overwhelming and deadly. But you, Moses, He says, "You can experience My name and My goodness."

Let us go back in the book toward the front to Exodus 19. I want to read a stretch here to give us an idea of just the dramatic wonder and awe of God's presence. We will read verses 16 down through verse 20. This was right before giving the commandments.

Exodus 19:16-20 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. [You know, everything was vibrating so much that the people began to vibrate. Everything was so loud and just trumpets beyond what we can imagine.] And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon

it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

He is going up there to receive the Ten Commandments, and the people are down there quaking in their sandals because of God's presence being in such close proximity to them. They could not see Him necessarily. But they sure saw the smoke and the lightning, heard the thunder and the trumpets going, and it was just overwhelming. It was sensory overload.

Exodus 20:18-20 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

This was a demonstration of His power and it was something that they should remember. They should fear Him because they see Him in what they thought was His full power. It was not. But it was enough to get them quaking so that they should think twice, three times, four times, four thousand times, four million times before sinning before God, because this was the Judge.

Exodus 20:21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

Even God's muted glory in this passage is too much for sinful Israel. But they could know they can approach and experience His name, which is more gentle because His name focuses on things like love and mercy, goodness and justice and righteousness. That is, His holy character. It focuses on things that they can understand. Maybe not fully, but at least they could understand those kind of words like love and mercy and goodness and justice and righteousness, and maybe get an idea of what this God is all about.

Those in the right frame of mind, these people, even sinful people, can relate to. They could relate to goodness and mercy. They could relate to justice. They can relate to other words like that.

Now, while His glory is so dramatic—the fire, the noise, the earthquake, the smoke, a mountain trembling—His name is more amenable to everyday life and worship. We can sit and contemplate God's name calmly and peacefully, but try to do that when God's glory is unleashed. At that point, you are out of your mind. You cannot really think. But you can think about His name. So what His name does is it portrays His virtues, particularly His likeness to human beings in terms that they can understand. Like I mentioned, justice, mercy, loyalty, love, forgiveness, sovereignty, His presence, and that sort of thing. And so we can worship Him. We can come to understand Him by His name and therefore feel like we know Him.

Let me summarize this point here under Exodus 33:12-23. It is very simple. Remember, there was the distinction between glory and name. We can summarize it like this: God's glory is unapproachable, overwhelming, totally incomprehensible. We just know that we are being shell-shocked by this awesome display of power. But God's name, now that is something we can grasp very easily. God's name is approachable, it is understandable. And when we come to really know what it means, it is comforting.

Let us go to Exodus 34. We kind of left that story hanging in the midst. We need to know how it resolves.

Exodus 34:4-9 So he [Moses] cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. [Remember, he had broken those during the Golden Calf incident.] Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there [Remember, they spoke face to face.], and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth

generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

Moses got it. Moses understood after this display how a holy God could be in the midst of a sinful nation. Through His name.

I want you to go back to verse 4 and just notice that God appeared to Moses and proclaimed His name to him while Moses was holding the two newly-hewn tablets on which the Ten Commandments would soon be written. It is a stunning picture. It is a good picture for us to understand here. We could say that Moses was embracing those tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were to be written. What this is, is an illustration, a small vignette, a small picture of Moses' righteous disposition toward God, his attitude toward righteousness. We could say that he was *embracing* God's commandments. It was to him, one God called "His servant" that God proclaimed His name, the one who He had prepared to understand. And what He did, knowing Moses' disposition toward Him as meek and humble and ready to learn, He preached a sermon to a very receptive, humble, and meek Moses about His name. Moses understood then that God's glory is in His name, at least the kind of glory that we can understand at this point.

So, the sermon that the Lord preached to Moses begins with the repetition of His name. This is really interesting, I thought. In Hebrew it would be Yahweh, Yahweh-El. It is an excellent introduction to the topic of His name because He brings up His two most important or prominent names. Yahweh. Yahweh-El. Lord, Lord God. If we were to translate these words literally, which is something that most of us do not think about doing, we just look at it, it says Lord, or we might think of Yahweh and El. We would think of El or God, Deity.

But listen to what this introduction becomes when we translate these words literally. It could read, in essence, "I am, and this is how I am God. I'm the Ever-living One, and I'm going to teach you why I am God." In other words, the traits that He lists after this opening salvo of His two names, set Him apart as divine, not necessarily His great power and eternity. That is part of

it. That is there in the names of Yahweh and El. But it is those other things, these divine traits that He gives us a list of. What do they do? They explain or expound His holy, righteous character. That is what makes Him God because He has character and we do not. He has perfect character, and we have slime for character. It is like saying to Moses, "You wanted to see My glory. I will now reveal My true glory, My character. These characteristics are what set Me apart as God."

So what does He say? What are His character traits? He starts with the fact that He is compassionate. He is concerned and merciful. That is what compassionate means. How many times do we see in the Gospels Christ having compassion on the multitudes? It is the first thing He turns to. "Look. These people are wandering about as sheep with no shepherd. I've got to do something." And so He heals them. He casts out their demons. He is compassionate. He is gracious. He grants favor to the undeserving. Because He wants to come to repentance. He wants all to be in His Kingdom.

He is slow to anger. He is very patient with us, knowing that we have slime for character. He is very forbearing, He holds off. He does not pound us the first time we sin. What kind of future is that? If we sin, okay, he is done. What kind of God would that be? We need a God who is patient with us and gives us time to repent, to turn around.

The next one is He is abounding in *hesed*. That is the covenant love, the covenant loyalty there that is translated as a goodness. He is abounding in it. He is just not faithful and totally loyal to His covenant, He is perfect in it. He overflows with this love toward those He makes covenant with. He is all in for them, and He is going to try and try and try again so that those people come around and love Him like He loves us.

It says He is abounding in truth. He is correct in all things truthful. And so because He is correct and truthful in all things, He is reliable. We do not have to worry about Him telling us anything wrong because everything that He says is right. So he abounds in this character trait of being truthful. God *cannot* lie. It is *totally* against His nature. He is not going to deceive us. He is going to be a straight talker so we can believe Him. It says here He maintains His covenant loyalty indefinitely. That is, "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." So He is eternally faithful. It is

not just for a short time, not just for a few years, not for a lifetime, not for a few generations. It goes on and on and on!

His covenant loyalty goes forever. He is eternally faithful and constant. He is forgiving. He forgives, as it says here, iniquity and transgression and sin. It covers all the bases there. He is willing to forgive all those things and bring us around so that we can go forward in goodness. He is just and equitable. He does not side with one or another. He is going to give true justice and equity to the people.

And this last one, it is one that people kind of scratch their heads about. He says, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children unto the third and fourth generation. What it means is that He punishes appropriately for sin, and He does this to minimize its lasting ill-effects on successive generations. The effects of sin could go on without end and just ruin us. Ruin all the generations that could come after us. But He limits these effects to the third and fourth generation. He does not let them go on forever. That is how merciful He is.

When people screw up, it is not forever, and it is not going to affect their whole line all the way down. And we see in the second commandment that He blesses people who do well for thousands of generations. The weight is far over toward His goodness toward people and His blessing for being righteous and good, than He is for punishing evil. It must be punished, but He keeps it contained. Just a third or fourth generation. Is that not beautiful character? Even though He has every right to smash everyone for our infractions against His law, He works with people. He loves them. He does not want them to fail.

Like I said, His name, which encapsulates all these characteristics, is approachable. It is something we can deal with. It is something we can understand, and just the pure blast of His glory does not tell us anything, except this is a really powerful God and I am getting a very bad sunburn. But when you know His name and all the attributes that are linked to it, then you can really appreciate Him for what He is—along with His power and the light that comes from His face. So God's name condenses or encapsulates all that His people need to know about His person, and it does that through character traits.

Do you remember the story of Elijah on Mount Sinai in II King's 19:11-13? I am not going to read it for time's sake, but he went down there thinking that he was the only one left and he was basically having a little Elijah pity party. And he said, "God, I'm the only one left, you know?" And God said, "Hey, Elijah, look at this. I'm going to go out to the entrance of the cave and just observe." So He sends the strong wind. "Elijah, I'm not in the strong wind." He sends the great earthquake that is shaking that whole mountain again. "I'm not in the earthquake." He sets up a blazing fire again on Mount Sinai. (That place just takes a beating.) But He says, "I'm not in the great fire." But He says He was in the still small voice that came after.

God was not in the big theatrics. He was not in necessarily the catastrophe, you could call it, of His presence, if you will—all of those things: the fire, the wind, the earthquake. He was in the communication of words that describe Him and His acts, both great and small. He was in the communication: calm, gentle, whispered, easy to understand; not full force in the face where you actually lose your mind because of His greatness. These words about Him are designated and concentrated in one word: name. God's name, specifically. The name of the Lord stands for His complete divine nature. The name of the Lord is what He is. All those attributes that we have come to know about Him.

Let us go to Matthew the 28th chapter. I know that this section of Scripture, specifically verse 19, has people who are having a dispute about the way that this has been put together because it contains a trinitarian formula that should not be there. And I do not want to worry about this at this moment. I just want to read verses 18 through 20. This is after His resurrection, obviously, meeting with the disciples.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Now, our focus today is on that short phrase in verse 19 "in the name of." Terrible translation. Actually, the proposition here is terribly translated. This is the Greek preposition *eis*. *Eis* does not mean "in." In Greek *en* means "in." They have an actual proposition for the word in. It is very similar to ours. But *eis* means "into" and there is a significant difference between in and into. The scholars confirm (I do not know Greek well enough to be able to say this myself, so I am leaning on their expertise.), that Matthew is very careful in His gospel to maintain the distinction between *en* and *eis*. When Jesus said "into" he put *eis*. He did not put it when Jesus said "in." He used *en*, because that is what it means. So verse 19, Jesus said into and Matthew scribed it as *eis* in Greek.

The preposition into, or *eis*, strongly suggests here coming into a relationship with or coming under the Lordship of. When we are baptized *into* the name of the Lord it is suggesting that we are coming into a relationship with Him and, I think it is not *or* but *and*, we are coming under the Lordship of. We are being put *into* His name. Are you starting to get goosebumps yet? What He is doing when we are baptized is He is starting the process of *you becoming God*. Because remember what I just said about His name? It encapsulates everything about Him, His character specifically.

So, when you are baptized into His name, you not only come under His authority, you are not only having a relationship with Him, you are actually starting the process of being Him!

Anyway, when we are baptized, we are set into or immersed into everything God's name represents, not just His Family. It is His Family, too, because everybody in the Family is going to have the same character. They are all going to be the same in those terms. But it especially indicates inclusion into the very nature and character of God, even though it is baby steps at that point. He is including us in the goal ultimately, and that is inclusion into the very nature and character of God and into, then, the closest relationship possible with our Great God.

It is not just being baptized into the Family of God, but being baptized into *everything* that God is. We have another word for this: oneness. We are being included in Him fully as if we were one with Him, even though we are

just starting. What a generous God. What grace, what confidence!
Remember, He says that the thing that He starts, he does not fail to finish.

Let us go to John 17, Jesus Christ's final prayer before He was arrested. He was thinking about this.

John 17:6-12 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They are Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I come forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are one. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

John 17:20-26 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word [you and me]; that they all may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You have loved Me from the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Is that not beautiful?

This prayer takes on new meaning when we understand the awesome scope of God's name. Jesus is teaching what we call the gospel. His words, His example, is a manifestation, a declaration and expounding of God's name—about what God is all about. He says here that knowledge of His name, understanding what it is all about keeps us, it secures us. It guards us. It protects us. It keeps us on the path for the purpose of belief in God and Christ, and ultimately for the purpose of becoming one as the Father is in Christ and Christ is in the Father. And at the end of this, in verse 26, Jesus throws in the idea that through this process of belief and becoming one, love, the agape love of God, the godly love is produced in us. The same kind of love is produced in us with which the Father loves Christ, and which Christ loves the Father.

That is the goal. Perfect love, oneness with God, total immersion in His name, that is, His character, His presence, and His being. That is just mind boggling that He would give that great opportunity to people like us with slime for character.

Let us go to Revelation 3 please. This is the letter to Philadelphia. And as I emphasized in my sermons on those letters from Christ to the churches that are recorded here in Revelation 2 and 3, the rewards do not pertain exclusively to the particular church they are mentioned in, but they are to all the churches—plural. But this one in the letter to Philadelphia is especially pertinent to our topic because name is mentioned several times here.

Revelation 3:7-13 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" [I just want to mention here that He opens up this letter with another terrific salvo. This one comes from He who is holy and He who is true.]: "I know your works [He says]. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them

come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you [John 17:26]. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. [here it is] He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

"Name" appears four times in this letter. It is something the Philadelphians do best: Keep God's name. They have not denied His name. In fact, He uses it, the name, four times here, referring twice to Christ's name, once to the Father's name, and once to the city of God, New Jerusalem. This ties everything up in a neat bow. Where was God's name placed? In the Tabernacle and then in the Temple. And it is, then, that the name of the New Jerusalem, where God's eternal Temple will be, is placed on our foreheads.

The two streams come together, the Temple and the people, the worshippers who have become like God. And of course, they receive the Father's name and the Son's name. Everything is one at the end. God brings it all together. Like I said, He ties it up with a neat bow. And it is so beautiful. What a gift! Our reward of God's name being written or inscribed or etched or engraved, or however will be, on us, depends on what it says there in verse 8. That, despite our human weaknesses, which we have many—I have said slime for character many times in this sermon for a point—those who are of this attitude, those who are in this particular church, those who follow what it says here: they keep God's Word and they do not deny His name.

In other words, we are humble and obedient to His instruction, and we are loyal and faithful to Him, His Father, and all They represent. Those are the people who are really going to be rewarded in God's Kingdom. Those who are loyal to God. My father used the term faithful this morning. That is what God is looking for. He is looking for people who learn and understand about

His name, His character, and all that He is, and they latch onto it. They embrace it, like Moses embraced the tablets of stone, and they never deviate from it again.

I am talking about in terms of unfaithfulness. There will be sin. There will be iniquity. But these are the people He wants that just embrace it for all they are worth, and say, "God, I will never leave You or forsake You, just as You will never leave or forsake me." What a glorious goal. What awesome motivation that He should dangle this out in front of us. And He means it. It is not dangling so He can pull it away at the end when we reach for it. He means it. It is there for us. Talk about going to the head of the class. That is just amazing. God is offering eternal glory, power like you cannot imagine, and unity with Him for all time. All for a little sacrifice, a little obedience, and a lot of loyalty in the here and now.

Let us finish in Revelation 21, if you will. We will read the first seven verses. A passage tailor-made for the 8th day.

Revelation 21:1-7 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [See this. More strands coming together in this. The Bride of Christ and New Jerusalem.] And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God [oneness]. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

This passage describes what this feast day looks forward to, when *all* things are made new and we will inherit *all* things. All things! Totally incomprehensible. Look up into the heavens and see all things. You cannot. There are stars and galaxies beyond what we can see, especially with our murky air and all the light pollution.

But we cannot fathom the future that He has set before us. We cannot imagine what God is willing to give. He *wants* to give it. He is thrusting it on us and saying, "Take it, I love you. Be My children. All I ask is a little loyalty, a little obedience, a little sacrifice in the time being. That's all it takes. And you can embrace all things with Me and My Father."

The greatest thing of all, though, is that we will be fully and truly God's children, one with Him, bearing His name and all it entails for all time.