

they want to be obedient and live in a God-pleasing and God-honouring way. Are you a person who wants help in this and needs help in this and finds help in this matter, looking to the Lord Jesus Christ and calling upon Him and His Spirit to guide you into all the truth and all the law of God? Surely then also another help is reflecting help in keeping this law.

What I mean with this fourth point is when you are one wanting help and needing help and finding help with this law of God, it will show and reflect in your life and it will be reflected. It will show by your prayerful conscious resolve to participate in all that aids you in true holiness and your humble determined resolve to flee all that hinders you in true holiness, and your aim to encourage others in the same way, and to model to others the very life you know God calls for from us. When this is reflected by God's grace in our lives, that by itself helps us in living more according to this commandment and all the commandments of God. God's people discover time and again that the way of holiness promotes, by God's design, further holiness and delighting therein, whereas following the pathway of sin draws us away from holiness and deadens us to that way.

The gospel point here is, going in the pathway of the Lord is so rewarding by itself and it promotes so much good and blessing all around. Isn't this what God's people know and reflect and sincerely and joyfully promote? Oh, may we all be such a salt in this perverted decadent world, such a bright Christian light in this dark evil time! Is that what you want for yourself and your loved ones and with so many more in the church and outside the church?

Then you will take also this third commandment very seriously indeed. Are you a person wanting help and needing help and finding help and reflecting help in keeping God's third commandment? That is surely what marks true believers in Jesus. He that has ears to hear, let him hear. *"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes His Name in vain"*. Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT [2]

Helps against taking God's Name in vain - wanting help, needing help, finding help, reflecting help. That is the subject again as we conclude our message on the third commandment of God. God gives His Ten Commandments both in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. In His third law, God commands: *"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."* Last time we focused on how the true child of God wants help in keeping the third commandment. Now we focus on how really living by this law of God to God's honour doesn't only mean consciously wanting help, but needing help, finding help, and reflecting help in keeping it.

Indeed, the true believer doesn't only want help in living by this commandment, but is needing help so to live! Do you admit this and know this too, dear friends, how the true believer confesses not only desire for keeping God's law but desperate need for help from God to do so. How many are the ways of breaking this holy law of God. How openly and shamelessly, repeatedly and defiantly, and universally this commandment is broken in our times today.

The Heidelberg Catechism in its explanation of this commandment mentions five ways of taking God's Name in vain, but there are countless forms of doing so. It can be by cursing, using God's Names and what He is about just as a swear word or a filler in your conversations. How rampant this evil is in our times. Some of you have to work in settings where you hear it daily and how distressful that can be and is for the true child of God. Then there is the evil of perjury, which is lying under oath, saying in God's Name you will tell nothing but the truth, but telling nothing but lies. How much doesn't that happen in our times! What about the use of unnecessarily making oaths in God's Name over matters of daily life? Not letting your yes be yes and your no be no, but having to add, "I cross my heart, I swear to God, or God is my witness" to matters of every day life. It becomes taking God's Name in vain. And what about silently letting it go by when someone else misuses God's Name, not only by cursing but also in false worship and disrespectful behaviour in worship and with God's Word? How easily, to our shame, do we let it pass, hearing and seeing God's Name taken in vain. If you respond, 'But surely you know we can't be approaching people about this all the time, and you have to be so careful about what you say to

people!' And I agree with you, but could we not approach others more than we do, and could we not at least be more in prayer to God about this, rather than just let it pass?

Yes, also when you hear God's Name taken in vain, and simply go along with it, and even laugh along with it? As, for instance, when on radio or TV programs, a video or DVD, or with computer games all kinds of things are promoted that are dishonouring to God and in direct violation of His holy law and good will, but you allow it anyways because you enjoy the show, and you excuse it saying, 'it's only once or twice or a few times'? Too many, also among confessing Christians and regular churchgoers, isn't it true, just excuse God's Name being taken in vain as no big deal and not a great and grievous sin at all! Christians in North America won't even give up godless amusements for the gospel's sake, but all too many confess to be Christians while drinking in the same ungodly and blasphemous and worldly behaviour even in our homes. If I would just misuse your name once or twice, you surely wouldn't approve of that, but you can allow God's Name being taken in vain? Will we be partakers of these horrible sins in others by allowing God's Name to be taken in vain on the TV screen in our homes? Shouldn't we be about preventing and forbidding all sins against the third commandment in our lives and in our homes especially? You see, God is so holy, or don't you really believe that so much?

The Christian in the Heidelberg Catechism in Question & Answer 100 states on the basis of God's Word, "there is no sin greater or more provoking to God than the profaning of His Name, and therefore He has commanded this sin to be punished with death." Do you take most seriously that God will not hold guiltless those who take His Name in vain? Is this your Christian conviction too? Being a Christian doesn't mean God becomes less holy for anyone but we may come into His presence now as His dear children, in and through Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Jesus Christ, always remember, suffered death in the sinner's place especially on the false charge of blasphemy! As the Substitute and Saviour of sinners, Jesus had to suffer all the agonies of eternal hell in body and soul and give His life to death on the cruel cross, in paying the punishment for sin and so to make a way for us sinners to come humbly and freely into the presence of God in and through His finished work on sinner's behalf.

Do you want help in not taking God's Name in vain and do you need help in doing so? Yes, not only thinking of what is all forbidden in this holy law of God but also considering what all God calls for positively in this commandment, namely, as the Catechism puts it, "that we use the holy Name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence, so that He may be rightly confessed and worshipped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works." Is that what you want to be about too, and do you need help in this way, calling on God so to bless you and enable you to live? Do you need

help knowing how by nature we can so easily and flippantly, quickly and repeatedly and even unawares, take God's name in vain? Do you need help seeing we live in an environment where God's Name is constantly taken in vain in all kinds of ungodly ways, and increasingly now in churches in so many religious ways too? Is your consciousness of God and His honour so uppermost that you will live to Him to the uttermost, or not so really? This is a commandment of God that convicts us all of our sins and sinfulness by nature. Do you see that too? Does it lead you and me in true repentance before God? Or will you again this week carelessly be involved in some way in breaking the third commandment of God?

Helps against taking God's Name in vain: one help is wanting help, another needing help, and our third point is finding help in not taking God's Name in vain, namely, finding help with God time and again. This is the gospel that with the Lord is complete salvation, meaning with Him not only do we find forgiveness of all our sins, but also the Spirit-given power to live wholly according to God's law and to want to do so and delight in doing so.

You can and will find help in keeping this third commandment, praying to God, calling on the Saviour and looking to Him, dwelling upon Him and ever drawing from Him, the almighty and triumphant Saviour over all sin and over Satan. Asking God to help you truly to live to His praise and to honour God and His Name in and with everything is what God's people are about. That is the heart attitude you then have and show. The glorious gracious gospel message is all that is required not only in becoming a Christian but also all that we need to live as Christians to God's praise, we may and can and will receive out of Christ's fullness as Saviour, grace for grace, even as we call upon Him day by day. Jesus the Saviour perfectly kept the law for His people, that by both His life and death on sinner's behalf, and as the Saviour Who arose from the dead and lives forevermore we may find life and that more abundantly. Whoever trusts and obeys Him for all of salvation will not be put to shame.

God's people find help in keeping the third commandment thus in the way of prayer and reading God's Word, in the fellowship of His people and in the regular Sunday worship of God, and through filling our minds and hearts with that which is right and good and daily fleeing from all appearance of evil in us and around us. Is your life one of finding help from God in being saved and in living a sanctified and holy life before the Lord? Finding help is all about abiding in Christ and His Word and so bearing fruit to His praise. Without Him we can do nothing. Have you discovered this as so true particularly also in connection with the third commandment? When truly saved, you can't be satisfied with a superficial hypocritical keeping of God's law.

God's true people know their calling to live by God's law in view of Jesus Christ as their only Saviour and Lord. With this third commandment