

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Theme: "The Testing of Your Faith"

Lesson: 37 Text: 5:12

Date: 12-10-23

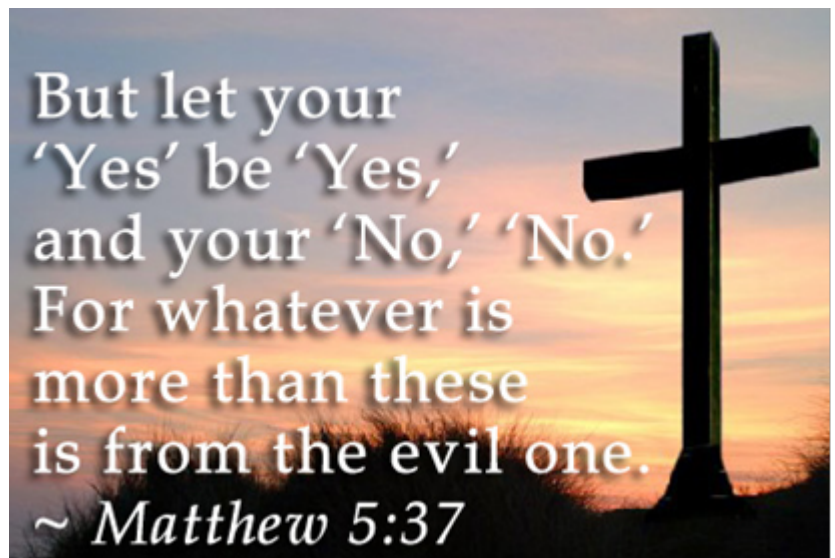
Trinity Lutheran Church

Pastor David Nehrenz

www.tlcnorman.org

TEXT AND STUDY NOTES

(12) But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either **by heaven** or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.



(Gen 21:23,24; 50:5; Lev 19:12; Dt 6:13; 10:20; 1 Sam 24:21,22; Ps 24:4; 63:11; Is 65:16; Mal 3:5; Mt 5:33-37; 23:16-22; 26:62-66,74; Mark 14:71; Lk 6:28; Rom 12:14; Heb 3:18; 6:13-16)

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT – Luther’s Small Catechism

Thou shalt not take **the name of the Lord, thy God**, in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love **God** that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by **His name**, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Second Commandment - Luther’s Large Catechism

49 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

51 If, then, it be asked: How do you understand the Second Commandment, or what is meant by taking in vain, or misusing **God’s name**? answer briefly thus: It is misusing **God’s name** when we call upon **the Lord God**, no matter in what way, for purposes of falsehood or wrong of any kind. Therefore this commandment enjoins this much, that **God’s name** must not be appealed to falsely, or taken upon the lips, while the heart knows well enough, or should know, differently; as among those who take oaths in court, where one side lies against the other. 52 For **God’s name** cannot be misused worse than for the support of falsehood and deceit.

54 But, the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the conscience, when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as **God’s Word**.

62 Thus you now understand what it is to take **God’s name** in vain, that is (to recapitulate briefly), either simply for purposes of falsehood, and to allege **God’s name** for something that is not so, or to curse, swear, conjure, and, in short, to practice whatever wickedness one may.

63 Besides this you must also know how to use **the name [of God]** aright. For when saying: Thou shalt not take **the name of the Lord, thy God**, in vain, He gives us to understand at the same time that it is to be used properly. For it has been revealed and given to us for the very purpose that it may be of constant use and profit.

64 Hence it is a natural inference, since using **the holy name** for falsehood or wickedness is here forbidden, that we are, on the other hand, commanded to employ it for truth and for all good, as when one swears truly where there is need and it is demanded. So also when there is right teaching, and when the name is invoked in

trouble or praised and thanked in prosperity, etc.; all of which is comprehended summarily and commanded in the passage Ps. 50:15: Call upon **Me** in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt **glorify Me**. For all this is bringing it into the service of truth, and using it in a blessed way, and thus His name is hallowed, as we pray in **the Lord's Prayer**.

65 Thus you have the sum of the entire commandment explained. And with this understanding the question with which many teachers have troubled themselves has been easily solved, to wit, why swearing is prohibited in **the Gospel - Matt 5:24ff, James 5:12; Matt 5:33-37; 26:29; Acts 21:20-26**, and yet **Christ**, St. Paul, and other saints often swore. 66 The explanation is briefly this:

We are not to swear in support of evil, that is, of falsehood, and where there is no need or use; but for the support of good and the advantage of our neighbor we should swear.

For it is a truly good work, by which **God is praised**, truth and right are established, falsehood is refuted, peace is made among men, obedience is rendered, and quarrels are settled. For in this way **God Himself** interposes and separates between right and wrong, good and evil.

70 On the other hand, they should be constantly urged and incited to honor **God's name**, and to have it always upon their lips in everything that may happen to them or come to their notice. For that is the true honor of His name, to look to it and implore it for all consolation, so that (as we have heard above) first the heart by faith gives **God** the honor due Him, and afterwards the lips by confession.

73 For this end it is also of service that we form the habit of daily commending ourselves to **God**, with soul and body, wife, children, servants, and all that we have, against every need that may occur; whence also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals, and other prayers, morning and evening, have originated and remain in use. 74 Likewise the practice of children to cross themselves when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard, and to exclaim: "**Lord God**, protect us!" "Help, **dear Lord Jesus!**" etc. Thus, too, if any one meets with unexpected good fortune, however trivial, that he say:

"God be praised and thanked; this God has bestowed on me!"

Commentary on James – "The Epistle of Faith" – Dr. David Scaer - CPH

similar to the Sermon on the Mount. It is an abbreviated variation of the following section from the Sermon:

Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is His footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil [or "the evil one"] (Matt. 5:33-37).

LIFE APPLICATION

Let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no.

How does this describe a person who is true to his word before God and man?

"Be a man of your word"