

<sup>6</sup> *I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word.* <sup>7</sup> *Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.* <sup>8</sup> *For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.*”

Text: John 17:6-8 A 6-21-26 Exodus 34:5-8 James 5:12-15 Psalm 54 Responsive Psalm: 145  
Hymns: 4, 10, 19, 27

### HONOR GOD’S NAME

All praise to God, who reigns above, The God of all creation.  
The God of wonders, power and love, The God of our salvation.  
With healing balm my soul He fills, The God who every sorrow stills,—  
To God all praise and glory!

What God’s almighty power hath made His gracious mercy keepeth;  
By morning dawn or evening shade His watchful eye ne’er sleepeth;  
Within the kingdom of His might, Lo, all is just and all is right—  
To God all praise and glory!

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Our text is part of Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” to His Father. Jesus tells His Father, “*I have manifested Your name*” to the disciples. Jesus taught the disciples about God. When we hear the name of someone we know, we think about that person and what we know about him. When we hear the name, “God,” we think about God and what we know about Him. Where do we learn the truth about God? Jesus knows His Father personally. He told His disciples the truth about His Father. Jesus didn’t make things up about His Father. To know the truth about God, we don’t put together a picture of Him that we learn from movies and magazines and documentaries, from what we think we know about God, from what people say about God, or from other such sources. We learn the truth about God from the Bible.

We read in 1 John 4:9, “*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*” One thing that stands out about God is that He is a loving God. God has the power to be anything. Many of the gods the world has come up with are mean, fickle (doing whatever they want to do because they can’t be stopped), uncaring, and other bad things. How blessed we are that God, the living God who really exists, is loving! “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:16, my emphasis). God loves everyone so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us. As the Bible says, “*God is love.*” (1 Jn. 4:8, 16)

For Jesus' sake God is a loving, merciful, forgiving God. We come before God, weighed down with our sin and guilt, repenting of our sins. We may wonder, "Can God love me?" "Will God forgive me?" Yes, God can and does love us. Yes, God forgives us. Romans 5:8 says, "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" We are sinners. Jesus died for sinners. Jesus died for us. Jesus says, "*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*" (Lk. 19:10)

We know that God is a loving God because the Bible says He is. Whenever we need the assurance that God loves us and forgives us, all we need to do is look in the Bible. There God tells us over and over again that when we tell Him we're sorry for our sins, He forgives us. Jesus says to His Father about the disciples, "*They ... have known surely that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.*" The Son of God came to save us. As true God and true Man, Jesus lived a perfect life for us. Jesus died for our sins on the cross, and rose again. By His perfect life and innocent suffering and death, Jesus saved us. We're saved just by believing in Jesus. Jesus said to His Father about His disciples, "*You gave them to Me.*" Jesus says in John 6:37, "*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" God has given us faith in Jesus, and we're saved!

When we hear the name of someone we know, someone we love, we think good things about that person. If we hear bad things about that person, we speak up for him. If someone is saying things about God that aren't true, we need to say so. We need to say what the Bible says.

The Second Commandment is, "*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain*" (Ex. 20:7). "*In vain*" in the original refers to "*emptiness, nothingness; emptiness of speech, lying.*" A popular expression these days is, "Oh, my God!" If someone is saying that without thinking about it, as simply an expression of surprise (or some such thing), that's not good. That's taking God's name in vain.

As we heard, taking God's name in vain can also refer to lying. Some people will say, "I swear to God" when they're talking about something. We're supposed to believe that they're telling the truth. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't. If they're lying, that's taking God's name in vain. In conversations with others, just tell the truth. Then people will know they can trust your word. There's no need to try to back up what you say with an oath. James says, "*Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your 'Yes,' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' lest you fall into judgment*" (Jms 5:12). (By the way, Jesus allowed Himself to be put under oath by the Sanhedrin – the Jewish legal authorities: Mt. 26:63-64. Therefore it's not wrong for us to take an oath before legal authorities.)

Martin Luther explains the Second Commandment in this way: "We should fear and love God that we do not use His name to curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie, or deceive; but we should call upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." Isn't it strange when people who don't believe in God use His name as a swear word?! Using God's name as a swear word has no place in our vocabulary. When we speak God's name, we want to speak about Him in

such a way that honors and glorifies Him. Do we place at least some trust in our “sign” (“I’m a Pisces,” “I’m a Sagittarius” ...), or in a lucky whatever, or in a horoscope, or in a fortune teller, or in something else besides God? We need to place our trust in God alone for this life and for the life to come. Do we sometimes leave out certain details of what we said or did try to make ourselves look better? We need to be truthful with God, truthful with ourselves, and truthful with others. God says in Psalm 50:15, “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*” As Luther says, we “pray, praise, and give thanks” to God.

Jesus told the truth about Himself, that He is God’s Son and our Savior (Lk. 22:66-70; Jn. 4:26). Jesus told the truth about His Father, that He is the living God, the almighty God, our Creator, the eternal God, the God who saves us. Jesus said, “*I have come ... to do ... the will of Him who sent Me*” (Jn. 6:38). Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, “*He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street*” (Is. 42:2). Jesus humbly carried out His Father’s will for our salvation. He didn’t talk back to His Father, or rebel against Him, or defy Him. Jesus perfectly trusted in His Father. Jesus perfectly did what His Father told Him to do. Jesus is our example to follow, and Jesus saves us.

When we hear the name of someone we know, love, and respect, we think good things about that person and say good things about that person. In the Second Commandment God refers to Himself as “*your God*”: “*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain*” (my emphasis). God is not a far-away God who doesn’t care about us. God is “*our God*” who loves us and cares about us, as He showed by sacrificing His Son to save us. When we hear God’s name, the God whom we love and reverence, the loving God, the God of our salvation, we honor God with our attitude, we honor God with our words, we honor God with our lives. Dear fellow believers, **HONOR GOD’S NAME.**

The Lord forsaketh not His flock, His chosen generation;  
 He is their Refuge and their Rock, Their Peace and their Salvation.  
 As with a mother’s tender hand He leads His own, His chosen band—  
 To God all praise and glory!

Ye who confess Christ’s holy name, To God give praise and glory!  
 Ye who the Father’s power proclaim, To God give praise and glory!  
 All idols under foot be trod, The Lord is God! The Lord is God!  
 To God all praise and glory! Amen.