

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

LOOSE LIPS SINK BATTLE SHIPS

James 5:12 “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.”

Sailors have it ingrained in them to not speak in public about their ship, what is on it, where they are going or its condition. Any of this information in the hands of an enemy can be used to attack and even sink the ship. Watching what is said is for the safety and well being of all the crew and the ship itself.

James’ words today remind me of this warning to sailors. “Do not swear (take an oath), either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no. . .” I’m going to expand James’ words in this devotion just a bit to include all the words you say, not just oaths.

Have you noticed in our society the casual, thoughtless use of God’s name? From the youngest of children to the aged the exclamation “O my God” (OMG) is a favorite phrase when someone is excited or sees something that is beautiful or special. The name of Jesus is used much more frequently as an expletive, an unnecessary word, especially when angry, upset, frustrated, etc. than to honor, worship and reverence Him as Lord and Savior.

God commands that you take great care in how you use His name. God desires us to use His name in worship, prayer and witness. We are to use His name when an oath is necessary for His glory or for the welfare of our neighbor such as when giving testimony in court, taking an oath of office or speaking a wedding vow. God forbids us to use His name “falsely, thoughtlessly, or in sinful, uncertain, or unimportant matters.” (Small Catechism, p. 63)

God wants you to use His name in prayer, praising and in giving Him thanks. Through the Psalmist God invites you to “Call upon Me in the day of trouble. . .” (Ps. 50:15) The Psalmist urges, “Praise the Lord . . . praise His holy name.” (Ps. 103:1) The Psalmist encourages you to “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

His love endures forever.” (Ps 118:1) Use God’s name in a manner that gives testimony to your faith in Him and gives Him honor and glory.

Prayer: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14)

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds In a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, And drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole And calms the heart’s unrest;
‘Tis manna to the hungry soul And to the weary, rest.

Dear name! The rock on which I build, My shield and hiding place;
My never failing treasury filled With boundless stores of grace.

O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend. My Prophet, Priest and King,
My Lord, my life, my way, my end, Accept the praise I bring.

How weak the effort of my heart, How cold my warmest thought!
But when I see Thee as Thou art, I’ll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim With ev’ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name Refresh my soul in death!
(LSB 524)