

Reverence for God

by Paul van Engelenhoven

This sermon emphasizes the seriousness of blasphemy by delving into the story of an unknown man's death in Leviticus, highlighting the consequences of misusing God's name. It explores the reverence for God's majesty, justice, transcendency, nearness, and holiness, stressing the importance of living a life of worship and holiness to avoid blasphemy.

Scripture: Leviticus 20:10, Leviticus 24:10, Psalms 99:3, Psalms 99:6, Psalms 99:9, 2 Corinthians 3:18

Topics: "Reverence for God's Name", "Consequences of Blasphemy"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the seriousness of blasphemy by delving into the story of an unknown man's death in Leviticus, highlighting the consequences of misusing God's name. It explores the reverence for God's majesty, justice, transcendency, nearness, and holiness, stressing the importance of living a life of worship and holiness to avoid blasphemy.

Transcript

Worship to him who sits on the throne of heaven. Now to get and understand Psalm 99 and the seriousness of blasphemy, I want to take you to a story in the book of Leviticus that describes the history of the death of an unknown man. Leviticus 20 verses 10 verses 11 to 17.

If you have your Bibles please turn with me to Leviticus chapter 24. Actually I'll start in verse 10. Now an Israelite woman's son whose father was an Egyptian went out among the people of Israel and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name and cursed.

Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Debre and the tribe of Dan. They put him in custody till the will of the Lord should be clear to them.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, bring out of the camp the one who cursed and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head. That is they bring the condemnation upon him for what entered into their ears and let all the congregation stone him and speak to the people of Israel saying whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.

All the congregation shall stone him the sojourner as well as the native when he blasphemes the name shall be whoever who when he blasphemes the name shall be put to death. This is a traumatic story isn't it

about this young man we never read his name. We don't know who he is and the reason why is that his name is not worthy to be recorded.

He is not worthy to be remembered because he misused the name that you notice it's rare that the Bible uses this word the name to identify that in the same sentence of a blasphemer you're not going to bring the name of God even to a close proximity even in the text. In other words this man was so filthy so vile and so horribly sinful that his name was not to be written down unless anyone should honor him by his name and when he sins it's not going to say the name of God because his sin is so horrifying. As a result the boy is stoned his name is to be forgotten and not just executed somewhere in a dark corner no he has to be publicly executed outside away so that his name will forever be forgotten that he will only be known as the name the son of that woman and she is named.

This is the seriousness of the honor of the name of the Lord. You see he is not in the story he is not going against God or going up on a mountain and trying to curse God no this is a man that in a fight with somebody else misuses the name of God. He takes the name of God lightly and as a result he is to be stoned to death his name is to be eradicated so that no one will ever remember his name.

Now there are many today who misuse the name of God it's all around and they are not stoned. We don't see stones flying from heaven or the servants of God going around stoning everyone who misuses God's name in vain and so they seem to go free as God lowered his standards his blasphemy no longer a great sin well make no mistake about it they are marked by God because this stoning is only a prophecy of the judgment that will fall on those who blaspheme God's name. Those who misuse God's name are marked by God and in a way they're living dead men they're on their way to judgment to stand before God and be judged by God's eternal stoning.

Arguably the greatest sin in all the bible is the sin of blasphemy using the name of God in vain. Now it is my purpose and intention to show you today why this is so terrible and I could go into how what the name means in Hebrew that it describes the character or describes the the being of God and that's why it's terrible and all those things but then I would just be able to persuade your mind. I want you to be persuaded in your heart you see you're very persuaded in your heart that I should not misuse the name of your spouse right man if I were misusing your spouse name or if I was making fun of your spouse in front of you you would be ready to pick up a stone you would say my wife's honor you do not put on the line how much more God's name how much more the God who created us who formed us who sent his son to die for us and assert the eternal judgment in himself on the cross well if we rightly understand Psalm 99 we will hate blasphemy the way God does what is the opposite of blasphemy what's the opposite of blasphemy it's worship it's praise right for us it's not enough not to blaspheme right as Christians we're not just silent people we're not like the rocks or the trees or the stones or the mountains or the hills or the valleys it's not enough to be quiet we must not only not not blaspheme we must come to the other side as the new testament reveals we must live a life of worship to God walking in front of God in holiness in reverence in love in fear walking with God like Enoch oh I wish that we would know more about Enoch for Enoch walked with God and he was no more for God took him that's the life we are to live and so if we understand this as followers of Jesus Christ to say we shouldn't abuse the name of God if we stop there we've fallen short isn't it we must live a life in which our hearts our minds our lips are praising God that with Paul we can say I worship my Lord from my spirit from the bottom of my heart I sing my life is constant praise to God I do all things for God because he is worthy I wake up in the morning and I get out of my bed because I can live another day for the glory of God that's the life isn't it that is to keep the commandment you see if we look at how Jesus Christ fulfilled this commandment it wasn't that he just

abused God's name he did whatever God desired in every way that's the footsteps that we follow by grace through faith and so what I want to lead you through tonight is five points and they're these reverence for his majesty reverence for his justice reverence for his transcendency reverence for his nearness and reverence for his holiness now I'm not a native speaker and so I might pick the wrong words sometimes in my bullet points but by the word reverence what I really mean is that mixture of fear love joy carefulness holiness in the heart by which we walk in worship before God right this way that Christ walked on the earth and the reason why I picked these topics is because these come forth in Psalm 99 and the reason why I want to bring these forward is because these are just a few highlights but we could go on and on and I could preach till my dying day with reverence for fill in the blank I could go into reverence for and name everything of God the Father and of God the Son and of God the Holy Spirit and then I could do reverence for and do the Trinity and all their wonderful attributes and what they have done and reverence for the actions that they've done and reverence for the promises he has made I can fill the entire Bible or I can preach on the entire Bible with reverence for because ultimately from Genesis to Revelation everything is coming to us we might have reverence for God that we might love God walk with God fear God worship God praise God and so let us begin with reverence for his majesty please open your Bibles to Psalm 99 we'll look at the first three verses this is what it says the Lord reigns let the peoples tremble he sits enthroned upon a cherubim let the earth quake the Lord is great in Zion he is exalted over all the peoples let them praise your great and awesome name holy is he the psalmist opens our eyes so that we can see things that our natural eyes cannot see you may have seen part of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth and you see a little bit of earthly majesty you see men standing in reverence and fear before an earthly regent an earthly king or queen but these words that the psalmist brings to us is far greater isn't it because if you doesn't matter what king you are doesn't matter if you were Caesar himself the earth did not begin to shake before you the mountains wouldn't tremble because you're just a man made out of the dust of the earth you're just a piece of this earth made out of dust but what we see here is the eternal God seated upon his throne now I want to read it to you in another way and I don't mean to add to the scripture I just want you to see a reality we could read it this way today the Lord reigns let the people tremble today he sits enthroned upon the cherubim let the earth quake today the Lord is great in Zion today he is exalted over all the peoples therefore let them praise your great and awesome name for holy is he he is right now seated on the throne he is right now worthy that all the nations tremble before him and worship him from the bottom of their hearts he is seated right now and sees with his eyes us sitting here this night this is not something of two thousand years ago this is eternal in a million years he still sits above the cherubim his sovereignty rules over all the people of the earth all our lives are in his hands he can decide the very beats of our heart and when it stops the pressure of our blood the ability to breathe oxygen is taken up and our blood system is decided by him and he can stop it at any moment he is majestic there's nothing that is outside his control before him or below him are the cherubim those fiery angels before whom we would quake and fall in reverence and fear and yet before God they cover their eyes and cover their feet and say holy holy holy all the nations belong to him and it says in Isaiah they are but a drop in a bucket all the majesty all the pomp all the anxiety that you have listened to on the news this week or what if the democrats are gonna do this or the republicans or russia or china or korea ukraine all the news you get is a little drop in a bucket you wouldn't even notice it if you would see God you would have to look carefully in comparison to God and look on the vastness of heaven and look for a bucket somewhere hidden in the vastness of heaven and on that bucket there is hanging a little drop on the edge and you realize that's that's all the nations of the earth you grasp the majesty of God i think if the smallest angel the least of the least the lowest rank of angels or wherever these things are organized if one of those would walk in here and live among us we would all fall in love with that angel and say nothing more perfect has ever been

made like this are no human eyes have ever behold something so beautiful something so glorious something so delightful and something so beautiful when you enter into heaven the angels are simply the servants of God there are but a dim reflection you know if you love small things i used to walk to school and in the netherlands we have the dew coming up and then a sun coming through and sometimes you would see these these beautiful intricate spider webs and then the dew would be upon it and it'd be just filled with all these little tiny drops and then the sun would shine through and when you look carefully it beams with brilliant light and all these single drops and you look at it and you say wow it's beautiful it's made by God and he can make an infinite number of them but all these things and all the glory and the beauty of the things that our eyes long for and love for is but a reflection of God but the backside of his glory of his majesty however you can fill your heart let's say we would sponsor you to become the most delightful or the most happy person on earth and we would all gather our money together come up with the most wild and wonderful ideas send you across the world and in super luxury buy a plane for you make you travel the world and see all the beautiful sights of heaven you would never have to work you would you'd be in absolute comfort all the days of your life we guarantee your future until you die we guarantee the best of everything and you would enjoy that until you're 120 still in good health and you were done you have but seen the outskirts of the shadow of the reflection of God's glory we don't understand the majesty of God we don't understand the majesty of the one to whom we pray so easily in the morning we wake up and we say heavenly father walk with us today and help us not realizing that our voice enters into the deepest side of heaven where God sits upon the throne where God himself receives our prayers with his very own ears and his heart is stirred with love and responds to our prayers oh that we could see a little bit of his majesty more every day you see my my prayers when I pray for you I always pray this that you would see God more and I always add myself to it and me too lord that together we would see God more that was Paul's desire wasn't it that together we would see the length and the breadth and height and the depth of the love of God that together as we we all run as much as we can to see the glory of God as much as we can and we we fill our eyes and our mind and our hearts with the glory of God then we share it and then together we get this vast landscape of the love of God that's my hope that we grow in that that every week we speak to each other we see more of the love of God our hearts are stirred up more not to see if we can argue with one another can define something more precisely or sure that's important but to love God is key to love God and therefore if we see that and we taste if you have tasted that the lord is good why would we ever blaspheme this holy name which brings me to my second point I realize that my time is going to be short so stay on board as we go through reverence for his justice psalm 99 verses 3 to 5 let them praise your great and awesome name beloved the word awesome here means awesome not the way that we use it awesome a hamburger is not awesome a sports player is not awesome he's just a sports player it's a piece of meat but God is awesome where if you would come into his presence you would stand in awe you would stand and your mouth would drop and just stand in awe and if would God if God would not supernaturally strengthen you you would stand there in awe for a million years and your body would be as revitalized as it ever could be because you would see something of his glory well let's go on and appraise your great name an awesome name holy as he the king in his might loves justice you have established equity you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob or in Israel exalt the lord our God worship at his footstool holy is he the second reason for praise to God is that the psalmist notes is his justice God is a justice loving God in this world many of our leaders and the peoples in high places lose their respect and their reverence for their office by injustice injustice we soon find out that even the most respectable human beings are but people and faulty ones at that and the great political game of our day is to cover up your past as much as you can so that nobody finds out who you truly are that the wickedness that rules and even the hearts of the most

respectable people in our day is what takes them shows them that they are like us people that are in just and in need of God's power but not so with God he is perfectly just his character his actions all his thoughts and doings are perfectly just there's never anything that God does or does not say that is not perfectly just there's nothing dishonorable in God all of us will look at God hear his words see his action for a billion upon billions upon billions of years for all eternity and never in all eternity will we see anything that is wrong can you grasp that with your mind can you draw a line that has no end in your mind you cannot understand it you've never seen it except in the Lord Jesus Christ but even if the apostles wrote down the life of Jesus that there was no sin in him as soon as it was written on paper and Jesus was gone we don't understand it anymore is it we've never seen one who is truly just there's so much talk about justice in every way and I'm all for justice but at the end of the day we're like little ants trying to decide what justice is as we walk around in a little cup the only time that we can truly see and find justice is if we come to God and the only way that we can truly reflect that justice is when we look at God and he transforms our hearts and it opens our hearts that we walk in justice we must speak with this name in the deepest reverence because there has never been anything unjust in him oh that there would be a leader let me let me take it back let me that there would be one hour of pure justice in the world in every way wouldn't that be glorious every hour there is wickedness going on in every city in the world there is injustice in the homes there's injustice on the streets there's injustice everywhere and maybe you're part of that and maybe you need to have a full drink of seeing the justice of God so that you're reflecting in this mirror so that you can see what you do to your husband or your wife how you treat your spouse how you treat your parents or your children how you treat your neighbors or the people of this world oh that we could see the majesty of his justice thirdly reverence for his transcendency exalt the Lord our God worship at his footstool holy is he the Lord our God is above the heavens he is above all the earth is but his footstool the entire earth with all its complexities before God is as simple as a wooden toy hammer to us there's nothing complicated about it he fully understands these he fully sees and knows everything he's not like us and bigger like like us and better like us and stronger or like us and wiser he is altogether different he's God and we're but the reflection of his glory he is transcendent he is God that created the one who brought matter and time into existence try to wrap your mind around that the God who created time who created existence you cannot grasp it it's like an ant trying to understand a math test for a human being all he can do is walk on it and see black ink it's beyond us he is unlike anything we have ever seen or anything we have ever understood we consider gold and diamonds as valuable but he created the world with one word we consider the galaxies to be enormous in size he holds them in his hands we consider the sand of the sea as numerous or numerous but he knows its position of every grain of sand and the history of what it ever has been if you see a dust flying when the sun comes in through the window and you see a spectacle of dust he has seen that speck of dust for 6,000 years and he can tell you where it was on what millisecond anywhere through its history he knows every thought you've ever thought he knows even the intentions of your thoughts that never came to the forefront of your mind do you grasp if you grasp this you can come forward and take over because i can't all i can do is wonder i've said this before but even mankind with all its wisdom has not made one blade of grass and even if man could make one blade of grass god would raise the bar and says okay make it out of nothing he is transcendent he can make matter and it's not a trick he can make a cow with a word can you make something with your words i can ask you something but i cannot make anything with my words all i can do with my words is destroy things i can destroy your heart with my words but i cannot create but god oh our god to him to us we think oh the cherubim and their glory and their might what a glorious sight a cherubim would be to god a cherubim and earthworm are pretty much alike he created the one as well as the other for god it's as easy to create an earthworm and create a cherubim that can kill a what was it 40 some thousand men in a night for him it's as easy to create a rock as to

create an entire nation that's why jesus says or that's why it says in the bible out of the rocks he can bring forth praise god is transcendent and it's the greatest privilege for us tonight here to speak about god and to hear about god to receive god's words and to say that we want to follow god and we believe god and we pray to god oh how dark is the sin of blasphemy i think if god would not restrain the angels every one of your co-workers who has ever blasphemed would die as quick as the blade of a cherubim could fly can you imagine the fierce anger of the angels of god towards those who blaspheme his holy name they have loved their god for at least six thousand years how much do you think they would get angry if they see you blaspheme his holy name and yet god restrains his anger perhaps many of us have been blasphemers in our words have misused the name of god god stood his angels back and he says wait and the angel says good you're going to strike him down that paul there deserves the fiery strike of the almighty god says no i'm going to send my son to die and receive that strike that he deserves so that paul can go free oh let us draw near to him in reverence then reverence for his nearness for six and seven in the pillars of the clouds he spoke to them they kept his testimonies and the statues that he gave to them sorry i forgot six moises and aaron were among his priests samuel also among those who called upon his name they called to the lord and he answered them they called to the lord and he answered them do you grasp this the god who we've just described as this amazing god who knows all things who has all things in his hands these dust worms called to him and he answered them not only that he went in front of them he walked and marched them through the desert when this man moises and aaron moises whose blood the blood of this egyptian has just dried up i said i've been dripping from his hand as he murdered this man moises who stood against god and says i don't want to go i don't want to speak to you well i'll let you do miracles i still don't want it let somebody else go this moises said god can you help and god stood up from his throne and stepped in to help the god who formed the heavens and the earth stepped into the life of moises and even when moises says i want to see you show me your glory we think wow what a reference what a pure motivation and god loved it but if you think about it does god really have to show up when an earthworm stands and say i would like you to walk by me god did showed moises his glory you know why because this transcendent god is a loving god who loves to come near to his people it loves to come near to his people he loves it when you and i pray speak to god he loves to answer our prayers i can give you many verses this is not once in a hidden corner in scripture this is in many verses the bible almost constantly says pray pray pray pray pray why is that because god wants you to come near to him so that he come near to you if you look in the mirror you say well i'm not much to look at or i'm getting old who cares about me or maybe you're at the end of your life and you had dreams where you're young you thought i'm going to do all these things and by the end of life you realize i didn't really accomplish anything of what i thought i would accomplish you're depressed you look at your life and you say it's useless it's pretty much nothing realize that god listens to your prayers i'd rather be able to pray than to be the president of the united states it is a greater privilege to pray in the name of jesus christ than to rule the most powerful nation in human history it is greater honor when an old weary body sits down comes down to his or her knees and say god help me to pray and the earth with its nations that should tremble before god are in a way set aside and god listens to that person god is a god who comes near oh that we would grasp the privilege of prayer not just the possibilities i mean they're endless but just the privilege that we would speak more to god than to other human beings try to spend a week speaking more to god than speaking to other human beings you don't speak that much to other people unless your your job is continuous talking but even then spend a week more time talking to god and to other people and you'll find yourself after that week more joyful more strengthened more glowing with his glory than you can ever imagine right now yet why do we not take that privilege if the transcendent god comes near you see i i often the most frightening thing of a service for me is to pray and yet it's the most glorious because what i realize is when i pray it doesn't matter whether i'm

fluent or not or whether i make mistakes or not or whether my mind is fuzzy or not but we draw near to the throne of god that's privilege that's glorious well let me move on quick to point five reverence for his holiness which brings me to the last point in verses three six and nine the description keeps coming back for god is holy god is holy god is holy that's the the refrain if you will he is holy in his majesty he is holy in his justice he is holy in his transcendency he is holy in his nearness because of his majesty he is holy because of his justice he is holy because of his transcendency he is holy because of he's near he is holy holy he is the one by whom all things were created for whom all things were created and to whom all things were created he is separate from us he is different from this fallen world he is holy and in the bible if you're a christian this evening you are called holy saints belonging to the holiness of god you do not belong to this world your eyesight will never be satisfied in this world you see we invite people to come to christ and we say you receive incredible riches from christ and we're true but usually what we forget to say is you'll lose your appetite for anything in this world the things you used to love no longer gives you joy the pleasure you used to have the things you used to watch and would make you relax now just makes you restless you no longer love the things of this world but you love the things of god you receive holy appetites which simply means the appetite that god has becomes your appetite and now you walk with him but time fails me to lay out the fullness of his holiness let me just bring it back to this why was the blasphemy of the young man worthy of this terrible death by stoning the answer is this because god is holy and those who walk before god must be holy why were the sons of aaron struck down with fire from heaven because those who draw near to god who present god must treat him as holy why did a man die because he touched the ark because even the ark of god is holy you see every every sin that we commit is blasphemy because you and i were made to reflect god's glory in god's name on earth and everything you do that insults his name is blasphemy when you lie you're blaspheming god's holy name because what you're representing is i am created in the image of god and god is a liar if you gossip you're blaspheming if you're unkind and unloving and unforgiving and bitter you're blaspheming the name of god you see this touches everything it's not for nothing that james says if you break one commandment you break the entire law now if that's true is there any hope you see if i said it tonight we don't blaspheme anymore that means don't use the name of god in vain all of us would pump our chest and walk out and say got that one down at least i hope so if you're actually misusing the name of god in vain with your words doesn't matter if you hit your finger or not if you actually do that you should really look into your own heart if you even know the lord but that's not what blasphemy that's not the totality of blasphemy so how can we live in a way that we don't blaspheme god's name is it by not doing anything wrong to look at our lives and to take one step at a time and think making sure we don't do anything wrong and take another step and i think i'm not sure do anything wrong when somebody says to us we take 10 minutes to process the question and then respond after 10 minutes making sure that in our attention in our thoughts and in our hearts there's nothing wrong in our response to whatever conversation that'd be impossible what we need is to worship god from the heart in a way we need the heart of god in us not to blaspheme his name we need not just christ in front of us we need christ in us so that when we've suddenly overtaken by stress or anxiety or pain we respond as christ responds that's what christ promises that's what it means to live by faith that's what it means to live by faith now how does that happen well first of all when somebody comes to christ he receives a new heart he is circumcised of heart so the foundation is laced of christ living in the heart but then we must grow in degrees of holiness we must go holier and holier and holier and holier how do we do that well the people in galatians thought okay we start with christ and then we try to do really hard and then we get better and better we got the foundation we got a good example we got the foundation of christ and now we're going to really hard we're going to squint our our eyes and and press with all our minds and then we're going to produce fruits so most people do so you and i attempted to do to try to do it in our own

strength it'll never work so long you look in the mirror the more spots you will find that need to be washed but you'll never find the water that actually washes it away the bible tells us a much better way a higher road it's this second corinthians 3 18 and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the lord in other words you look away from the mirror and you look to heaven you see christ seated on the right hand side of god are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another for this comes from the lord who is the spirit are being transformed into the same image are you doing the transforming or is it done to you it's done to you the only action here is the beginning beholding the glory of the lord you see that are being transformed if you say i have such a difficult heart that i'm wrestling with you'll never win your heart will outmaneuver your best strategies i can give you 10 steps that may have worked in some way in my art but as soon as you hit you whack them all it will pop out another way you can clean the outside by yourself but you cannot clean the inside and so the way of the gospel is this you look to christ and as your eyes are fixed upon christ the holy spirit is transforming you renewing your mind renewing your heart making you more like christ every day it's the opposite of the pharisees see the pharisees looked at at the law without god or without christ they look at the law and they try to okay there's a spot here and they take their dirty hands and they try to rub it here now all of you who care about clean clothes if you take a spot out with dirty hands what kids like to do it makes it worse right instead of a little dot now it's a big smear the dot is gone because it's covered in the smear it's when you do it by your own strength i should no longer should be proud no longer should be arrogant but in your heart it's boiling up and boiling up and every time you think don't be arrogant it's it's raging through and you don't show it but oh if somebody crosses you off in traffic and there's no other christian around and it's not sunday morning or afternoon boom you explode like a bomb but if you look at christ he will transform you from one degree of glory to the next and then to the next and then to the next and every time like the layers of an onion it gets more pure and more intense you become holy because he is holy amen let us pray dear heavenly father what a privilege to say your name to worship you and the beauty of holiness and the love of god that is poured out into our hearts through the holy spirit father i pray that these dear people myself would go from one degree of glory to another

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