

March 26

“THERE IS NO OTHER”

Deuteronomy 6:13

Special Music: “There is None Like You”

Lenny LeBlanc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx8hBj9UXhk>

THERE IS NO OTHER

*Fear the LORD your God, serve him  
only and take your oaths in his name.*

*Deuteronomy 6:13*

**FOUNDATIONS  
OF LENT**

**Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.**

**Deuteronomy 6:13**

## **THE ONLY NAME THAT MATTERS**

**Search me, oh God.**

**Look beyond this mortal cask**

**And find my soul,**

**That nugget of life that you caste**

**To make me... well me.**

**You say that I am made**

**In your image.**

**Yet, can you see me in your mirror?**

**If you do,**

**Do your own eyes stare back at you?**

**Or am I a mirror darkly,**

**Falsely reflective?**

**If all creation vanished**

**Into cosmic, iconic dust,**

**Would I remain?**

**Am I not a part of you,**

**A child and heir?**

**Search me, oh God.**

**Find my still beating heart**

**The one that once was stone**

**And is now rendered in flesh.**

**Does my heart**

**Beat for your children?**

**Does it share their pain?**

**Can they feel the warmth**

**Of your love  
When I draw near?  
Can they trust the image of God  
That is found in me?  
Or is the image so warped  
They cannot see you, my Creator?  
Is my soul soiled and ugly,  
Spoiled by my reticence?  
Is this temple of flesh  
So tarnished by my selfishness  
That it has become  
Unrecognizable?**

**You, Father, are the Creator,  
The great caretaker of souls.  
Only you can make my spirit presentable  
In such a way  
That people see you,  
Want you,  
Desire your presence in their lives.  
When I take their hands in mine.  
Let it be your name on my tongue...  
Let it be your reflection on my soul.  
Let it be that there is no other name  
That parts my lips.  
Yours is the only name that matters.**

I know a historian that is very much into genealogy. Seems logical really. She took a great interest in my genealogy. Probably because she is related to me, and I am the namesake for the Wellborn side of the family. My driver's license and social security card say that I am Walter Hope Wellborn III, but my mother always told me I was the twenty-seventh. Who knows. I have no urge to rectify that and I have met a number of people that thought it was strange that I don't care. I mean, everyone wants to know where they come from, right? It simply doesn't matter to me.

My dad was a good man, a proud man. I never met a single person who had something bad to say about my father. Ever. He was strong, dedicated, with a sharp mind and good with his hands. He was also a great provider for his family and a faithful follower of Christ. I loved my dad.

But I never really knew my grandparents. And in truth, the more I learned about them, I was kind of glad. It was not that I was ashamed of them, I just began to believe that maybe the past should remain in the past. And as this genealogist started digging around into my family history, I was wishing that the dead would stay buried. In Alabama, there is a Walter Wellborn High School. Maybe if I had come from that kind of stock I would feel different. But, in truth, I don't believe any child should be held accountable for the actions of their ancestors. Don't we all have enough baggage to carry around from our own lives?

On that same note, I had an email come across my desk from a Rabbi that said that he had a research team that could tell me what my name means in

Hebrew. Well, that sounded kind of interesting since Walter is Germanic and Wellborn is Old English. It didn't cost anything. So, I wrote him back and told him to give it a go. It wasn't long before I received an email back that said my name Hebrew was David ( דָּוִד ). They even showed me how to spell it in Hebrew. But I am still scratching my head as to how Walter becomes David, considering the difficulties with translation. But in their defense, the name is also based on activities, posts, and other information. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt.

Here in Fort Stockton, it seems everyone here knows most everyone else and everyone's families. That is a very common thing in small towns. I get totally lost in many conversations because I don't know all the players. I don't have a history here. But, for the most part, I have found the people gracious and kind even when they talk about other people.

The history of the Jewish nation is based in names. The twelve tribes of Israel come from the sons of Jacob. History associated with names is important as well. Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Joshua, Noah, Jonah, Job, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach, Abednego, Saul, David, Jesse. When we say these names, we recall the stories as well. Back then, if people wrote something about you it was because they felt you have done something significant, good or bad. Your name also became synonymous with your reputation.

2 Chronicles 34:1-2 says this about Josiah:

**1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years.**

- 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

2 Chronicles 33:1-2 says this about Manasseh:

- 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years.
- 2 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

Once our name is Chronicled, it is difficult to step away from it. And yes, as wrong as we think it is, our children can suffer the consequences of our reputations as well. They often have to jump extra hurdles to overcome the reputation that they are saddled with because of their parents. And no, our reputations don't have to be chronicled on paper. This being a small town, most of our reputations are carried on the lips of the people around us.

We've talked about how God does not change. His truth is a rock that we can anchor our lives to. Today we are talking about the third and last temptation of Christ. Satan comes to Jesus and says in Matthew 4:8-9 **"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."** For some reason, satan thinks this is a pretty good offer. But Jesus sees it for what it is.

Think of it this way. Let's say our father owns a string of high-end department stores. One day, we walk into one of the stores and the manager

recognizes us. He immediately comes over to us and whispers in our ear, “If you will just tell your father to go away and leave us alone, I will give you everything in the store. Free. It’s all yours.” Why in the world would this offer sound attractive? I guess if we are sold on the need for immediate gratification, it might hold some merit. Still, if you take time to think about it, we are already heirs to our father’s fortune and we live pretty good lives, so all this is ours to begin with, as well as everything in all the other stores.

So, Jesus turns to Satan and says, **“Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”** He is pulling His answer straight from Deuteronomy 6:13, **‘Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.’**

My own words here: “I will serve my Creator only, and no other. His name is above all names. Any oath I take in His name will be done, for He is my rock and my salvation. I will have no other Gods before me.”

I don’t know how it was in your home growing up, but cussing was never allowed in my house. Neither was taking the Lord’s name in vain. Swearing was unpardonable no matter whose name you did swear by. How often have we heard, “I swear on my mother’s grave.” But the worse thing was when you took an oath using the name of God with the exceptions that we were in court, being sworn into the military, or were taking an oath of office. My parents took such things very seriously.

But here in Deuteronomy 6:13 we find something that we often don't think about. **“and take your oaths in his name.”** Not just certain oaths. All oaths. If the oath is truly a promise that should never be broken, we must attach the name of God to it. We must fix the promise with the seal of our Creator. And when we do that, we had better follow through with that promise because God's name is attached to it.

This is also true of vows in churches. Our Christian vows, our marriage vows, our words of baptism, our professions of faith. These are not things that we just mutter to the air. They are a promise before God, using the name of God with the absolute stipulation that will honor those vows. And when we fail to do so, God weeps in despair, as do we.

And yet, we have this strange passage of scripture over in Matthew 5:33-37 that seems to contradict what we just read:

**“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath 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 take an oath 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.**

Jesus is saying here, “Don't swear by anything. Don't take an oath at all.

Because you are a Christian. Because you belong to me. Because you are my



sheep. Your word should be good enough. Saying anything more than 'Yes' or 'No' could be considered evil and possibly a lie. It is a statement that constitutes that as a Christian it is implied that our word is our bond and our handshake as good as a vow. When we break our word or ignore our vow, we don't just damage our own reputation, but we bring dishonor to our relationship with Christ. If we can't keep our word given in the name of Christ Jesus, why should anyone believe that we are sincere about our love for Christ or His presence in our lives.

The truth that we are forced to face on a regular basis is that, although Jesus never lied, never diluted His message, always kept His promises, We, as His children, are prone to falling short. Even Paul admits to being the worst of all sinners. We do not need to lie, exaggerate, or expound beyond truth to bring people to Christ. To do so is a misrepresentation and manipulation. It is also a common practice among Christians, as much as we hate to admit it. We want God to fit into a mold that we have preset. We want Him to be a certain color or race so that we can better relate to Him. We want Him to have two legs, two arms, and a head, just like us. We want Him to be small enough that we aren't afraid of Him yet big enough to defeat any monstrous demon that crosses our paths. We want him to answer to "God" when we know His name is "Yahweh." "God" seems more familiar to us and "Yahweh" somewhat surreal and far away. We want to refer to God as Him or a Her, He or She, even though we are quite aware that God is independent of such nuances. And so many of us, while willing to make "Yahweh" our primary god, we want to keep our secondary gods as our backups, our 'sidegods'. We tell ourselves that we can never be too careful.

What if our Creator turns out not to be our Creator. Shouldn't we have a backup plan? I know a woman that was very much into "new age theology." She had all kinds of crystals, statues, incense, and other paraphernalia. When she came into a relationship with Jesus Christ, she got rid of almost all of those things. But she did not get rid of her crystals saying that they kept her grounded. God looks at that as our plan "B." If God is our God and Jesus Christ our savior, there is no plan "B." There is no need for a plan "B."

That's just satan whispering in our ears saying, **"All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me."** And us replying, "That sounds mighty tempting. Tell you what. If this whole God thing doesn't work out, I will take you up on the offer." We say this because we fail to comprehend that thinking like this is giving satan just what He wants, because it means that we aren't "all" in when it comes to our investment with God. There is a reason that most people are baptized by emersion. It is truly a representation that we are all in with God and He is all in with us. He is so into the human condition that even when we are at our worse, He is at work covering us with His grace and His mercy.

So, when Jesus cries out to satan, **"Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name,"** there is no more fundamental, reliable dependable name in all of Creation. "Fear the LORD your God, serve him only!" But I hate to say that we hold God loosely. As long as the sea is steady and the wind is calm, we will hang around. But when the seas get rough, and the lightning flashes, and the thunder booms, and the winds try to push us back, that is when we cling to God. And if things don't work out, we will just go cling to something

**else because whatever we believed must have been wrong. God didn't keep us from experiencing the storm. God never said that we wouldn't have storms in our lives. What He promised is that we would not go through the storms alone, that he would always be with us. We want God's presence only when we want it. And yet, He ignores our wants and is constantly present with us. That can annoy us. We beg for God to come when we need Him without even noticing that He is standing right beside us.**

**The name of Yahweh should always be on our lips, so that at every moment of every day we can call out praise to Him for allowing us to be in His presence.**

**I want you to try an experiment this week. Every time you pray, every time you call out to God in some way, use the name Yahweh, not because using the name "God" is wrong. But it is often generic. Yahweh is intentional. Everyone loves it when someone calls them by name. It shows an intentional desire to communicate. Yahweh is deserving of that kind of attention. When we reach out to Him, let us use His name rather than His title.**

**When we speak the name of Yahweh, we are embedding truth in our lives. And that truth is what separates us from others as God's children.**

**May Yahweh bless you all,**

**AMEN**

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