

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Right, we, uh? Come to chapter 22 in the confession. And. Uh, chapter 22 is a little bit foreign to us because we have so declined as a culture. I was in seminary before I understood the difference between an oath and a vow.

Uh, an oath is a commitment that you make to another person. Uh, placing yourself in the hands and under the judgment and at the mercy of God. As you as you do so. Uh, and a vow. Is not a commitment made to another person. It's a commitment made. Directly to the Lord in both of them.

You should be. Not acting upon God with your soul, everything in worship. The main thing in every part of worship is you're acting upon God with your soul. Whether you are offering your soul up to him in Praise, especially in song. Or crying out to him and placing your soul upon him.

Independence, and especially in prayer. Or offering up the willingness and the submission of your soul unto God, especially in hearing his word preached. Or coming with your soul to be nourished. Looking to him for help? The Lord's Supper being a meal that actually helps you helps us know how to act upon God with our souls in taking the supper because.

You're supposed to be hungry and thirsty. But the Bible even says not to be hungry and thirsty for the bread or the wine. And so, you come to feed upon to be nourished upon Christ with your soul well. And. Uh, in an oath, you are placing yourself in the hands of God, offering yourself up to his scrutiny and his judgment because you're making a promise to someone else.

But what you're saying is God's Judgment of what you are saying is infinitely more important than any, uh, any other person? You may have been at a wedding and heard someone say and just the blink of an eye before God and these Witnesses. And we tend to think of ourselves as the primary Witnesses when we're at the wedding.

Uh, but no, it's a marriage oath. And even to some extent a marriage vow, remember? In Proverbs when it talks about the adulterous, says she has forgotten the Covenant of her God. That there is an offering yourself unto God, uh, when you are getting married, not just committing yourself to one another before God.

Her marriage is from God, and marriage is for God. In a way that makes it not just an oath between the two of you, but vow unto God. Yes. Uh, I'd like to just ask for some clarification on something. Over here has spoken several people who were a man and woman they lived together, and they would say, well, we made Val promises to juggling everything else.

Your comment. I've said to them, they said, well, part of the reason for a marriage ceremony. Our Witness. Both the value made. That's the purpose. I like to know what your thoughts, how do you respond to some business? Well, we made our products with each other. Well, how I would respond to those who say we made our promise to each other?

I'd say marriage isn't yours. Promises to each other doesn't make a marriage. Marriage is from God. It's a creation ordinance. It is committed unto him first and unto one another second. And so you can't just invent your own side or different thing and call it the equivalent. Um, in the way that you've been responding, I think is, uh, is helpful.

The only. Yeah, addition or further expansion that I would make on that. That the the promise is first and foremost unto God, he's. And then he's also the primary witness. But we are unbelieving. Even Christians. Are much more affected sadly, and I think probably every one of us in this room have this experience continually to our grief.

By what other people see than what God sees? Even though we know from the Bible, and we know in our hearts, and when we come to him in worship, we really know, as we realize again. What we've been since the last time we were on our knees? The, the main thing is what God sees and what God hears and what God thinks.

Uh, and yet it makes a difference. When Mom and Dad walk into the room, doesn't it children? Or what your husband or wife walks into the room, you know, the those of you who are married?

The more God grows Us in our integrity. Um. The less dependent we will be on that. But having human Witnesses is a necessary help for Sinners who forget that God is holding us accountable. Because we don't see him. And he doesn't. Pick up the phone and call us or ask us why they saw us with that woman at the grocery store or.

Um. I mean. Certainly, the holy spirit will afflict your conscience. But the one. Uh, who's accustomed to ignoring God the Holy? Will sadly find humans less difficult, less easy to ignore. So, there's, uh, there's a lot of reasons. Um. And I hate the phrase. They should make it official.

Um. But the the main one is that marriage doesn't belong to us. It belongs to God. Uh, yes, Miss Stephanie. To say that people that are living together are married, and they aren't about anyway, because they've already.

They are. Obligated to one another. Before God because of what they have taken from each other and what they have done to each other. Uh, I wouldn't say that they are. Necessarily married. It definitely disqualifies them to marry anyone else.

Yeah, I, I, I think our elements to what you said that? That are true. Um. Choices and actions come with responsibilities. And those particular choices come with many of the responsibilities. I think one of the difficulties is that we don't live in a just Society. Um. Adultery and fornication.

Uh, are an assault on. The one person. The one flesh. Person of marriage. So to speak. And. This is why scripture consistently prescribes. Uh, capital punishment. For. In the. In the ongoing New Testament application. The equivalent of being cut off from your people is. Um. Excommunication. Uh, but the Civil magistrate still has to deal with.

The destruction of? Uh, the one flesh person of marriage, the destruction of a household, the destruction of a society. Um. The civil penalties should be such. Uh, if the if the nation is conscientious before God and cares about its citizens enough. Uh, that. You might not be able to have the question.

Well, it's just like we're married, or we're married enough before God because they might now be. Uh, incarcerated for hard to do hard time or executed or. Something that's that's going to reflect the same. Uh, the same severity that God himself reflects in what he prescribes for it. Is that a hand Jordan?

Yes, sir, sorry. Yeah, so the idea of of O's being like these, this host, the South America being British and head coaching around to help?

I heard recently, uh, my older, was that was making a case that the prenuptial agreement? Standpoint, maybe something that would work well. Consider the many marriages that's just another means of helping to put weight behind those sorts of decisions that people might make. The, uh, the prenuptial agreement, like?

Groups and children's classes. Um, any other number of things is. A man-made invention to substitute for failing to follow God's Own prescription. If we would if we would so contract with one another in betrothal. Uh, the way that scripture describes. Um, betrothal, as a contract and even our chapter.

We're going to have a. Chapter on marriage, but in the in the convention, but it refers. Uh, it refers to the contract that can't be broken for anything other than adultery or abandonment. You know, so? Biblically betrothal. Is a commitment to? And I, I think. You know, we break marriages so easily.

We don't even understand what it means to. Contract to get married to be betrothed in such a way that that can't be broken. Uh, in any way, the the other than a marriage. It could be broken as well, so I, I think the prenuptial agreement is just. A modern Innovation to make up for something that we have discovered that we're missing because we're not following scripture.

Um, Dave, I do want to Circle back to Oaths and vaps. What Jordan said Tennessee 'til the mid seventies and mid 80s? They recognize that as common law, marriage. In the eyes of the state, they were married, and so it's all the problem. And I was talking with our general, is that still on the books?

States left to do Kentucky's World since he got rid of the mid-74, but I was told with our general sessions judge about this a couple weeks ago. Now, he's he's paid okay, but he said that would

make my life so much easier, because when these people come to court well that that was the reason for common law marriages to make life easier for the Civil Magistrate.

Willing to? Um, to regulate and enforce. Uh, the way that he should is basic. Basically, if you're overrun by immorality and everyone's acting married when they're not, you can't imprison everyone or execute everyone. So, what you do is you come up with a solution? Like we were saying before to impose upon them the obligations.

Uh, that they had put themselves under by what they they have done done to one another as a common law. Marriage was a way. Of. Uh, enforcing those obligations. Uh, and not just their obligations to one one another, but the society needs to know how to deal with them too.

Right, because you've messed everything up by just permitting it to continue. It's so easy. 50 is yours fifty, so whatever they got they put together with price and half, he said. Now, the way it's set up, you know, they got a group. Well, I have title to this, and he says, it's just a perception.

Harm has been done by doing what's easy. Throughout the history of humanity. All right then, wanna. Why don't we, uh, read the first, uh, article of, uh, chapter 22? Um, a lawful oath is a part of religious worship. Wherein upon just occasion. The person swearing solemnly, calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth.

Judge him. According to the truth or falsehood of what he's swearing. Now, you say, a lawful oath is a part of religious worship. And that's what I began talking about when I'm trying to describe the difference between an oath and a vowel, because we don't even. Uh, I, I think most of us.

Until we get exposed to the Westminster Congression and never even thought seriously or understood any kind of definition. Of an oathroval. We just thought it was a promise. Maybe we thought it was a really, really serious promise? Uh, but it's actually a part of religious worship here. Putting yourself in God's hand and you're committing yourself unto him, uh, it was something that.

They were actually supposed to come and do at the temple or at the Tabernacle before the temple. But when the temple is built in second chronicles 6, and Solomon is giving his prayer of dedication for the temple and asking God to to own. Simple to make use of it and validate it.

Put his stamp of approval on it. Um, one of the purposes one of the many purposes for the temple is that it would be the place where they swear. So if you have your? Uh, Westminster Confessional is scripture prayers. You can even see. The second chronicles 6, 22. Uh, is one of the proofs.

For it being. Uh, part of religious worship. Um. Let me grab it out of. New King James. Nothing at all against the King James. It's actually more precise because the English is more precise. Uh, not even necessarily because of better translating ability. Uh, if anyone sins against his neighbor and is forced to take an oath and comes.

This is, uh, Solomon, praying to God and comes and takes an oath before your altar. In this Temple, then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according, uh, to his righteousness.

We know that we no longer have a physical Temple that we come to. Uh, who is, well, the the Bible talks about it in two different ways so? Uh, either one. Yeah, you can answer, and we'll, uh, we'll expand up on it. Who is the temple now? Children, especially.

How can you get to God where, where is the place you have to worship God? And it's a rare question with a who answer.

All of that smiled at me, like she knows.

It's Jesus, right? I think many of you probably knew that already. Um. So, this is actually much more serious now. That there's not a physical Temple. And again, this gets back to perceiving that which you know to be genuinely spiritually true. Uh, although your eyes can't see it if you had gone, uh, to Solomon's Temple, where much of the grandness and glory of God was communicated, uh, through architecture.

It would be impressed upon you how serious a thing it is to swear to someone else that what you're saying is true. But now we do that, not in front of a physical structure. But before God. In the Lord Jesus Christ. That's infinitely more serious. And intimidating. Or it should be.

So, children, I, I know you've heard people talk like this. And if you've heard people talk like this enough, you may even talk like this. But get out of the habit of when someone doesn't seem to believe you or when you're worried that they might not believe you, saying, I swear.

Because what you're doing is you're putting yourself. In the solemn presence of God, whether you are being serious. And and taking it seriously or not. And you're not supposed to do that for just any promise. That's why it says, oh, lawful, Earth is a part of religious worship. Okay, offering yourself to God, putting yourself in his hands, asking that he would judge.

Wherein upon just occasion. What does that mean?

It means that what you are making your promise about? What you are? Claiming is true, and swearing is true. Is of such seriousness. That it is not taking God lightly. To call him. Uh, call him to Bear witness in that. Okay, so. Uh, if you get into the habit of?

Uh, swearing about everything. You're taking God's name in vain. You're turning into a light and trivial thing. And especially if you just say, I swear. And you don't mean to the Living God. Because swearing is an act of religious worship. And if you don't swear before the Living God?

Then you're swearing. Before a false god. And that may be yourself or the person that you're talking to or the social group that you're in that you are going to expect to be judged by.

Whoever you are implying that you are committing yourself unto their judgment as to whether or not what you're saying is true.

You are worshiping that person. Whether it's explicitly stated or implied. This is why Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 10 when they're coming into the land, and that first third of Deuteronomy. The Lord is pounding home to them that they have to worship him, not the gods of the Canaanites. One of the things that he repeats in both of those places is that they must swear only in his name.

That he alone is their God, and they must not swear. Uh, by anything else so? Deuteronomy 6, 13. We may grab a little bit of context here. Okay. You know, we'll start up at verse 10 and we'll go to verse 15 so that you can get. Much at. You can get the extent to which, uh, swearing making O's as an act of worship.

Uh, so it shall be when Yahwe, your God, sorry? Mike needs you to be closer. So, it should be when Yahwe your God brings you? End of which he swore to your fathers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build houses full of all good things that you did not fill, you know, Wells.

But you did not did Vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you live eaten and are full, then beware. Yahweh, who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, you shall fear Yahweh your God and serve him and shall take Oaths in his name.

You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you. For Yahweh, your God is a jealous God among you. Bless the anger of Yahweh. Your God be aroused against you and Destroy you from the face of the Earth. So, did you hear how?

Remembering the Lord and having him alone as your God. One of the one of the ways that you do that is you only swear in his name.

And so. What I'm not saying, although. God has used many a child this way, um, what? I'm not saying children, is that every time someone says, I swear, you would immediately say you shouldn't do that. Swearing should only be done to the Living God. It's okay, if you do that, that's not the primary thing.

I'm telling you to do. Um. Praise God. Children can often get away with a certain level of bluntness because they're not expected to be as refined as as we are, and my children have. Had to learn not to speak out of turn at times. But while they were learning that I, I can think of a half a dozen times that are flooding back to memory, where someone in some Church was sufficiently rebuked in a way that I was not going to do myself.

You know, part of the conversation with the children later, was that's actually Daddy's job and? You're right, but you're it's not right for you to be the one who says it. Um. But the primary thing I'm saying is for you to guard your own heart. And if someone does say I swear?

The first thing I want you to do? Is to remember that you are suddenly before the face of God with that person in a special way. It, it would be very okay if realizing the seriousness of what they just said, even though they didn't realize it. You just gasped.

Shuttered. Or took a step back. And. Um. Because asking God to visit? Vengeance upon you. If what you're saying is false? Is a serious thing. God is patient and longsuffering. He's not shooting lightning from Heaven all the time, and turning people who swear lightly into piles of soot.

But that's coming. The fact that it doesn't happen instantaneously does not mean. That that is not. The response of God to false swearing. In fact, it's not going to be lightning in a pile of soot is going to be Everlasting destruction. In the burning of God's glory. And so.

Uh, living in a society where we don't even keep our promises. Uh, let alone. Uh, take Oaths before the face of God. Uh, it would be very helpful to us if understanding from the Bible. What a serious thing it is. Uh to, to swear to invoke God's name. Um.

If we, if we took it seriously? Um, a lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein upon just occasion. A person swearing solemnly, calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth. And according to the truth or falsehood of what he swearing. Um. We'll at least read the next paragraph.

We may not have time. Uh, to discuss it, although. Uh, much of it just follows directly from things we've already said. The name of God only. Is that by which men ought to swear? And therein, it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly.

Rashly. Which means, without spending the time to think about what it is that you're doing. When when you make that oath? To swear vainly or rashly? Vainly means lightly or emptially. To swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and Dreadful name. Or to swear It All by any other thing.

Is sinful. And to be abhorred. Now, probably you have. You have heard the word swearing, mostly used in connection with foul language. Right? Oh, he swears a lot means there's a certain number of four-letter words and three letter words that he uses. And you don't want to be around him because you're going to pick that up and you're going to start thinking those words in your heart and mind, uh, let alone having that overflow out of your mouth.

Now, think about how Dreadful it is. That that which people use to add force or seriousness? To their statement. Is no longer the name of the Living God. But I think they add intensity or seriousness to their statement. With the most foul words. In the language. See, it's. It's an obscenity.

And the obscenity becomes the way that they add solemnity or intensity to what they're saying. And maybe you have have fallen into doing this too. I mean, some of you have. Um. Come into the public workplace for. For the first extended season of your life recently. And. It is all around you.

But it's not just. That the words themselves are obscene. It's that they are being used to make speech waiting. In a place that only the name of God should be used. To make speech. Waiting. So it's it's a dreadful blasphemy. Yeah, I. We've lost the. Offensiveness and the seriousness of what that is before God.

Um. When my former denomination? When you went to church planting school, they taught you to cuss. Uh, so that you could make. Actually, I had a friend who got cussed out for not cussing. Uh, when and he got. Uh, he was not approved. He didn't get the. Mission in North America.

Uh, certification to be a planter and praise God. There was a good church that decided to call him anyway, because Presbyteries don't have to listen to what M A says, oh, and a, by the way, is m a light. It's not anymore. It's gotten a lot better if you remember the our general Synod report.

On that with PCA. So, I'm sorry. I guess I said m. A you guys probably know what that is already. So, we have lost. Um, the dreadfulness. Of swearing, vainly swearing by other names, I swear. In my mom, I swear on my. My mom's life. So, we're on a grave.

You never heard these things. I've heard all of these things. All those things that you're substituting for the name of God. And now we use obscene words. You know, if you read, as I like to do, and I know at least one brother likes to collect those books? Pastors used to write books of counsel for the young and especially 19th century 1800s.

Conservative faithful presbyterianism is full of of those books. And almost every one of them. Has a huge section. Devoted. Uh, to warning about swearing. Because being willing to swear with the lips is one of the first indicators. That, however, well catechized, the the brain is. The heart is not taking God seriously.

Being before him and using his name just isn't mattering that much to you. And. I'm sure every one of us feels very convicted now because of many things that we've lightly rashly heatedly. Efficiently said. But we need we need God's word. To expose these things and praise God that exposes Christ as well.

Things in. Yeah, there's so many of them almost countless. One of the wonderful things in the account of Jesus's trial. Until he was put under oath. And then he told the truth about himself. That he is the son of man, and they're going to see him coming on the clouds.

Up being the decisive evidence against him in his trial. But praise God. Our Savior was obeying. The ninth commandment was obeying scripture. On lawful Oaths and vows. Even as he was in the process of being condemned for our sins. For. Um, false.

Anyway, I think, uh, I think we'll have to do more in article two next week, uh? But it's, uh, it's fine. This is. Uh, something that is worth our thinking about for more than 40 minutes. Let's pray.

When we realize father what we have done with your name and how false we have been before your presence? Shutter together. Uh, indeed. Oh Lord. Every one of us. Has had the experience of your word being living and active and flaying us open so that we are naked and exposed.

Before you who will judge? And we thank you that we won't be judged, make it, and exposed but covered in Christ. And so we commit ourselves. Unto you in him. And we ask that. You would conform us to him that your spirit would take his own reverence for your name and seriousness about being before your face.

And apply that to us and grow Us by the grace and the knowledge of Christ. In his name, we ask it. Amen.