

Title: "Yes" or "No"

Passage: Matthew 5:33-37

Summary:

I. The Law of Moses demands we fulfill our vows

II. Jesus the Messiah demands we make no vows.

Key Truths:

- Do we pray with our mouth to be delivered from evil in the Lord's Prayer but then also exaggerate with our words and therefore do evil with our very own lips?
- You should not make any vow because you are not the King of the universe where you always control what will come about. There are so many variables. Only God is God.
- All of God's promises are true. Therefore, we must bear His character with our words.
- We must be people of the truth. Be truthful; hate falsehood.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- In what situations do people typically say something untruthful?
- What steps can you take this week to become known as a person who keeps his or her word?
- What unfulfilled promise have you made that you need to carry out?
- James 1:22 admonishes us to be "doers of the Word." What next steps will you take in response to the truths you have been exposed to?

Introduction

How do we measure the progress of our spiritual life?

- Contrast: physical projects we can see visual progress.
- Truth: we are somewhere between justification and glorification. And that is a very good place to be.
 - Grace is nothing else but the beginning of glory.
- Temptation: compare ourselves to others or think how others have let us down.
 - But how often do we say things that we do not mean or follow-through?
 - "I'll pray for you."
 - "God, if you fix this, I promise to..."

Context of Passage:

- Jesus was talking about murder, adultery and then talks about oaths.
 - Before talking about giving to the needy and the Lord's Prayer among many other things in the Sermon on the Mount.

Ecclesiastes 5:2-7

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

Old Testament examples of rash vows

- Saul - vow to curse anyone before he could avenge his enemies.
- Herod - vow would provide up to half his kingdom.
- Peter - vow would never deny Jesus.

Passage:

Matthew 5:33-37

"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.

EXPOSITION

Overview

- I. The Law of Moses demands we fulfill our vows
- II. Jesus the Messiah demands we make no vows.

I. The Law of Moses demands we fulfill our vows (v.33)

- You shall not swear falsely
 - See Lev 19, Dt 23
- The Law does not command one to make vows.
 - But if you are to make one, you must follow through it.

Luke 16:10

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

Matthew 12:36-37

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Objection: But I have good intentions.

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Objection: But I have a good heart.

Proverbs 21:2

Your way is only right in your eyes. The Lord weighs the heart

II. Jesus the Messiah demands we make no vows. (v.34-37)

“But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. “Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of the evil one.

“But I say to you,

- Jesus brings about a new understanding.

James 1:18

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Ephesians 4:15

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

1 Corinthians 13:6

it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

- "Oath" or "Vow"
 - Root word = fence
- Contrast: culture of being loose with words of promises leads to manipulation.
 - "Cross my heart and hope to die..."
- Context: Jewish leaders created many loopholes to making oaths.

- Ex: You can swear by the sanctuary but not by the gold otherwise that is binding.

Matthew 23:16-22

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Isaiah 66:2

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

Psalms 48:1

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain,

- God is over all.
 - Therefore, every word spoken is before Almighty God.

“Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

- You cannot age a day older or younger. You cannot add to your life's span.
- You cannot say "I will do this for certain" or "I will not do this for certain"
 - Only God can.
- You are not the King of the universe. There are so many variables. You cannot control what will come about.

James 4:13-16

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

“But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of the evil one.

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.

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

- Contradiction: do we pray to be delivered from evil in the Lord's Prayer but then also exaggerate with our words and therefore do evil with our lips?

Application

We must be people of the truth.

- We will stumble but must remain humble under the Lordship of Christ.

As we evangelize, we must stand on the truth of God.

- People will question: "did God really say...?"
 - We must be clear and stand for what God has said while also confront lies.

Matthew 26:63-64a

But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so.

- people try to use oaths but Jesus' response was clear: "you have said so."
 - Our words should be clear and truthful.

Proverbs 30:5

Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

Hebrews 6:13-18

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

- All of God's promises are true.
 - Therefore, bear His character with our words.
 - Hate falsehood

Romans 12:9

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.