

Matthew 5:33-37

**TELL THE TRUTH**

# 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."

# The Old Saying

- Why do people invoke oaths?
  - To affirm a statement and to end a dispute
    - Hebrews 6:16 - "For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation." (ESV)

# The Old Saying

- ◎ What is Jesus talking about?
  - The Third Commandment and its original intent.
    - Exodus 20:7 - "'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.'" (ESV)
    - Leviticus 19:12 - "You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord." (ESV)

# The Old Saying

- ◎ What is Jesus talking about?
  - The Third Commandment and its expanding understanding.
    - Not to use the Lord's name in any light or thoughtless way.
    - Not to use the Lord's name at all, even to the point of being forbidden to pronounce.

# The Old Saying

- ◎ What is Jesus talking about?
  - The Jewish teachings of Jesus' day.
    - Substitution of the Lord's name with some other object.
    - Some oaths were 'more binding' than others, based on the wording of the oath.

# Jesus' Saying

## ◎ The correction

- Just because God's name is not invoked doesn't mean He's not involved.
- The use of other things still implicates the Creator.
- To swear using the formula, "as surely as the Lord lives," and then "fail to perform the oath, is to call into question the reality of God's existence." (Tyndale OT Commentary on Exod. 20:7)

# Jesus' Saying

- The call...

# Tell the Truth!

- ◎ Am I allowed to take an oath?
  - Yes.
    - Principle – A universal negative does not deny particularity (E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, p. 618)
    - Jesus
      - Matthew 26:62-64 – "And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" 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. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."“ (ESV)

# Tell the Truth!

- ⦿ Am I allowed to take an oath?
  - Yes.
    - Paul
      - 2 Cor. 1:23 - "But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth." (ESV)
      - Gal. 1:20 – "(In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)" (ESV)

# Tell the Truth!

## ◎ Why?

- It expresses love for God through obedience
  - Colossians 3:9 – “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices” (ESV).
  - Compare Jesus’ own words – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” John 13:34 (ESV). And “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” John 14:15 (ESV).

# Tell the Truth!

## ◎ Why?

- It expresses love for God through obedience
  - Ecclesiastes 5:1-7
    - Such an expression of truthfulness is “fearing God,” which is the beginning of wisdom

- " Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. 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." (Eccl. 5:1-7, ESV)

# Tell the Truth!

## ◎ Why?

- It expresses love for the listener.
  - Ephesians 4:25 - "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." (ESV)
  - Matthew 22:37-39 – "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (ESV)

# Tell the Truth!

## ◎ Why?

- To maintain your integrity, even if it hurts you.
  - Psalm 15:4b (“O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who...swears to his own hurt and does not change.”)

# Tell the Truth!

- ◎ Why?

- To set an example for other people, including the next generation.

Tell the Truth!