

2/4/2024—Sermon—Matthew 5:20; 33-37—Being a Person of Your Word

I. Context

- a. Fourth of sixth 'antithesis' statement stemming from v. 20 where Jesus ups the ante of righteousness showing us it's about the heart, not just legalistic behavior.
- b. Oaths invoking the name of the Lord were used in Old Testament times.
- c. Over time people began looking for loopholes to get out of something
- d. If they didn't swear by the Lord, but something lesser (Jerusalem, heaven, my mamma's grave), it was considered less binding.

II. What does swearing mean in this context?

- a. Not referring to cussing
- b. Invoking God's name to guarantee the truth of something.

III. Should we take this as an absolute ban on oath-taking? Probably not

- a. Jesus testified under oath before the Sanhedrin (Jewish court) (*Matt. 26:63-64*)
- b. Apostle Paul made oaths when he invoked God as a witness (*Gal. 1:20 & 2 Cor. 1:23*).
- c. *The point is that our 'yes' or 'no' should be as binding as any oath.*

IV. It's a heart issue.

- a. What comes out of our lips stems from our hearts (c.f. *James 3:10-12*)
- b. A dependable heart will speak dependable words.
- c. Jesus: *I am the... truth (John 14:6)*; our truthfulness reflects our identity in Christ.

V. It's a trust issue.

- a. The more you are a person of your word, the more trust you will gain.
- b. As Christians, we can lose credibility.
- c. Lying reveals a lack of our trust in God and his looking out for us.

VI. What about you?

- a. Do you make false promises just to make someone happy?
- b. Are you reliable? When you say you are going to do something, do you do it?
- c. Are you genuine?
- d. Do you tell little white lies to get what you want?
- e. Will you say whatever you need to say to get out of trouble?
- f. Are you trustworthy with business dealings, or school