

Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #10
“Kingdom righteousness”
Establishes truth through God Part IV

Matthew 5:33-37

Scripture: Matthew 5:20 *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Introduction:

Maybe you have seen the show “A Few Good Men”. Tom Crews plays a Jag lawyer assigned to investigate a murder that happened at Gitmo, Cuba. Two marines performed a “code red” which is a form of disciplinary action on another marine to help train him. The marine died during the code red and left the two marines accused of murder.

In the movie, these code red’s had been outlawed by the military, but the base colonel (Jack Nicholson) had given the order to do it anyway, which resulted in the marines death.

So Tom Crews established as his defense strategy simply to get the colonel to admit that he ordered it, whereby showing that the marines were merely following orders.

So Tom Crews with Nicholson on the stand says “did you order the code red?” He says I want the truth....Nicholson tries to skirt the issue but when pressed admits that he did.

Research has found that only 22% of adults in America believe there is even such a thing as absolute moral truth while only 9% of teenagers do. The real tragedy of this research is that the study was done among those who profess to be Christians.

Barna Research

Transitional Statement:

Have you noticed that truth sure seems hard to come by these days. Today we will be studying the words of Jesus who is declared to be the way the truth and the life John 14:6.

He will point us to God as the only garreteer of truth as He directs to live such godly lives that a simple yes or no will suffice.

I. Vows unto the Lord

Matthew 5:33

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.'"

A. First let's define a "Vow"

1. The Hebrew word "shebha" 5088...means a solemn promise to God
 - a. Basically vows are between God and man
2. A vow usually establishes
 - a. Intention....
 - b. Commitment
 - c. Or even dedication to the Lord.
 - d. Vows are even included as acts of worship.... Psalms 61:4-5,8
3. Making a vow to God is not wrong at all and rightfully done is pleasing to God

B. But here, Jesus points back to the Law of Moses says "*You shall not make false vows...*"

1. Looking back to the Old Testament

- a. We see in Leviticus 19:12

12 ' You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

- 1) But here specifically, God wants us to be truthful with Him.

- a. God can't be glorified outside of the truth

2. Let me say that I think that truthfulness with God is a very current crises even especially Christians.

- a. For many it has almost become fashionable to make righteousness with God something to be defined by our own terms.

- b. Then there is the Christian who thinks the only truth God knows is what they tell Him.

- 1) Obviously haven't read Psalms 139

- c. Then untruth can also be seen in the way we sometimes treat God like a dog....merely throwing Him bones to keep Him happy.

- 1) Telling Him only what He wants to hear

- d. The lack of truth is often seen in our lack of Commitment to Him.
 - 1) In some cases truth has become nothing more than a Christian accessory.
- e. In many ways we have bought into the idea that whatever we come up with in our lives, the grace of God will cover and He will just have to accept for who we are.
- f. Sometimes lying to God becomes so regular that we get to the point that we can't even distinguish what is true anymore.

* God forgive us for any and all untruth we have had before you

C. Jesus continues by saying: “...*But shall fulfill your vows to the Lord*”

- 1. Moses tells us in Numbers 30:2

2 " If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

- 2. Basically if you tell God your going to do something you better do it.

D. Warnings about vows

- 1. First they are to be made with great consideration.....not lightly

Proverbs 20:25

*25 It is a trap for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!"
And after the vows to make inquiry.*

- 2. Don't delay

Deuteronomy 23:21

21 " When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you.

- a. Make them a priority...don't put them on the back burner.

- 3. Solomon in his great wisdom reminds us in Ecclesiastes 5:5 says: “*It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.*”

- a. Moses further backs up Solomon in Deuteronomy 23:22 by saying:

22 “... *if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you.*”

E. Penalty for breaking

1. Malachi 1:14

14 "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

2. God is pretty serious about us keeping our word to Him.

II. Oaths generally, were used between people to establish or insure the truth

A. An oath in the Hebrew “buaah” 7621 means a sacred promise attesting to what one has done or will do.

1. It is meant to confirm truth

a. Hebrews 6:16

16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

-Ex Gen 21 & Gen 21:22-34

2. Oaths are not the same as a vow

a. Numbers 30:2

2 " If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth

b. Two separate but often closely linked ideas

3. Oaths in general are between people to:

- a. Declare innocence ex 22:10-11
- b. Proclaim friendship 2 sam 21:7
- c. Affirm a promise lev 5:4 1 Kings 2:43
- d. To ratify a peace treaty Josh 9:20
- e. To pledge loyalty to God or a person 2 Chron 15:15

4. Used to establish accountability for the truth.

5. And oaths throughout scripture are not wrong as long as they are done in the name of God.

III. But Jesus continues by saying to turn away from Pharisaical oaths

Matthew 5:34a

34" But I say to you, make no oath at all..."

A. "...make no oath at all"

1. Some have thought it sinful to make any kind of oath or to swear.
 - a. Can't swear before a judge
 - b. Not even at weddings.

B. Question: Is it the Lord's intent to prohibit what was once allowed?

1. The Old Covenant simply says swearing is to be done in God's name
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:13-14

13 " You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. 14 " You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,

- b. Deuteronomy 10:20

20 "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name.

2. To go along with these verses the New Testament tells us that:
 - a. God make an oath.....Heb 6:13-18
 - b. Jesus makes an oath....Matthew 26:63ff
 - c. Paul ends up making several

See:

2 Cor 1:17-18,23

Gal 1:20

Philippians 1:8

3. So what is Jesus saying?

C. Jesus goes on to explain the unacceptable oaths used by the Scribes and Pharisees

1. Matthew 5:34b-36

"...either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

- a. In short Pharisaical oaths turned to created things to prove truth

- 1). Leave God out of the picture.

2. The Scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites and liars.... They, like some today, wanted to form religion around their thinking and desires. So to guard against false swearing by the name of God...and to give them license promote almost anything, they turned to oaths sworn by things of creation that couldn't reveal there lies.

a. They swore by heaven, earth, Jerusalem and even their own heads.

1) Everything except God

b. Jesus crushes this attempt to avoid accountability

1) Matthew 23:16-22 Jesus turns this on its head

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' 17 "You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' 19 "You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 "Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. 21 "And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 "And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

2) Again, Psalms 139.....God sees all

3. To the Scribe and the Pharisee, being believed became more important than the truth.

4. Church, truth comes only through God.....and His Name

a. To swear by anyone else is to center our focus outside of the all sovereign God

IV. Kingdom righteousness necessitates that live truth in God

37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no';..."

A. We can't establish the truth with our words or some formula....only God can establish truth and you can be found true if your actions live within God's truths.

B. In these final words Jesus seems to point to the most basic of kingdom righteousness by pointing out that if we live God's truth a simple yes or no will suffice because we will be known as people of the truth.

C. To which Jesus concludes by saying "...anything beyond these is of evil."

Conclusion:

Is the truth of God a pillar in your heart?

Have you been lying to God with your life?

Are you trying your best to live God's truthfulness in your life?