

Walking Through the Mount - 6

Jesus, Oaths, and Integrity – Matthew 5:33-37

Introduction:

1. This is the fourth contrast of the teaching of Jesus in light of the Law of Moses. As in the previous three, there is:
 - a. The situation - “You have heard that has been said...”
 - b. The condemnation - “Do not swear at all...”
 - c. The affirmation of right living - “Let your yes be yes...”
2. The practice of the Pharisees and Jews
 - a. “You shall not swear by My name falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord” (Lev 19:12).
 - b. See also Exodus 20 and taking the name of the Lord in vain.
 - c. The Pharisees made a mockery of the Law by their traditions and duplicity (deceitfulness, cf Matthew 23:16-22 swearing by the temple vs the gold of the temple, or the altar vs the gift on the altar).
 - d. Practice of the Jews - Acts 23:11-35
 - e. Psalm 15:1, 4
 - i. Jephthah - Judges 11:30-40
 - ii. Paul - Acts 18:18; 21:23
2. Does this text forbid the taking oaths in a court of law or prior to giving testimony?
 - a. **No.** Context is always the first consideration. (e.g., “He who does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and yes his own life also...” Luke 14:26)
 - i. Mark 5:7; Acts 19:13, 1 Thes 5:27 “adjure” KJV = “oath”
 - ii. Jesus answered questions under oath - Matt 26:63
 - b. The context would demand that the other party would know the person and character of the Christian.
 - c. When the other party lacks familiarity, the simple declaration of “I’m a Christian” lacks any real substance.
 - d. This would have been true in the first century when Christianity was new. It would also be true when the word “Christian” has lost its distinctiveness.

Body

1. This text points to the power of the tongue and our living testimony as presented to the world.
 - a. Matthew 12:37 - By your words you will be justified...
 - b. James 3
 - c. Ephesians 4:25, 29