

Gospel of Matthew “Simple Speech”
Matthew 5:33-37
May 15, 2022

Matthew 5:33-37 (ESV)

33 “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.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

What is it that “those of old” heard?

Leviticus 19:12

You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

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.”

Numbers 30:2

If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

A vow taken was a vow that should be fulfilled.

Jesus is undoing the practice that there are times when our words matter and there are times when our words don’t.

Our words are always witnessed.

Oaths and swearing are used to create outcomes.

James 5:7-12

7 Be patient, therefore, brothers,[a] until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

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.

Swearing reveals a lack of patience.

James 5:12

“... but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no.”

Without honesty we lose community.

Without honesty we lose our witness.

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?
- What are things we say to convince others to take us at our word? Can you share a situation in which you desperately wanted to be believed?
- Name someone that you think is a notably honest person? Who do you go to if you want the truth? Can you ever be truth-telling to a fault?
- To be “yes and no people” means that we not only mean what we say but that we follow through. Can you share a commitment you’ve made that was or has been difficult to maintain?
- Read James 5:7-12. How can our words reveal whether we are exercising patience?
- What is one way that you could be more truth-full? What obstacles or resistance do you sense in moving towards being more honest?
- Close your Grow Group discussion by praying for one another to be faithful in those things that are big and also small?