

Matthew 5:33-37
Let Your Yes Be Yes

We are continuing our journey on the Sermon on the Mount at Oxford and by this point we should be seeing the intricacies of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. We are looking at the details of this kingdom the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is bringing. Truly this kingdom is like no other. Truly this kingdom is a kingdom that the world so desperately needs.

But more than simply a kingdom, we are studying a King. This life that we get to study together, this life that we proclaim, this life of Jesus, is a beautiful life. Most in the world when they think of Jesus think of a beautiful life. Listen to skeptic William Lecky, "It may be truly said that simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the wellspring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priest craft and persecution and fanaticism that have defaced the Church, it has preserved in the character and example of its founder an enduring principle of regeneration"¹

To say the least, Jesus is a man of integrity and perhaps the most beautiful aspect of Christianity is that we don't simply get to stare at this life of pure beauty from a distance, a beautiful aspect of our confession is that he has come to make us his very own. Athanasius said it well, "He has come as we are to make us as he is." He has come to call you by name, and maybe some of you will hear his voice today calling you to him.

I want you to think of that word integrity for just a moment. Oxford's English Dictionary defines integrity as "wholeness, completeness." A life of integrity is a life that is above scrutiny, a life that is not afraid of anything being found out because there is nothing to find out. How many people do you know like this? Is this you? Would others say so? Jesus has come in a world full of duplicity, a world full of deceit, to make men and women of integrity.

READ TEXT

Some may be thinking of all things, why does Jesus care about what we say? The reason is found in Matthew 12:34: *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.* Can you see the link between integrity and what we say? I want to give you three truths this morning from this text about why what we say is serious.

1. Nothing Reveals Your Heart Like What You Say

The quickest way for us to show others our heart is for us to open our mouth. Just say "ahh" and everyone around you will quickly get a feel for what kind of person they are dealing with. This is such a good word in our blogging, tweeting, status updating world. Listen to Proverbs 10:

- 10:11 - *The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.*
- 10:19 - *When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.*

¹ (<http://www.rzim.eu/was-jesus-typical-or-exceptional>, Accessed June 10, 2017).

- 10:31-32 - *The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.*

What springs forth from the fountain of your lips, lies or truthfulness? Remember where we are, we are climbing the highest summit in the world - the Sermon on the Mount. We are no where near the top and we have this word about what we say. God cares about what we say because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Jesus has come to deal directly with our hearts, he has come to display for us the new heart that he will accomplish for us by shedding his own blood on a cruel cross, and part of that new heart is a heart that cries let the words of my mouth be pleasing to God.

But we get more specific this morning. Look at what Jesus says next. He begins by saying, *You have heard it said, now I say.* He says this to show us the new humanity he is forming in himself. Now look at what he says, *Do not swear....* What does Jesus want us to learn?

2. Every Place Is A Place of Worship

This is where what Jesus says gets really fun for us to think through. The problem with most of us is that we want to compartmentalize our lives. We want to be Christians when we are around other Christians, or Christians when someone is watching, or Christians on Sunday. Jesus comes and takes that whole perspective of our tendency to be Christians here but not there and completely blows it out of the water! How does he do this? He doesn't just say it, that would have been enough, but remember who it is that is saying what he is saying. This is the Eternal Son of God who has chosen to take on flesh. Without ceasing to be who he has always been, he has forever become someone that he was not - he has become everything that it means to be totally human without ceasing to be totally God. He has united himself to us so that he can unite us to himself. There is no compartmentalizing our lives from him because he is God!

David knew this. Listen to what he said in Psalm 139:7-12

*Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the
uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and
your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night
is bright as the day, for darkness is as
light with you. (ESV)*

Remember the conversation that Jesus had with the Woman at the Well? She had a question for Jesus, a question of worship. Remember? Which is the right mountain to worship? Gerizim

or Jerusalem? Jesus told her, you are asking the wrong question. *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:21-26)

The people of Jesus' day were very religious. They had made the Temple an idol. They had forgotten Isaiah 66:1

*Thus says the LORD:
"Heaven is my throne, and the earth
is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
All these things my hand has made, and
so all these things came to be,
declares the LORD.*

Jesus said tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up. He was referring to his own body. Do you know what this means? It means that the place of worship begins in your heart to the God who is too large to be contained by human hands.

It often happens to me that when I reveal that I am a preacher the conversation shifts. We had a large event at the church recently and I was waiting to come up the stairs as a group was coming down the stairs. As they saw me, the leader of the group said in almost a hushed voice, "Shhh, there is the preacher." Now I know the spirit behind that kind of attitude, but that misses the point of what Jesus is saying. Jesus is telling us don't compartmentalize your life, you cant divide off sections of your life and say this one is sacred, this one is secular, this one is God's but I am going to keep this one.

Jesus says, Don't swear. Be a man or woman who is in such hot pursuit of a life of integrity that you don't really need the support of an oath to hold up what you say. Swearing is unnecessary for a man or woman of integrity. If they say it they must mean it, otherwise they wouldn't say it. Which leads us to number three this morning:

If Nothing reveals your heart like what you say, and every place is a place of worship:

3. Worship in Every Place

God wants all of you to be his worshipper everywhere. Look at what he says, *Let your yes be yes and your no be no.* We have every reason to be men and women of integrity because of one thing: God is true. Jesus is a man whose yes is yes and his no, no. Could you just imagine if he was dishonest with the man that was blind that he told to go wash in the pool of Siloam? (John 9) He had already spit and made mud and put that mixture of spit and mud on his eyes

and told a blind man to go to the pool of Siloam to wash. Thankfully the Bible says he came back seeing.

What if Jesus said that he was going to rise from the dead but didn't rise from the dead? What if Jesus had never come? God knew the world of uncertainty that we lived in and so he swore to Abraham that he would send salvation. God swore? Yes he did. Why? To assure us, to leave us without any uncertainty that he would do what he would do. Listen to what the Bible says in Hebrews 6:13-20:

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (ESV)

Did you hear that? The truthfulness of God in an anchor for our souls. If you trust Jesus, God has said an eternal yes for your soul! This is why all this matters. We have to be careful what we say because what we say reveals who we are. We have to be careful what we say because what we say reveals whose we are. We have to be careful where we hang our heart. Jesus has come to give us a new heart, a heart that takes every thought captive and places it under the obedience of Christ.

This past week our nation was captivated by a hearing that some are calling one of the most significant hearings in the history of the United States where the former Director of the FBI, James Comey gave testimony, under oath, calling into question the integrity of the man in the highest office in the world - The President of the United States. As I was sitting with my Dad listening to the Senators ask Mr. Comey what seemed like the same questions time and time again, and Mr. Comey repeating himself time and time again, both my Dad and I had a longing in our hearts for a world where a yes would be a yes and a no a no. Aren't you longing for that world?

Why don't you make that your confession today? Call upon Jesus, turn from deceit, surrender to him. Confess your longing by making up your mind that with the Holy Spirit of God you are going to be a man or woman of integrity and let your yes be yes and your no, no.

God give us grace to be all that he has called and enabled us to be.