

# Thursday Devotional

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*“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.” – Matthew 5:33-37*

I believe we all have told a story where we have exaggerated just a little bit. We all have heard a fishing story where each time the story is told, the fish gets bigger and bigger. This may seem like a “little white lie”, but as we see Jesus continue to teach his Sermon on the Mount, He emphasizes how we are to use our words as Christians. In our world and in our culture today we see many lies being told. Lying is prevalent in the political world and in the business world. We can get extremely frustrated and even angry at the dishonesty and manipulation that is happening in our world. Yet we need to be thinking and asking, have we looked at our own heart and seen the lies (even if they are small lies) that we are telling those around us. What does Jesus have to say about this?

First, Jesus teaches (Vs. 33) against the legalistic view of telling the truth. At that time period the Pharisees were living by the letter of the law and not the spirit of the law. They had narrowed the 10 commandments down to only what they commanded to do or not do. This is contrary to God’s original meaning of the 10 commandments. When we read the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> commandment, we must see that it is not only about lying in a court of law but lying in our everyday and personal life. How we use our words as Christian’s matter. How are you using your Words for God today?

Second, Jesus teaches the reason we are not to lie (Vs. 34-36). In these three verses Jesus emphasizes that all things are under God. When we swear, make an oath, or make a promise in the name of anything other than God, we are claiming that thing is greater than God. Jesus is pointing out that all lying is bad, because every word we say, everything we do is done in the presence of God almighty! Therefore, public or private lying is a sin against God. Do you see that all things are under God and everything we say is in the presence of God?

Third, and final, Jesus teaches that our words matter. The Christian life should be one where oaths and promises are not needed because of our integrity and character found in Christ. Therefore, speaking truth in all situations is part of living the Christian life. As Jesus states, “Let what you say be simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’”. Where have you mixed your words and not made clear your yes or your no? Have you thought about how you are using your Words for God today? God is truth and therefore desires truth to be upheld by His people. Let us strive to tell the truth for the glory of God.

For further study: Psalm 25:4-5; Proverbs 12:22; John 14:6; James 5:12