***The Sermon on the Mount***

**The Law, Kingdom Citizens, and Speaking with Integrity; Matthew 5:33-37**

**Background to Matthew 5:33-37**

* **In Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus is dealing with God’s will for making promises set in contrast to the prevailing view of the religious leaders of His day**
1. **Old Testament Statements Concerning Vows, Matthew 5:33**
2. **Rebuke of the Practices of His Day, Matthew 5:34-36**
	* Abuse of the intent of God’s Law by splicing words, crafting deceitful sentences, intentional withholding information, giving different levels of seriousness to statements
	* Most offensive, using religious language in order to carry out the abuse
3. **God’s Will for Us: “Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say!” Matthew 5:37**

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**Scripture Reading and Prayer**

* **Rejoinder from marriage from last week**
* Keith Dibble and counseling for August, September, October and November
* Connection with last week and this week’s scripture reading
* Last week we discussed the seriousness of the commitment between husbands and wives and this week we discuss the seriousness of all vows
* In a wedding, the couple makes vows or promises
* These promises are made before God and before witnesses and before a spouse
* These promises are made to God and to a spouse
* When a couple makes these vows, they must realize the somber and serious nature of this commitment
* Husbands are to love their wives for life and wives are to love their husbands for life
* “Do you promise…”
* Do you take this woman whose hands you hold to be your lawful wedded wife?
* And do you promise you will live with her together after God's ordinance in the state of matrimony?
* Do you promise that you will love her and cherish her and comfort her and honor her and keep her no matter if she is sick or well?
* And do you promise that from this day forward you will forsake all others and keep yourself pure and true alone to her as long as you both shall live?
* **Read Matthew 5:33-37 (Slides)**

**Exposition Matt. 5:33-37 (Slide 1 – Header Slide)**

1. **The Gospel and the Sermon on the Mount**
	* Christless Christianity by Horton, pg 63 G.K. Chesterton’s critic of evangelicalism
	* We run the risk of reducing the Sermon on the Mount to merely an ethical teaching that is to make our lives better instead of a righteous standard by which the God of all creation will hold us accountable
	* While we examine the righteous standard the Christ applies to very practical and daily struggles, we cannot lose sight of the Gospel
	* We are saved by treasuring Christ above all else
	* Jesus did not come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people live.
	* The Sermon on the Mount gives dead people a reason to despair of their condition
	* The Sermon on the Mount gives living people a standard of righteousness for loving the God who saved them
		+ 1. **Background to Matthew 5:33-37**
	* In Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus is dealing with God’s will for making promises set in contrast to the prevailing view of the religious leaders of His day
	* As with any of the other statements by Jesus in this section, we cannot decouple the statement by Jesus from the problems He faced in His day
	* Vows, oaths, promises had fallen on hard times and was ripe for abuse by those in power
	* If you didn’t know the code language for the elites you would get burned
	* We see this today in the questionable contracting by some businesses
	* The contract language is written so as to intentionally trap a person so that when you confront the individual, they fall back to a paragraph in the contract which is expressly placed there for the purpose of getting them out of implicit commitments
	* Had this experience just a few weeks ago when I called the company about the way in which the bill was worded, eventually to have the individual say “in paragraph ?? of your contract it says…”
	* I asked the individual if they felt good about the application of this contract with the express intent of getting someone to buy a product on false pretense
	* In Jesus’ day this same type of behavior seems to be prevalent
	* Before dismissing the use of oaths or vows completely, let’s look at a couple of examples from Scripture
	* Examples oaths, first a good examples: Ruth then Paul
	* **Read Ruth 1:16-17 (Slide 2)**
	* Paul made a vow, appears to be a Nazirite Vow
	* **Read Acts 18:18 (Slide 3)**
	* Example of a bad oath: Simon Peter
	* **Read Matthew 26:71-72 (Slide 4)**
2. **Vows or oaths in the Old Testament**
	* Here is the introduction by Jesus to the current theme
	* **Read Matthew 5:33 (Slide 5)**
	* There are circumstances that God allows and even requires a vow or an oath
	* A solemn promise to God that some gift or service will be given to God
	* Calling God as a witness to a statement or commitment as to its truthfulness
	* **Some examples of God’s commands in the Old Testament concerning Vows**
	* **Read Deuteronomy 23:21-23 (Slide 6)**
	* **Read Psalm 76:11 (Slide 7)**
	* All oaths were to be in God’s name
	* All oaths were to be given only on very somber occasions
	* All oaths were to be fulfilled
3. **Rebuke of the Practices of His Day, Matthew 5:34-36**
	* **Read 5:34-36 (Slide 8)**
	* Schemes to get out of commitments
	* Fingers crossed like some kid on the playground, the tradition of the day was to get out of your vows by crafting your words in such a way as to get out of an obligation
4. **God’s Will for Us: “Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say!”**
	* **Read Matthew 5:37 (Slide 9)**
5. **Practical conclusions (Header slide – slide 10)**
	* Speak the truth to one another, be known as a person of integrity
	* Take your commitments seriously
	* Remember that God will hold us to account for commitments made in His name

Announcements:

1. Reading seminar