

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (I)

LESSON TEN: OATHS

I. PASSAGE

Matthew 5:33-37, “³³ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: ³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: ³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

II. INTRODUCTION

There had been teachings after teachings by the scribes and Pharisees which the Lord had to correct and help the disciples to learn, unlearn and relearn, and understand the commandments of God again. It is a similar problem with many churches today. It is not that they do not have God's Word. They have God's Word but they are not taught correctly.

When any teaching of the Bible is wrongly taught, no matter how good the application is no use. That is one of the reasons why those who are called to full time ministry to become preachers, teachers and pastors of God's people, must receive theological training in a Bible College that is faithful in teaching God's Word and holding high regard of the authority of God's Word for God's people in these last days. And those who learn must learn well. They must humble themselves to the authority of God's Word for them.

The Ten Commandment was the most basic teaching which the scribes and the Pharisees ought to have taught faithfully to the people put under their spiritual care. Yet they failed. As such the Lord has to correct the misconception so that the people will know the right teaching and live out accordingly to the glory of God's Name.

III. THE MISCONCEPTION (verse 33)

The misconception was taught by the scribes and Pharisees, directly under the 9th commandment of “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20:16). They reduced the understanding of this commandment into the situation of a courtroom. The judge dependent on the witnesses' account. That is the reason why their testimony is made under oath, invoking the Name of the Lord. In short, they are teaching the people: when you swear in the Lord's Name, you must always tell the truth. Is this difficult to obey? The answer is no.

But the problem is: how many will end up in a courtroom? Maybe for many, it may not happen in their lifetime. That means this commandment is easy to observe since oath is made in the name of the Lord only within the courtroom. What about the day to day conversation, and promises people made to one another? There is nothing that governs them as long as the Name of God is not invoked. In other words, the people are serious with keeping their words and promises only within the courtroom since the Name of God is used. But outside of the courtroom, and since the Name of God is not used at all, the people are not serious and committed to keep their words and promises. And this is what the Lord wants to correct the people. Just because the Name of God is not invoked, it does not mean the 9th commandment will not be broken.

Even when they are not making any oath in the name of the Lord, they are still obliged to keep their word. That is why the Lord must correct the misconception.

IV. CORRECTING THE MISCONCEPTION (verses 34 to 36)

It is not wrong to swear. There is a place for swearing to take place. When the truth is at stake, it is necessary to swear or to give an oath in order to uphold the truth. But the problem with the people is: they thought as long as they made an oath not in the name of the Lord, they thought that they had not broken God's commandment even if they did not fulfill their oath.

But they will take special care to make sure to keep their word and tell the truth only when they made the oath in God's Name. Other than that, when they swear in the name of heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, or even their own head, the seriousness of keeping their word is automatically lifted. There is no need for them to be serious about it since they are not using God's Name. As long as they are not swearing in the name of the Lord, they think it is ok. And it is all because the scribes and the Pharisees say it is ok. But the Lord says, No, it is not ok at all!

V. ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH (verse 37)

Always keep your word. Always mean what you say, and say what you mean. If you say "yes," then make sure it is yes all the way. If you say "no," then make sure it is no all the way. Do not break your word. Always be prepared to tell the truth and the whole truth, and not tell only some part of the truth which is to your advantage, and hide the rest when it is not to your advantage. When others are kept in the dark of a certain truth, when you have the whole truth, there is only one option for you. It is to tell the whole truth, even when the truth will put you in a disadvantage position.

Let us always be truthful. Let truth be always part of us. Each time we tell a lie, we are standing with the devil, do we know that? The devil is the father of lies. But our God is a God of truth. If we follow God, we will always want to bear the truth. But if we tell lies and keep telling lies, we are going against the God of truth. The reality is: we are following the devil, and not God. And that includes white lies. Some Christians believe that white lie is ok with God. But a lie is a lie. No amount of justification can turn a lie into a truth. A lie will always be a lie. But we are children of truth.

Let us not be liars. The moment we think we have to resort to lies in order to save the situation, we are telling God, 'God, I can handle the situation my own way. I do not need Your help. I will solve the problem my way. And I am going to tell a white and harmless lie.' But our way is not God's way. If we go God's way, we will make sure we uphold the truth all the time. We will make sure we keep the 9th commandment simply by letting our yea be yea and our nay be nay. Be truthful, and not become liars. May God help us. Amen.