



Lent Day 26, March 18, 2012 Words

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Matthew 5:33-37

We end our week’s study on the topic of simplicity by looking at our words. In this passage of scripture, we see Jesus forbidding oaths. The Pharisees had complicated the process of vows by creating complicated rules. Only those vows that had the divine name were recognized.

Jesus, however, taught that all vows were binding, regardless of the wording that was used. This passage shows us that Jesus wants us to speak in such a way that our words are taken seriously; our yes’s should mean yes, and our no’s should mean no.

As we think about how His words affect us today, I believe that Jesus wants us to consider carefully how we speak.

1. First of all, I believe Jesus wants us to be honest and truthful. Because oaths were even used at all, shows us that people didn’t always tell the truth or keep their word-- they had to take an oath to show others they were serious about the topic. Ephesians 4:25 shows us how important the truth is to God. We need to cultivate the habit of truthfulness.
2. I think that we should also carefully consider requests that are put to us before answering yes or no. Jesus wants us to keep our word if at all possible once we give it, so we need to carefully and prayerfully consider what people ask of us before agreeing or disagreeing. If someone asks us to head up a committee or volunteer every Tuesday at the soup kitchen, we should not just give a quick answer, but seek God’s guidance. Then once we have given our answer, we need to keep our word.
3. While we are on the topic of words, we should also strive to make the words that come out of our mouths be ones that are honest, kind, and encouraging. Sometimes we will have to be firm and speak the truth in love, but if we are often impatient with people or have a biting tongue, then we need to let the Holy Spirit work in our lives to change those characteristics.

Application: Today spend some time in prayer, asking God to take control of your words. Think seriously before making decisions that will involve time and commitment. When presented with a request, consider the following things.

1. Is God calling me to this?
2. Do I have the time in my schedule to do this?
3. Does a prior commitment have my first allegiance?
4. Do I my gifts and talents match this opportunity?
- 5.

I think that this topic can be difficult for mothers of young children. If you have young children, they are a top priority. The season of young children passes quickly, and there will be years ahead of you when you can be involved in other things. However, if your spouse or other caring person is agreeable and can provide care for the children, seek God's guidance to see if this is where He is leading you.

Prayer: Lord,
Help us to be honest in honoring our commitments. We pray for wisdom in what we agree to do, and we pray that you would control the words that we speak. In Jesus' name, Amen.