

## Matthew 5:33-37; Lord's Day 37

### RIGHTEOUS IN SPEAKING THE TRUTH, ALSO IN OATHS

- I. What's condemned.
  - A. Man can communicate, convey thoughts and ideas, and respond, both to God and to each other.
    1. Sin drastically changed this wonderful gift, making man a natural liar with the instinct to lie.
    2. Oaths and vows arise because of man's great proneness to lie, to be distrustful, and to be inconsistent.
  - B. In our text Jesus continues to contrast His concept of righteousness (heart) with the outward show of the Pharisees (Mt. 5:20f)
    1. The Pharisees said the third commandment applied only to oaths made to God – not to those not mentioning God's name.
    2. Jesus condemns their oaths.
- II. Jesus' instruction (as in the previous instructions of God's law) does not condemn the thing itself, but its mis-use.
  - A. First, Jesus' "swear not at all" is not absolute (prohibit all oaths) but relative.
    1. Scripture commands us to swear by the name of God on certain occasions (Deut. 6:13).
    2. Scripture does not condemn the many examples of those who swore – examples we may follow.
  - B. Jesus condemned the mis-use of oaths introduced by the Pharisees (Matt. 5:33-37).
    1. Sometimes oaths are necessary to settle controversies and put an end to strife (I Kings 8:31,32; Heb. 6:16).
    2. Oaths and vows do have a lawful place in the believer's life: marriage, baptism, confession of faith, ordination into office.
- III. Oaths ought not be the norm for a Christian.
  - A. First, God's people should so speak the truth that vows are not often necessary: "yea, yea; Nay, nay" (Matt. 5:37).
    1. As disciples of the Truth, let our whole life be lived in the consciousness that He is present as our witness.
    2. "Of evil" (37b) means that anything beyond yes and no is because of the fall (evil). Sin makes oaths necessary.
  - B. Let us be diligent to perform the vows we have made.