

“Woe To Those Whose Vows Are Vain!”

Matthew 5:33-37

July 6, 2025

INTRO:

- When was the last time you **made a promise**?
- What is the ***greatest promise*** you’ve ever made?
- When was the last time you **broke a promise**?
- What’s the ***worst broken-promise*** you’ve made?
- *When’s the last time you took God’s name in vain?*
- What do all these questions have in common?

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Gospel of Matthew on The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ***“How to BE righteous & live the righteous life.”***
- We’ll dig deeper into Christ’s context shortly...

BIG IDEA:

Woe to those
whose vows are vain!

PREVIEW:

1. Read
2. Realize
3. Respond

TEXT:

Matthew 5:33-37

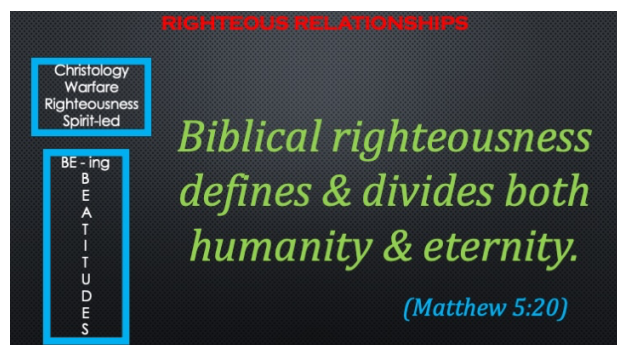
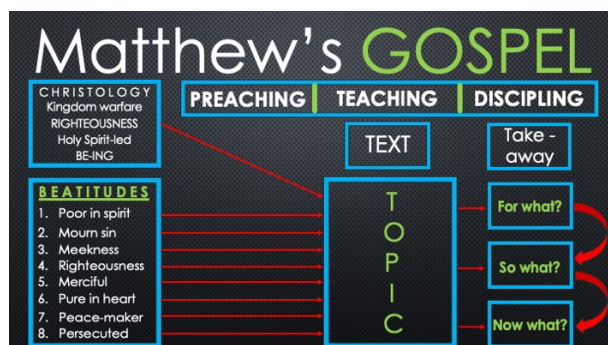
Oaths

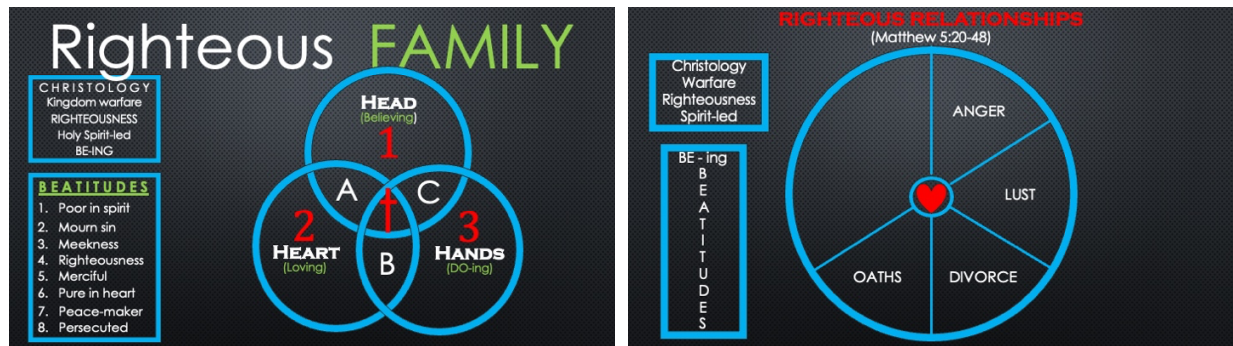
³³“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

I. READ

A. CONTEXT

“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of old,





Note the center & singularity of the righteousness pie

B. CONTENT

*'You shall not swear falsely,
but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'*

VIDEO: *"Names Of God"*
(GotQuestions.org)

*Oaths, vows, & promises are all forms of covenants... and
covenants call for fulfillment, integrity, & obedience
(IE. MARRIAGE VS. DIVORCE).*

THE JEWS OF JESUS' DAY REVERED THE IDEA OF TRUTH IN PRINCIPLE, BUT IN PRACTICE IT WAS BURIED UNDER THEIR SYSTEM OF TRADITION, WHICH OVER THE CENTURIES HAD CONTINUALLY CUT GOD'S LAW DOWN TO FIT THEIR OWN SINFUL PERSPECTIVES AND PURPOSES. - MacArthur

C. CONTRAST ³⁴*But*
(a contrasting conjunction)

D. CONFRONT

³⁴*But I say to you,*

*(You've heard it correctly... **BUT** applied it corruptly!)*

E. CLARIFY

Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

(CRITICAL CONTEXT)

God's people have been told where, when, why, & how to swear & make holy vows... & Jesus is saying, if you're not going to doing right/righteously, don't make a mockery of this holy expression of our relationship.

(The BIG IDEA)

JESUS' POINT WAS THAT GOD IS THE CREATOR AND LORD OF EVERYTHING AND IS THE GOD OF TRUTH IN EVERYTHING. TO CARELESSLY AND DISHONESTLY CALL ANY PART OF HIS CREATION AS WITNESS TO A FALSE OATH WAS TO DISHONOR GOD HIMSELF, WHETHER OR NOT HIS NAME WAS INVOKED.

To dishonor and compromise any truth is to dishonor and compromise His truth.

F. CORRECT

³⁷*Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';*

THE PERVERSION OF RABBINIC TRADITION

THE TRADITION JESUS MENTIONS IN VERSE 33 SEEMED TO BE BIBLICAL, BUT IT HAD SEVERAL FLAWS THAT MADE IT FALL SHORT OF WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT ACTUALLY TAUGHT. FIRST, IT HAD A MISSING INGREDIENT, AND SECOND, IT HAD A MISPLACED EMPHASIS.

WILLIAM HENDRIKSEN'S EXPLANATION IS HELPFUL:

"What we have here in Matthew 5:33–37 (cf. James 5:12) is the condemnation of the flippant, profane, uncalled for, and often hypocritical oath, used in order to make an impression or to spice daily conversation. Over against that evil, Jesus commends simple truthfulness in thought, word and deed"

G. CONDEMN

anything more than this comes from evil.

A. *Anything* means **ABSOLUTELY ANY-THING!**

There is NO higher ground than God's glory!

B. *comes from evil/the evil one.*

- *Fake & falsely made promises are intentional expressions & demonstrations of EVIL!!!*
- *Mistakes, while regrettable, are acceptable.*

- Dishonesty, duplicity, & hypocrisy are NOT!
- *Imperfection is an indelible stain on fallen humanity. But deception is a sin-saturated strain of the Devil's faithless DNA.*

Biblically discerning, per God's Word, will, & ways, the imperfect from the imposter is an eternal endeavor... It begins in the personal mirror, works out in the cultural market place, and both defines & divides the global mission field.

II. REALIZE

A. CONSISTENCIES

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Matthew 3:15 (*us fulfill all righteousness*)
- Matthew 5:17-20

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Matthew 23:1-36

¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice...

16“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ **17**You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? **18**And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ **19**You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? **20**So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. **21**And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. **22**And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. **33** **You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?**

B. CONSIDERATIONS

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
- Biblical/missional prescription & description
- Holy Scripture's **Guardrails** & Holy Spirit's **Guidance**...
- **Biblical truth in love brings tension in life!**
- Trust the **“COMPATIBILIST POSITION”**

GOD HIMSELF MADE OATHS ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS.

God provided for making oaths by His name. (Lev. 19:12).

Jesus many times used the phrase *“Truly I say to you”*

C. CONNECTIONS

- **Biblical Oaths & The Almighty**
 - God blesses God honoring oaths...
 - God hates irreverent swearing/oaths...

VIDEO:

"What Does Using God's Name In Vain Mean?"
John Piper

- 1. **BLASPHEMOUS** (Exodus 20:7)
- 2. **DEFIANTLY IRREVERENT** (Lev. 24:16)
- 3. **MANIPULATIVE** (Matthew 5:37)
- 4. **COUNTERFEIT** (Deut. 18:20)
- 5. **FLIPPANT** – OMG! (Psalm 148:13)
- 6. **MISGUIDED** –
- 7. **HYPERBOLIC** –

➤ The Almighty & Our Integrity

- *God IS Righteousness & Integrity!*
- *Biblical integrity = missional righteousness*

*"Righteousness guards the person of integrity,
but wickedness overthrows the sinner."*

Proverbs 13:6

VIDEO:

"What Does Using God's Name In Vain Mean?"
(GotQuestions.org)

- Integrity loves the Light/light...
- **GOD PUT THE GRITTY IN INTEGRITY!**

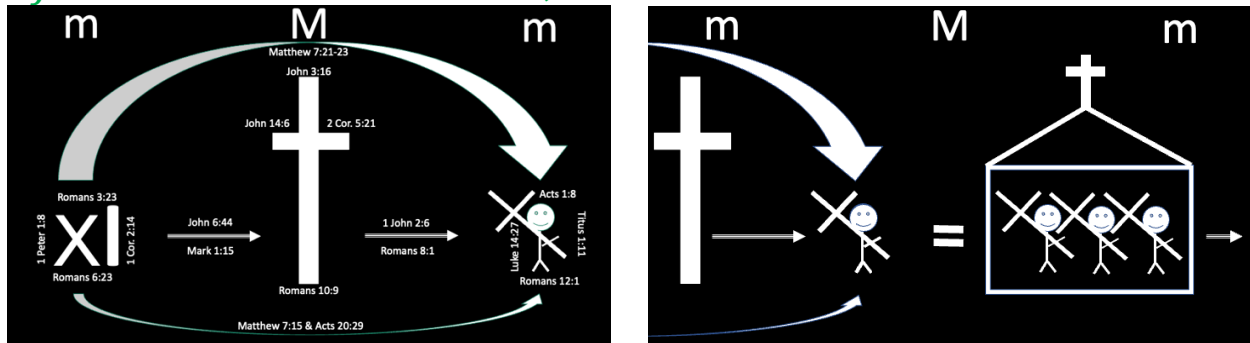
*"The blood thirsty hate a person of integrity
and seek to kill the upright."*

Proverbs 29:10

**GOD'S ABSOLUTE, UNCHANGING STANDARD IS
TRUTH AND SINCERITY IN *EVERYTHING*.**

THINK ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS!

If lies were not so common, oaths would be needless. – McLaren



The worse men are, the less they are bound by oaths; the better they are, the less there is need for them. – Matthew Henry

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have.

Abraham Lincoln

“In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and initiative... And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you.” – Warren Buffet

The only reason integrity should be a burden to you is if you enjoy being dishonest... a person of integrity hates hypocrisy.

– Sam Storm

If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don't have integrity, nothing else matters. – Alan K. Simpson

*Image is what people think we are:
integrity is what we really are.*

- John Maxwell

*What should seriously concern us... is not that the world
praises Christ without obeying Him, but that the church does.*

- Anonymous

➤ Integrity & Eternity

Integrity can be defined as complete wholeness,
harmonized congruence, uniting righteous motivation,
presentation, & application. Integrity is virtuous honesty
BE-ing lived out within the full, biblical, & missional
context of God's truth in love per His Word, will, & way(s).

*Integrity answers many questions for you... even before
they are asked. You see, integrity eliminates unacceptable
options before they can be confused with opportunities.*

Integrity is the Christian's personal, biblical, & missional
commitment to worship, work, walk, war, & witness to, for, &
through the grace, Gospel, & glory of Jesus The Christ!

Note: the counterfeit version of “*cultural integrity*,” (which
is not true integrity), tells the world that “*sincerity to self*”
is the core criteria & litmus test in defining integrity...

By contrast, in reality, genuine integrity requires a foundation of truth, love, & virtue, as defined & described by God's Word, will, & ways. While integrity champions consistency, consistency minus virtue is harmful.

- Eternity & God's glory!
 - Acts 4:12 & 1 Corinthians 10:31

III. RESPOND

- God's Word, God's will, & God's ways!
 - Matthew 3:15; 5:17,37; 6:10; 28:18-20
- Our Head, Heart, & Hands
- Locally, Regionally, & Globally
- No more. No less. No matter what!

APPLICATION ILLUSTRATION

*** What comes to mind when you hear somebody respond to a heart question with the words: ***"Well...TECHNICALLY..."*** (biblical examples abound)

- *"Did God REALLY say...?"*
- *"Who exactly is my brother...?"*
- *"What IS truth...?"*
- *"What's the big deal about anger?"*
- *"It's not really adultery so long as"*
- *"Divorce is every MAN's right..."*

William Barclay,

"Here is a great eternal truth. Life cannot be divided into compartments in some of which God is involved and in others of which he is not involved; there cannot be one kind of language in the Church and another kind of language in the shipyard or the factory or the office; there cannot be one kind of conduct in the Church and another kind of conduct in the business world. The fact is that God does not need to be invited into certain departments of life, and kept out of others. He is everywhere, all through life and in every activity of life. He hears not only the words which are spoken in his name; he hears all words; and there cannot be any such thing as a form of words which evades bringing God into any transaction. We will regard all promises as sacred if we remember that all promises are made in the presence of God"

God's vows, oaths, & swearing are Gospel translators, validators, & doormen... By grace, through faith, Christ promises salvation, sanctification, & glorification... thru THE Gospel, for WHOSOEVER (EVERY single one) who miraculously repents, believes, vows, swears, & fulfills their promised oaths to miraculously & righteously:

Respond – Confess – Repent – Believe – Obey – Love – BE!

*** **My redemption story...** my reception of Christ's amazing, saving, Gospel-grace, came through my miraculously empowered vow, & swearing to literally STOP living in & for self & sin. Instead, from that moment forward, I promised to live in & for Christ & God's glory...

MY LITERAL, (DECLARED & PROCLAIMED OUT LOUD) WORDS WERE (AND REMAIN TO THIS DAY & UNTIL I DIE)... “I PROMISE LORD, FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD, TO ANYTHING & EVERYTHING YOU ASK, MY ANSWER WILL ALWAYS BE “YES LORD! NO MATTER WHAT! ...PLEASE LORD, JUST DON’T STOP ASKING ME THE QUESTIONS. AMEN & AMEN!”

REVIEW: WAIT... THERE’S STILL MORE...

VIDEO:

Here's What Everyone Gets Wrong About Taking God's Name In Vain

The Gospel, by definition & description is a holy vow, a divine promise of blood bought, miraculous & saving grace... a crucified & resurrected Oath that offers sinners transformative salvation, righteous-sanctification, & eternal-glorification.

Hence, faithful obedience vs. disobedience is what differentiates taking God's name in vanity vs. victory!

CLOSE:

I had a conversation recently which helped to open my eyes to just how easy it is to get this lesson wrong... to miss the foundational teaching of Christ.

While the obvious remains obvious... the obscured meaning here should inform, inspect, & inspire all of us who claim Jesus as LORD & Savior, King & Commander, Creator & Christ

Here's the missional takeaway... ANY vulgar, disrespectful, inappropriate, manipulative, superficial, empty, or religiously misguided oath, vow, promise, claim, or representation... in or under God's name, be it in attitude or action... any such perversion that is embedded in one's Head, Heart, or Hands... is unrighteous & damnable sin - unless it has been personally remedied by the blood-bought & faithfully applied Gospel of Jesus The Christ.

“Woe To Those Whose Vows Are Vain!”

EVERY person who claims to be a Christian has, by definition, made a covenant with God to live a surrendered life in and for Christ... they have vowed, by grace through faith, to “love the LORD God with all their heart, soul, mind, & strength” (the greatest commandment), as well as, “love their neighbor as themselves” (the second greatest commandment)... ANYTHING less is breaking their vows and taking God's name in vain.

May we ALWAYS put 1st things 1st & NEVER lose faith in Him!

PRAYER

WORSHIP:

“What If” & “First Things First”