

Telling the Truth Matthew 5:33-37

What is Jesus correcting? (vv.33-36)

He's not correcting the Old Testament. He's correcting the way the Pharisees distorted the Old Testament — verses like Lev 19:12 and Deut 23:21.

You can see their distortions in Matthew 23:16-19. They spent a lot of time talking about whether you could swear by lesser things and not have to tell the truth.

So what is Jesus calling us to do? (vv.31-32)

He is calling us to tell the truth (v.37).

But is he calling us to never use oaths? Some Christian groups, like the Anabaptists, drew this conclusion. But Jesus testified under oath in Matthew 26. And Paul calls God to witness that he is telling the truth (Phil 1:8).

So Jesus point is that if we are going to use a vow — be sure to tell the truth.

Jesus' disciples should always tell the truth.

How can we overcome lying?

Jesus says evil words — like lying — come from our hearts.

So lying shows evil in our hearts.

When we lie it's because we are trusting something else to satisfy us more than Jesus Christ (Psalm 84:11).

So to overcome lying — we need God's power to supernaturally change our hearts —

First — turn to God as you are — poor in spirit. Ask Him to forgive you through Jesus.

Second — earnestly ask God to change your heart by the power of the Spirit.

Third — pray over Scriptures which will help you feel that God is your all-satisfying Treasure.

As you do this you will feel the Spirit changing your heart so you desire Jesus Christ more than anything — and would gladly forego any other pleasure and endure any other pain to have more of Him.

The result is that we will tell the truth. Gladly.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

When are you most tempted to lie? What's the pleasure you are trying to gain — or the pain you are trying to avoid?

Can you see that lying shows you are trusting something else to satisfy you more than Jesus Christ? Why or why not?

In the past how have you tried to overcome lying? Did it work? Why or why not?

Can you see how you will tell the truth when you trust that Jesus Christ is your highest pleasure? Why or why not?

What is the Father calling you to do in response to these Scriptures?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012