

The Sermon on the Mount  
(Lesson 8)

Introduction:

1. In Matthew 5:21-48 Jesus addressed 5 very important subjects by first mentioning what the Jews had been taught and then revealing His will.
2. In vs.33-37 Jesus dealt with "swearing and making oaths."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.33) JESUS MENTIONED WHAT THE JEWS HAD HEARD ABOUT SWEARING AND MAKING OATHS
  - A. The Jews had heard that they:
    1. were not to "forswear themselves" [make false vows] (Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2)
    2. were to perform their oaths to the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:21-23).
  - B. God's will on swearing and making oaths was clearly revealed in the law.
    1. The Jews were not forbidden to swear and make oaths -- they were instructed to do so by God's name (Deuteronomy 6:13).
    2. However, the Jews were required to abide by the restrictions they were given.
      - a. They were not to swear falsely, and they were to keep their oaths and vows.
      - b. Example: Hannah, Samuel's mother (1 Samuel 1:11, 27-28)
    3. Even though God's law clearly stated His will on swearing and making oaths, . . .
  - C. The Jews had a tradition that allowed them in their minds to get around keeping their vows.
    1. Jesus confronted this tradition in Matthew 23:16-22.
    2. When making oaths they called upon certain objects as witnesses to what they said.
    3. The purpose for doing this was to convince others that they were telling the truth (ex.: Peter "*denied with an oath*" that he knew Jesus -- Matthew 26:72).
    4. When they swore by certain things [the gold of the temple, the gift on the altar], they were bound to keep their word.
    5. However, when they swore by other objects [the temple, the altar], they were not bound to keep their word.
  - D. Jesus was dealing with the practice of making oaths by sacred objects while lying.
  - E. After dealing with what the Jews had heard about swearing and making oaths, . . .
- II. (vs.34-37) JESUS REVEALED HIS WILL ON SWEARING
  - A. (vs.34a) Jesus said, "*Swear not at all.*"
    1. Does this mean that we cannot swear to tell the truth in a court of law, exchange vows when we get married, or promise [pledge] to pay back money that we borrow?
    2. Let us consider several examples from the Bible.
      - a. (Hebrews 6:13) When God made a promise to Abraham, He swore by Himself.
      - b. (Matthew 26:63-64) Jesus made a statement under oath.
      - c. (Romans 1:9) Paul called upon God as a witness to what he said.
    3. These examples show us that all swearing is not forbidden.
  - B. The swearing that the Lord forbids is calling upon some thing [heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, or our heads] as a witness to what we say to convince others that we are telling the truth.
  - C. Today, people make statements like "I swear to God," "I swear on a stack of Bibles," or "I swear on my mother's grave."
  - D. Rather than call upon some thing or some one as a witness to what we say, we need to do what Jesus said in vs.37.
    1. When you say "yes," mean "yes," and when you say "no," mean "no."
    2. See James 5:12
      - a. We are not to profanely call upon God or a sacred object as a witness to what we say.
      - b. When we say something, the Lord wants us to mean precisely what we say.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus was dealing with hypocrisy [people appearing to tell the truth while actually lying].
2. Let us practice the instructions given in Colossians 3:9 and Ephesians 4:25.