

“JESUS’ KINGDOM MANIFESTO”

BIG IDEA . . . Part 7: Radical Truthfulness (5:33-37)

INTRO: As we continue to journey through the SOM, particularly Ch. 5 on “True Righteousness.” It is defined in vv. 1-16, explained in vv. 17-20 (Jesus fulfilled—completed the Law, actually raising the standard for daily living to “Exceed” that of the Scribes and the Pharisees—imparted by God’s grace through our faith based upon the finished work of Christ). In vv. 21-48 Jesus provides six examples of how the righteousness God requires exceeds their self-righteousness. Summary . . . So far: murder/anger, lust/adultery, divorce. Now the 4th example of the new standard: “Radical Truthfulness” (vv. 33-37).

The scarcity of truthfulness, the gap in credibility, the honesty deficit is nothing new—existed since the Fall and sin’s entrance—not surprising since Satan, the god of this world and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44) has created a world marked by a lack of truthfulness. Since we are all sinners by nature and by choice, we are ALL born liars! (Psa. 58:3; 62:4; Jer. 9:3-5). Mac writes p. 320 . . . We tell 4 lies/day on average. The people in Jesus’ day are not different. We are inclined to be truthful when it benefits us. The S&P respected truthfulness in principle, but in practice they buried it in flawed interpretations and manmade traditions to fit their own sinful purposes. In Matt. 5:33-37 Jesus exposes their perversion and raises the standard of living a righteous life.

I. THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING REGARDING TRUTHFULNESS IN OT MOSAIC LAW (v. 33)

- A. What the OT said – Two observations about swearing and oaths:
 - 1. *Vows in the OT were presumed and encouraged* (Deut. 10:20) and to do so in God’s name is a sign of grace (Jer. 4:2; 12:16)
 - 2. *What was discouraged was making a vow (swearing to do something), and then not doing it* (Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21). Summary – Vows were assumed, even encouraged. But once made, they were not to be broken under any circumstances.
- B. The Religious Leaders *Perversion* – By teaching an oath was *not* binding if it did not include God’s name or imply it (1 Sam. 17:55). They devised a system of rules of when you could or couldn’t lie. Result? Epidemic of ordinary conversations of frivolous swearing and oaths. They’d swear/oath: by your life, by my beard, etc. It became to try to convince others you were telling the truth while lying using some person or object as “proof”. Ex – “I crossed my fingers so I don’t have to tell the truth!”

II. CHRIST’S RADICAL TEACHING ON TRUTHFULNESS (vv. 34-36)

- A. Jesus rules out making vows using references to people or objects. The reason? God stands behind everything. The entire creation belongs to Him; so, when you refer to part of it you are including Him (see Matt. 23:16-22). Such swearing oath-taking, and vowing are sinful.
- B. (v. 37) His superseding will is simply let your yes . . . anything beyond this is of the devil. Followers of Christ don’t need to swear by anyone or anything they are telling the truth: Their word is truth! Jam. 5:12 AVOID PROMISES!

III. THE RADICAL IMPLICATIONS OF JESUS’ TEACHING FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

- A. “Are Christians ever to take any personal oaths? What about public oaths in court?” Some say absolutely not, ever! I don’t agree. Jesus honored the public oath of Caiaphas (Matt. 26:63-64). Several examples of Paul (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23).
- B. Jesus’ prohibitions are in regard to everyday conversations. Oaths, etc. are permitted, but not encouraged. They are not to be a part of everyday conversations to prove we are being honest.
- C. Jesus new standard that surpasses that of the day is a radical call to a life of profound truthfulness (Pro. 6:16-19; Eph. 4:25-32). ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH (Period)! Exo. 20:16. . . It’s not easy to be totally truthful all the time for two reasons:
 - 1. Lying is normal in fallen society – part of sinful culture. Too easy to fall in line (1 Jn. 5:19).
 - 2. The “heart” is corrupt (Matt. 12:34-36). Lack of honesty is evidence of an inward condition. God hates (Pro. 6:17).

ILLUS: George MacDonald, a great preacher and writer wrote to his son on Dec. 6, 1878 . . .

CONC: Truthfulness is not easy. Honesty as followers of Christ matters. Our testimony and His character are at stake. A truthful life is impactful. Jesus didn’t mince words, “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’; anything less is demonic (vv. 34, 37). Let’s commit to radical truthfulness!