Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

Title

6 March 2016 Message 8 of 20

NLT 40 Minutes

**“I Swear!”**

***Matthew 5:33-37***

**Topic:** Vows

**Subject:** How should you treat your vows?

**Complement:** Speaking truth beats making vows.

**Purpose:** The listeners will replace making promises with speaking the truth.

**Attribute:** We worship the God of truth

**Reading:** James 5:12

**Song:** I Worship You

# Introduction

### Interest: We *break* promises as easily as we *make* promises.

Promises
(2 slides)

#### Politicians make promises they never intend to keep.

Fingers crossed

Couple

Politician

#### Married couples too often lie to each other.

#### Businessmen agree to what they cannot deliver.

### Need: Are you a person of your word?

Pinkies

#### Do your friends trust what you say?

Wife turned away

Friends

#### Does your wife or husband believe you—always?

Handshake

#### Do you strive to make sure you *do* what you *say*?

#### Are you punctual?

Punctual

##### I used to be habitually late as a teenager until I just got sick of it—and I learned that the secret to punctuality is to be early!

Teacher Late

##### About that same time our church had one tardy choir member who consistently came 20 minutes late every Thursday night to practice. Rain of shine, she was at our 7 PM rehearsal at 7:20 PM.

Lady & Clock

##### One day as she came in, our director asked her in front of the group, “Lisa, next Thursday night I would like you to give the devotional precisely at 7 PM right at the beginning of our practice. Your topic will be a devotional on punctuality.”

Punctuality Definition

##### Do you think she was on time? Indeed! In fact, she apologized to us all and gave us the best definition of punctuality I ever heard: “showing high regard for other people and their time.”

Red Shirt Fingers

#### Are you reliable? When you promise, do you deliver?

### Subject: How should you treat your vows?

Subject

Back to Basics

• Vows

### Background: We are on week 8 on the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus spoke truth and taught us to do the same.

#### In the last two sections, Jesus talked about adultery/lust and divorce/marriage. Jesus has a way of getting to the heart of an issue in the most important areas of our lives—like our thoughts and our closest relationship in marriage.

• Murder
• Adultery
• Divorce

#### One of those most important aspects of our lives is what we say.

### Preview: Today we’ll see two ways to treat our vows.

2 ways

### Text: Matthew 5:33-37 helps us get two handles on our words.

(So what’s the first way you should treat your vows?)

# I. Keep your vows (5:33).

MP

[Don’t break your promises.]

## Jesus’ listeners knew Deuteronomy 23:21 (5:33a).

33a

Deut 23:21

33b

Jo Tan

Yunri
(2 slides)

Randles

Friendship Heart

### Deut. 23:21 NLT commanded, “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in fulfilling whatever you promised him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows, or you will be guilty of sin.”

### Other passages regulated vow making, as vows were very important to them.

## God commands us to keep our promises (5:33b).

### There are many times we take oaths or make vows in life:

#### Baptism is a vow to follow the Lord throughout life.

#### Baby dedications commit us to raise our children for Christ.

#### Church membership is a covenant to submit to the church.

#### Marriage is an unconditional promise until death.

#### Friendship commitments strengthen us.

### We must keep our promises.

Hand Over Heart

#### Too often those baptized or dedicated soon leave the church!

#### Too often non-members commit more than members.

MPI

#### Too many have not kept their marriage vows (Glenn: “I am getting a divorce, and as my pastor, it is your fault!”).

Subject

(So keep your promises—don’t break them. But how *else* should you treat your vows?)

# II. Make promises unnecessary (5:34-37).

MP

[Speak so simply that you don’t need to take oaths.]

34-36

## Don’t make tricky vows (5:34-36).

### Jewish leaders in Jesus’ time loved tricky promises.

#### In the Middle East, words carried more power than they do in most of our cultures. “A promise is a promise,” they would say, so they had no problem making them and sticking to them.

Title

Pharisees & Oaths

Title

#### One problem did come, though, when they made *too many* vows. What does it communicate if a person is always making promises? Perhaps it shows that, without a vow or promise, you cannot trust that person!

#### Such was the state in first century Israel. Due to the Pharisee influence, people swore by almost anything to make their point.

### Did Jesus really mean that we shouldn’t make *any* vows (34)? If so, how could anyone get married?

Jesus & Vows

#### The idea is not whether someone makes a marital vow. God commanded this to be made and kept in 1 Corinthians 7.

#### The idea is that, if you are not trustworthy, then people can’t trust you without a vow. Be someone worthy of trust even without an oath to back your promise.

### Why did Jesus mention vows made by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and the head (34b-36)? Were people doing this back then?

34-36

#### Well, the leaders then knew that you were not supposed to swear by God’s name. So, as Wiersbe says,

#### “The Pharisees used all kinds of tricks to sidestep the truth, and oaths were among them. They would avoid using the holy name of God, but they would come close by using the city of Jerusalem, heaven, earth, or some part of the body” (Wiersbe, 52).

### We promise now “with our fingers crossed” too.

## Just speak the truth (5:37a).

37a

Wiersbe & 3 Pharisees

Fingers Crossed

Stick Figures

### James 5:12 exhorts the same idea of not needing to take an oath.

Jas 5:12

### That vow that we take in marriage is good but it can get us into some bad habits of making too many vows—especially if we haven’t really kept the marital vow.

### Jesus corrected this problem of excessive vow making by exhorting us to be reliable in what we say without making promises. Isn’t just saying *yes* or *no* sufficient?

## Otherwise, you will follow evil (5:37b).

37b

### Why would speaking beyond a simple affirmation or denial be evil (37b)?

### Wiersbe again notes, “Jesus taught that our conversation should be so honest, and our character so true, that we would not need ‘crutches’ to get people to believe us. Words depend on character, and oaths cannot compensate for a poor character… The more words a man uses to convince us, the more suspicious we should be” (Wiersbe, 52).

### Satan is called the “father of lies” because he tells so many lies. If you cannot rely upon what I say, it means that I am following in Satan’s pattern rather than imitating Jesus, who always told the truth. To imitate the devil is to imitate evil.

Man & 2 Voices

Subject

(How should you treat your vows?)

# Conclusion

### Speaking the truth is better than making vows (MI).

MI

### Keep your promises but make them unnecessary (MI restated).

Title

Title

Title

MPI

### How should you treat your vows (MPs)?

#### Keep your vows (5:33).

#### Make promises unnecessary (5:34-37).

MPII

What vows to make?

### What kind of commitments *should* you make, then?

#### Commit to your family.

Family

##### Tell the truth.

##### Be reliable.

#### Commit to your church.

Church

##### Become a member.

##### Make an impact in this body.

Prayer

### Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### In the last two sections, Jesus talked about adultery/lust and divorce/marriage.

### Jesus has a way of getting to the heart of an issue in the most important areas of our lives—like our thoughts and our closest relationship in marriage.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### That vow that we take in marriage is good but it can get us into some bad habits of making too many vows—especially if we haven’t really kept the marital vow.

### Jesus corrected this problem of excessive vow making by exhorting us to be reliable in what we say without making promises. Isn’t just saying *yes* or *no* sufficient?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### In the Middle East, words carried more power than they do in most of our cultures. “A promise is a promise,” they would say, so they had no problem making them and sticking to them.

### One problem did come, though, when they made *too many* vows. What does it communicate if a person is always making promises? Perhaps it shows that, without a vow or promise, you cannot trust that person!

### Such was the state in first century Israel. Due to the Pharisee influence, people swore by almost anything to make their point.

# Questions

### Where was this admonition not to break vows found (33)?

#### Deut. 23:21 NLT commanded, “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in fulfilling whatever you promised him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows, or you will be guilty of sin.”

### Did Jesus really mean that we shouldn’t make *any* vows (34)? If so, how could anyone get married?

#### The idea is not whether someone makes a marital vow. God commanded this to be made and kept in 1 Corinthians 7.

#### The idea is that, if you are not trustworthy, then people can’t trust you without a vow. Be someone worthy of trust even without an oath to back your promise.

### Why did Jesus mention vows made by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and the head (34b-36)? Were people doing this back then?

#### Well, the leaders then knew that you were not supposed to swear by God’s name. So, as Wiersbe says,

#### “The Pharisees used all kinds of tricks to sidestep the truth, and oaths were among them. They would avoid using the holy name of God, but they would come close by using the city of Jerusalem, heaven, earth, or some part of the body” (Wiersbe, 52).

### Why would speaking beyond a simple affirmation or denial be evil (37b)?

#### Wiersbe again notes, “Jesus taught that our conversation should be so honest, and our character so true, that we would not need ‘crutches’ to get people to believe us. Words depend on character, and oaths cannot compensate for a poor character… The more words a man uses to convince us, the more suspicious we should be” (Wiersbe, 52).

#### Satan is called the “father of lies” because he tells so many lies. For you not to be able to rely upon what I say means that I am following in Satan’s pattern rather than imitating Jesus, who always told the truth. To imitate the devil is to imitate evil.

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Make commitments without pretense

Don’t make vows. Just tell the truth.

# Possible Illustrations

### There are many times we take oaths or make vows in life:

#### Baptism is a vow to follow the Lord throughout life.

#### Membership is a covenant to submit to the church.

#### Marriage is an unconditional promise until death.

# Possible Applications

### Commit to your family.

#### Tell the truth.

#### Be reliable.

### Commit to your church.

#### Become a member.

#### Make an impact in this body.

# Life of Christ Outline of Christ's Authority to Interpret the Law

**§§ 54-56**

# *Exegetical Idea*: In response to the crowds' interest in the righteousness necessary for kingdom entrance, Christ's Sermon on the Mount shows the holiness of God by teaching the characteristics of the kingdom's subjects, His superiority over the Law, and instruction to those entering the kingdom in order to discredit Pharisaic righteousness and to offer Himself as the sole basis for kingdom entrance (Matt 5:1–7:29; Luke 6:17-42).

# *Exegetical Idea*: The traits of those who trust Christ as King in the Sermon on the Mount are holiness and trust in Christ’s authority over the Law and oral tradition (Matt 5:1–7:29; Luke 6:17-42).

# I. The Subjects of the Kingdom § 54: People entering Messiah's kingdom should show holiness instead of mere Pharisaical observances (Matt 5:1-16; Luke 6:17-26).

## The response a holy believer should have to the benefits and persecution related to trusting Christ as King is joy (Matt 5:1-12).

### The setting of the sermon shows Jesus taking the role of a rabbi to teach the disciples the response of those embracing him as king (Matt 5:1-2; Luke 6:17-19).

#### Jesus saw the crowds and sat down on a mountainside (1a).

#### Jesus began teaching his disciples who showed initiative to listen (1b-2).

### The benefits of trusting Christ as King are many (Matt 5:3-11; Luke 6:20-26).

#### *Depending on God* leads to a **rich experience of life** (5:3).

#### *Admitting our needs* leads to **receiving God’s comfort** (5:4).

#### *Humility* now brings **honor in the millennial kingdom** (5:5).

#### *Holiness* gives a **deep satisfaction** in life (5:6).

#### *Showing mercy* to others leads to **receiving mercy from God** (5:7).

#### A *pure lifestyle* results in **seeing God in our lives** today (5:8).

#### *Making peace* with others enables us to **be God’s channel** (5:9).

#### *Persecution for Christ* gives us a **rich experience of life** (5:10-11).

### The response a believer should have towards persecution is joy over his heavenly reward and identification with persecuted OT prophets (5:12).

## The way believers should bless others is to direct them to God (Matt 5:13-16).

### The way believers should bless others is by helping them hunger for God (5:13).

#### Christians function like salt to create hunger for God in others (5:13a).

#### Christians who don’t create a hunger for God in others are useless (5:13b).

### The way believers should bless others is by helping them praise God by the good works they do (5:14-16).

#### Christians are lights to show people to God (5:14a).

#### A city on a hill and a lamp help others see the way to go (5:14b-15).

#### Be “light” through good deeds to help others praise God (5:16).

# II. The Relation of the King to the Law § 55: Christ rejects the Pharisaic views of the law that the disciples might know the proper type of righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom (Matt 5:17–7:6; Luke 6:27-42).

## The way believers will be rewarded is by obeying and teaching the true spirit of Old Testament until all it says about Jesus comes true (5:17-20).

### The time the OT will disappear is when all it prophesies about Jesus comes true (5:17-18).

#### Jesus came to fulfill the OT rather than abolish it (5:17).

#### The OT won’t disappear until every prophecy about Christ is fulfilled in the eternal state (5:18).

### The way believers will be rewarded is by obeying and teaching the true spirit of Old Testament (5:19-20).

#### Our level of millennial rewards depends on practicing and teaching the true spirit of Old Testament (5:19).

#### We won’t even enter the millennium apart from internal holiness in Christ rather than external piety of the Pharisees (5:20).

## Christ rejected the Pharisaic righteousness as unable to bring one into the kingdom to teach that the second table of the law demanding proper conduct towards others should also be followed (Matt 5:21-48).

### **Murder**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not only preserve life but will avoid the anger, hatred and poor relationships that eventually lead to murder (Matt 5:21-26).

### **Adultery**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not only be faithful to his spouse but will shun the lust that causes adultery (Matt 5:27-30).

### **Divorce**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not only never divorce his wife without legal documentation but will never divorce his wife at all lest this cause her and her future husband to both commit adultery when she remarries (Matt 5:31-32).

### **Oaths**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not only take oaths when affirming something which could be taken in more than one way but will have trustworthy speech at all times so oath-taking becomes unnecessary (Matt 5:33-37).

### **Retaliation**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not demand his right for retaliation but give up such rights as a characteristic of righteousness and godliness (Matt 5:38-42).

### **Love**: One surpassing Pharisaic righteousness will not only love his neighbor who will repay favors but will love his enemy as well who will never repay favors (Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-30, 32-36).

## Christ rejected six Pharisaic practices of the law that misconstrued its real intent to instruct why Pharisaic righteousness is not able to bring one into the kingdom since their hypocritical practices were directed man-ward for a reputation of piety rather than God-ward in true righteousness (Matt 6:1–7:6; Luke 6:37-42).

### Almsgiving: Public almsgiving of the Pharisees is repudiated for being performed to **demonstrate** piety rather than to demonstrate the love of God by meeting a need (Matt 6:1-4).

### **Prayer**: Public prayer of the Pharisees for human approval is repudiated for being performed to demonstrate piety and private prayer is encouraged which includes worship, supplication for God's work and personal needs, confession, prayer for protection and a forgiving spirit (Matt 6:5-15).

### **Fasting**: Public fasting of the Pharisees is repudiated for being performed to demonstrate piety rather than done privately before God to receive reward only from Him (Matt 6:16-18).

### **Eternal Investments**: Hoarding wealth as a sign of God's approval by the Pharisees is repudiated for being only temporary and making eternal investments is encouraged since they last into eternity and cannot be lost (Matt 6:19-24).

### **Worry**: Lack of faith by the Pharisees shown in trusting accumulated money is repudiated by an encouragement to replace worry about food and clothing with trust in God's daily provisions as one seeks the kingdom's arrival (Matt 6:25-34).

### **Judging**: Setting oneself up as judges and as the standard of judgment of the Pharisees is repudiated for being performed by claiming knowledge of the motive behind the action whereas God's righteousness demanded that one not judge until his own life has been purified (Matt 7:1-6; Luke 6:37-42).

# III. Instruction to Those Who Would Enter the Kingdom § 56: Christ knew that, in spite of the Pharisees' rejection, some would receive His teaching and would want to know how to enter the kingdom so He instructs those who desire to enter the kingdom in some pertinent areas (Matt 7:7-29).

## **Persistent prayer** will be answered because of God's nature as a Father makes sure His children's needs are met, not because of the endless repetitions of the Pharisees (Matt 7:7-12; Luke 6:31, 43-45).

## **The invitation to receive Christ** and enter the kingdom is given by declaring that He alone is the true, narrow way of access, not the false, broad way of the Pharisees that ultimately ended in exclusion from the kingdom and destruction (Matt 7:13-14).

## **False prophets** like the Pharisees have unrighteous lifestyles and will be judged because, while outwardly they fulfilled the requirements of the law, inwardly they lacked the relationship with the King that was the requisite for entrance into the kingdom (Matt 7:15-23).

## **Another invitation** to reject Pharisaism and accept Christ is given in a contrast between one who accepts the King's word and trusts His person and one who rejects His words and person, thus revealing that the destiny of those who hear Christ's words would be determined by their response to His message (Matt 7:24–8:1; Luke 6:46-49).

**“I Swear!”**

***Matthew 5:33-37***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way to treat our vows is to keep them but make them unnecessary (5:33-37).

# I. The way we should treat our vows is to keep them (5:33).

## Jesus’ listeners knew about Deut. 23:21 (5:33a).

## The verse was God’s command to fulfill their vows (5:33b).

# II. The *best* way to treat our vows is to make them unnecessary (5:34-37).

## The way not to vow is by making them tricky (5:34-36).

## The way we should speak is to give the simple truth (5:37a).

## The reason to speak truthfully is because otherwise we follow evil (5:37b).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will replace making promises with speaking the truth.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: We *break* promises as easily as we *make* promises.

### Need: Are you a person of your word?

### Subject: How should you treat your vows?

### Background: We are on week 8 on the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus spoke truth and taught us to do the same.

### Preview: Today we’ll see two ways to treat our vows.

### Text: Matthew 5:33-37 helps us get two handles on our words.

(So what’s the first way you should treat your vows?)

# I. Keep your vows (5:33).

## Jesus’ listeners knew Deuteronomy 23:21 (5:33a).

## God commands us to keep our promises (5:33b).

 (So keep your promises—don’t break them. But how *else* should you treat your vows?)

# II. Make promises unnecessary (5:34-37).

## Don’t make tricky vows (5:34-36).

## Just speak the truth (5:37a).

## Otherwise, you will follow evil (5:37b).

 (How should you treat your vows?)

# Conclusion

### Speaking truth beats making vows (MI).

### Keep your promises but, better yet, make them unnecessary (MI restated).

### How should you treat your vows (MPs)?

#### Keep your vows (5:33).

#### Make promises unnecessary (5:34-37).

### What kind of commitments *should* you make, then?

#### Commit to your family.

##### Tell the truth.

##### Be reliable.

#### Commit to your church.

##### Become a member.

##### Make an impact in this body.

### Prayer

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**Rick Griffith**

6 March 2016

Message 8 of 20

**“I Swear!”**

***Matthew 5:33-37***

# Introduction

### We *break* promises as easily as we *make* promises.

### Are you a person of your word?

### How should you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your vows?

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your vows (5:33).

## Jesus’ listeners knew Deuteronomy 23:21 (5:33a).

## God commands us to keep our promises (5:33b).

# II. Make promises \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (5:34-37).

## Don’t make tricky vows (5:34-36).

## Just speak the truth (5:37a).

## Otherwise, you will follow evil (5:37b).

(How should you treat your vows?)

# Conclusion

### Speaking \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ beats making vows (Main Idea).

### What kind of commitments *should* you make, then?

#### Commit to your family.

##### Tell the truth.

##### Be reliable.

#### Commit to your church.

##### Become a member.

##### Make an impact in this body.

**Thought Questions**

1. List all of the vows (oaths or promises) you have already made in your life.

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. What is the hardest area of your life to keep commitments? Why? What should you do?

Text

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