

“Yes” Means “Yes” (Matthew 5:37)

Introduction

1. Good morning, Church! Imagine putting a white glove on. Now imagine a bucket of mud. And picture putting your gloved hand down into that bucket of mud and pull it out. Is the glove muddy or is the bucket, glovey? Did the glove get dirty or did the bucket of mud get white and clean? The glove gets dirty, nasty and dirty doesn't it?
2. Likewise, we're supposed to be light and salt that influences the world around us. But if we're not careful, we are greatly influenced and shaped by the world. I see a real danger here when it comes to our speech and integrity. We may begin to think and talk like the world around us. And God is listening to our words (Matt. 12:36-37).
3. Of course, Christians should think before they speak. But we should think differently about speech as well. Jesus teaches Christians to talk differently than the world does – “yes,” means, “yes.” **Read Matthew 5:37**

Discussion

I. Word Games People Play

- A. It goes on today.
 1. We seem to learn this at a young age. That people don't keep their word. Maybe...
 - a. School Teacher disappoints us by not delivering on a promised reward or incentive.
 - b. Parent or step parent disappoints us by not doing what they say they will do – take us to a park or watch our game or pick us up after school.
 - c. We see from a young age that people (even and especially grown-ups) don't always do what they say they will do.
 2. Perhaps among our own peer group we learned some word games. Like, it doesn't count if your fingers are crossed. The old crossed finger routine. We told our friend they could keep our toy. They got excited. We said, “No, my fingers were crossed behind my back. It doesn't count.”
 3. We get the idea that someone has to keep their word and do what they say ONLY if they say, “I promise.” If you promised, then you have to do it, you'd be a liar otherwise. Thinking that way is a sign of questionable integrity. Why isn't it enough that someone just says they will do something, why do they have to “promise?” WORD GAMES!
 4. Word games have been going on for a long time. Jesus addressed such word games head on!
- B. Oaths Among the Pharisees
 1. First off, why do men make oaths? It is to bolster their word. This is the way of men (Heb. 6:16). See, according to the thinking of men, a matter is settled once an oath is made. God is the witness and God will hold you accountable to keep your word.
 2. Jesus addresses these Oaths and oath making paradigm which was typically falsehood in itself. (Matt. 5:33-36). What do we understand? When men swear by something greater than themselves, they swear by something they have no power over. You can't even change the color of your hair, how are you going to speak for heaven or earth. All you can honestly control is your actions and attitudes – will you do what you say you will.
 3. The Pharisees were evidently really bad about bold yet bogus oaths (Matt. 5:20; 23:16-22). They attempted holy deceit. There's no such thing as a holy or godly lie. They got the verbal gymnastics down to even differentiating oaths by the temple and oaths by the gold of the temple. They were liars but justifying breaking their word by the nonsense of greater and lesser oaths. WORD GAMES!
- C. Think about it. What's the sum total of word games and broken promises? Loss of Integrity. A basic mistrust and distrust of others in most of our dealings. That's what we witness around us.
- D. Without Integrity, People...

1. Always want it in writing. Contracts in triplicate; itemized bids and estimates; license and certification of everyone involved. There's mistrust of someone's word. After all, you'd have to be a fool to take someone at their word – especially a stranger.
 2. Often want a deposit. Give me \$ to see if your serious about buying this house or renting this apartment. Protect the property (or the time off the market) if you go back on your word.
 3. Cameras everywhere. All the world is a football game and we have instant replay. I understand video is great evidence against criminals, thieves. And you figure, if someone is arrested for theft, of course they're going to lie about it. If you're a criminal you lie, that's no big jump. However, the most basic legal defense is that "Everyone lies." Law enforcement lies, those witnesses are out to get my client, they all lie. So, play the video.
- E. All symptomatic of a basic distrust and that our word is NOT good enough. Our "Yes" or "No" is easily violated or forgotten and so people protect themselves.
- F. I know I've been part of this problem. I've been guilty of playing word games, and not always following through with my words and letting others down. Maybe you have too? And haven't we seen others do it also? Haven't we felt the sting of being deceived, cheated, betrayed, and disappointed when people play word games? They say one thing and do something else?
- G. But Jesus teaches something that would change this picture, change the world, if the world would practice it. We don't expect the world to practice it but Christians are expected to...

II. Jesus Taught "Yes" Means "Yes"

- A. Integrity (Matthew 5:37). Words and actions are consistent.
- B. James repeats that "Yes" means "Yes" (Jas. 5:12).
- C. Deceitful and Untrustworthy people earn God's judgment (Rom. 1:29-32): Deceit (v.29), Untrustworthy (v.31), deserve death (v.32). Liars are destined for Hell (Rev. 21:8).
- D. When a Christian gives their word (when they say, "Yes") they are obligated by Jesus to keep their word. Regardless of signed contracts, legal documents, security deposits, etc. Regardless of what this godless, wicked world insists to hold you to your word, Your word is your vow.
- E. When people do what they say they will do, when they say they will do it, it makes a difference. It's noticed. Christians are supposed to be those people – honest, trustworthy people. People with integrity!

III. Christians, Your Word Is Enough

- A. Marriage – You said "Yes." I do, I will, until death do us part. I do, as long as we both shall live. God was the witness, the minister was the witness, the assembly of family and friends were witnesses to your word. You said yes! So Irreconcilable-Differences Divorce destroys integrity. No-Fault Divorce destroys integrity. If you need a reason to stay with your mate another day or give your marriage another chance and continue working on it, how about – because you said you would do it and you're not dead!
- B. Employers/ Vocation – You said "Yes." I will deliver this product for this price. I will perform this service for these wages. Yes I give you my best effort. Don't be an eye-pleaser or lazy on your job. It destroys integrity. Psalm 15:4 describes person who may dwell on God's holy hill.
- C. Creditors – You said "Yes." When you took on the debt. You signed the credit card. You signed the mortgage. You did the financing. Yet there are folks in recent years who have chosen to walk away from their homes. I'm concerned that Christians are tempted to do the same thing. It destroys integrity.
- D. Brethren – You said "Yes"
 1. "Yes, I will pray for you." Do it. Write it down, do it immediately, over the phone.
 2. "Yes, I forgive you." Do it. Work to release grudge. Don't bring up. Pray for them/ about it.
 3. "Yes, I love my brethren." Do it. Not just word. In deed & truth. Provision, Presence, Care.

Conclusion: Will you say "Yes" to The Lord. – "Yes, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"