**Sermon Title:** Integrity Matters Greatly in the Life of a Christian.

**Pharisees’ and Scribes’ Misrepresentation of Mosaic Law Versus Jesus’ Exposition:**

* First, Jesus says here “again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sword.’” These words are not found anywhere in the Old Testament, so again Jesus is not dealing with the Mosaic law but rather the **Pharisaical perversion of it**.
* Secondly, the Mosaic Law had to do with, like divorce, **legislating and restricting oath-taking to serious and important matters**. They had been taking oaths for all sorts of trivial matters, and were lying. They had **drawn distinctions between various oaths**, saying that some were binding while others were not. *If you took an oath by the temple, that was not binding; but if you took an oath by the gold of the temple, that was binding. If you took an oath by the alter you need not keep it; but if you took an oath by the gift that was on the alter then it was absolutely binding.*

**Commentary:**

**Vs. 33-34:**

* The idea behind all this Oath talk comes from Lev. 19:12, although related ideas appear in Num. 30:3–4 and Deut. 23:21. Jesus’ “but I say to you” reply resembles Deut. 23:22, which reads, “But if you refrain from vowing, you will not incur guilt.” Also, it is likely that they had the third commandment (Ex. 20:7) in mind as well as Deut. 6:13. **The bottom line is that Jesus urges us to not make any vow at all.** Do not invoke heaven, earth, or Jerusalem, because they are God’s throne, footstool, and great city, respectively.

**V. 36:**

* Nor should one swear by one’s head, because people have **no ability to create life** (you cannot make one hair white or black). The solution is to have integrity.

**V. 37:**

* Yes should mean yes. No should mean no. **The very need for a vow is evil because it suggests that something more than one’s word is required.** Again, the rhetorical thrust that emphasizes ***integrity*** should not be missed. Vows were approved of in Scripture (Num. 5:19–22; 6:2). **Jesus’ point is that oaths should not replace integrity or become a means of manipulation by how they are made.**

**Major Sermon Point:** Christian integrity should make oath-taking unnecessary.

**Conclusion Regarding Oaths:**

1. While oath-taking must be restricted, there are certain solemn, vital occasions when it is right, when it is not only legitimate, but adds a seriousness and an authority which nothing else can give. 🡪 **Paul**: Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 6:16; **Jesus**: Matt. 26:63-65 – Jesus does not rebuke him for his Oath.
2. Jesus’ forbids us swearing or cursing using God, Jesus, or Christ. The name of God should never be used in this way.
3. Jesus’ forbids swearing by any creature, because all belongs to God. We must not swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, our heads, or by anything else but by the name of God himself.
4. Jesus’ forbids all oaths done in ordinary conversation. It just is not needed. Let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no.

**Let’s talk about Christian integrity:**

**Prov. 6:16-19:**

**16**There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: **17**haughty eyes, **a lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood, **18**a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, **19a false witness who breathes out lies**, and one who sows discord among brothers.

**Let us first give a definition as to what a lie is according to Webster’s dictionary:**

1. To make a statement that **one knows is false**, especially with the intent to deceive.
2. To give a false impression or action or **false statement,** especially with the intent to deceive.
3. To make a false statement in order to evade the truth.
4. The invention of a false story or excuse in order to deceive.

**Why Integrity Matters:**

1. **Lying is a sin**. Furthermore, lying and habitually lying has **serious consequences**. We are God’s people! We may be the only Gospel people ever see, or the only true Christian a lost person interacts with. *A lie which we tell in the presence of a lost individual may come between that individual’s soul and their salvation in Christ Jesus*.
   * I believe that the greatest reason lost people have for not believing in Jesus (at least that is their greatest excuse), is their experience around Christians who do not live like Jesus, the God they claim to be a follower of.
2. Let’s be honest, **exaggeration** is usually not just a mistake, but a lie. False impressions quickly become outright lies. Let your yes be yes, and your no be no, does not leave room for exaggeration.
   * Remember it is the Pharisees and Scribes that would work hard to distinguish between big sins and little sins, lies and things which are not exactly lies.
3. Not **keeping our word** is a lie. 🡪 Prov. 19:19; Eccl. 5:4-5

* We need to take serious fulfilling commitments we make to God or to other people. Our word as Christians should mean something.

1. **Lying grieves the Holy Spirit** (Eph. 4:25-30), because those who worship God “must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). We follow after Jesus’ example, in which the scriptures say that he never committed sin, and “neither was deceit found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:21-22).
2. Lying, exaggeration, and false stories are often a tool Satan uses to disrupt and **disunify God’s people and the church**.

**In Closing:** Here is an awesome promise in scripture to make you think!

**Psalm 34:11-13:**

**11**Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. **12**What man is there who **desires life and loves many days**, that he may see good? **13Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit**.