

Don't Allow Your 'Yes' to be 'Maybe'

Ever wonder why Jesus talks about the things He does? On occasion it seems odd to me the choices He makes. Take this for instance:

"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 sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil" (Matthew 5:33–37, ESV).

If I were to get to choose the contents of a book in the Bible, I might cover appropriate social media etiquette, and over-sharing in general. I would probably discuss when one should or shouldn't wear Crocs (*the answer is never*). Home Owner Associations would also get some heavy ire in my writings. Upon further review, my sermon on the soapbox would be pretty weak compared to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He tends to preach on things that reveal a great deal about the heart.

At that time when Jesus was teaching, Hebrew lawmakers, the Pharisees and Saducees, were tweaking certain laws that may appear to be too "difficult" morally for modern times and making them more manageable for their current culture. Oaths were one of these things/

Lawmakers at that time would say that oaths were only binding based on what things were sworn by. Swear by Jerusalem = not binding, but if you swear towards Jerusalem = BINDING. Swear

by the temple = not binding, but if you swear by the temple's gold= BINDING!

Sounds a little like the differences between a promise and a pinky promise. Jesus was against every part of this. It was humanity bending truth to the point of breaking, God's people abusing power to ease the difficulty from God's law. It wasn't just an "oath" problem; it was a truth problem.

Fast-forward a couple of thousand years, and things are no different. We can't stand truth. We like things to be a bit more vague and ambiguous. We've gone from "Yes" or "No," to "*maybe*" in everything. Maybe we'll stay married. Maybe we'll commit ... as long as things feel right. Maybe we'll join the church, as long as we find people that we get along with.

Jesus rejects relative truth. He rejects the concept of "sort-of committing." There is no swearing by or swearing towards. There is "yes," and there is "no." There was a truth problem, and Jesus was exposing it.

Even today, we like our truth polished up and softened just to our liking. We like our news spun, our reality on television, our magazines airbrushed, and our inner-life crafted for the world to see one status update at a time. This is our world, and our truth on our terms. We like a truth we can manipulate to our liking.

How different things would be, if Scripture stated, "I am a way, a truth, and a life, and some people that are cool with that, can get to the Father with me." Jesus is not "a truth," He is *THE TRUTH*. His truth calls us to reject ambiguity and relativism and hold fast to the Truth.

The truth of Jesus is transformational. It redeems and renews our minds. Living a transformed life is not an optional calling. It means we must live out the truth in all things. Our "yes" must really mean "yes."

Our word and commitments must be seen as such. The truth of Jesus transforms our view of life. Marriage, fatherhood, friendship, service, faith community, and absolutely everything else must be on the up and up.

Your word is an indication of your heart. How does your heart look? Does it keep its commitments? Does it stand firm on its convictions? Does it love sacrificially? Everything from promising to read your kid a book, to promising you'll be faithful to your wife matters. It matters because you are building your life on truth.

Every time I read through Scripture and focus on the words of Jesus, I find Him constantly taking a commonplace issue, and moving it straight to the heart of what matters; the truth. Let us be truth keepers and protectors, and let us be proclaimers of how He has transformed us.

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