



**Sunday, February 13, 2011: Truth and Oaths**

**Scripture: Matthew 5:33-37; Psalm 132**

**Speaker: Joe Boot**

**Sermon Notes:**

1. As the greater Moses, Jesus goes up on the mountain to authoritatively apply His law for His people.
2. The commands of God reveal 1) the holiness (integrity, righteousness, truth) of God, 2) our sinfulness; and 3) our need for the atonement of Christ.
3. Ignorance of the meaning of the law which reflects the character and nature of God is why so many people don't value the gospel.
4. Our words matter; it is sin to use God's name trivially or falsely.
5. In Acts 5:1-10, perjury before God's church leads to death.
6. Since we as creatures have no power to govern the future, we cannot make oaths about our day-to-day plans and business.
7. Oaths must be understood covenantally. An oath is a self-invoked covenant curse.
8. Communion is a covenant oath, where we receive God's promise of life.
9. In providing salvation, God who cannot lie, binds Himself with an unchangeable oath (see Hebrews 6:16-18).
10. Renewing oath before God while in rebellion to its terms can lead to God's judgment and death (1 Corinthians 11:28-30),
11. False oath taking is a serious offense before God (Exodus 20:7).
12. Jesus is not condemning all oath taking, but He forbids casual oaths, i.e. calling on God's name to add weight to our promises.
13. The 39 Articles allow oaths for serious public promises, such as an oath to tell the truth in court, or an oath of public office, or a marriage vow.
14. Our lives are a series of covenant vows and oaths. For example, baptism, marriage, communion, church membership.
15. All of life is covenantal, i.e., governed in terms of the relationship God defines with His creatures.
16. The third and ninth commandments govern our speech before God.
17. Speech is a privilege. All our speech before God must be mindful of God and His holiness. We should never trivialize our vows, oaths, or speech.
18. The Jews would use substitutes for God in their swearing, such as heaven or the temple. Jesus condemns this practice too.
19. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it (Ecclesiastes 5:5).
20. The third and ninth commandments prevent lying and perjury, making possible a properly functioning society.
21. Without truth and integrity, family and society cannot function.
22. Where there is no regard for truth, anarchy ensues.
23. Making false oaths and promises is a very serious sin. If you steal from someone, you can make restitution. A false oath, by contrast, is an attack on an entire society.
24. When we take oaths trivially, we claim independence from God and cut ourselves loose of His authority.
25. The mood of our time, following Sartre, is that oaths are meaningless because they have reference only to myself.
26. The key to transformation is regeneration, not revolution.
27. Our lives must reflect the integrity of our God: "let your yes be yes, and your no, no."

**Application Questions:**

1. What is a biblical oath?
2. What is the significance of shedding of blood in making an oath?
3. Give examples of biblically warranted oaths.
4. What kind of oath-taking is Jesus condemning?
5. Am I guilty of using God's name in dishonouring ways?
6. What were the consequences of making false oaths before God as recorded in Acts 5:1-10 and 1 Corinthians 11:28-30?
7. What are the social consequences of breaking commitments and bearing false witness?
8. Am I a person of my word? Do I have a reputation for honouring my commitments?
9. Have I made oaths, promises, or commitments which I need to take steps to honour this week?
10. How can I promote honesty, integrity and the truth this week?