

Scripture: Matthew 23:16-22

Text: Mt. 23:22 -- ".he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by him who sits upon it."

Topic-Theme: Swearing to God.

Proposition: Every **oath** is related ultimately to God. and therefore should be kept conscientiously by the maker.

Dates written: Feb. 8-12, 1971.

Dates and places used:

Feb. 14, 1971 - Oakland Park, Fla.

Source: Andrew 13:24-28

Text: "The Jews were  
given more by the Father of God  
of than him who sits upon it."

Context: According to God.

Proposition: They call it a  
gift to God, and therefore should  
be kept honorably by the nation.

Definition: Rev. 8-12, 1971.

Date and Place used:

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### Introduction:

1. An insurance investigator returned from a recent fire, and his boss asked him what had caused the blaze. "Friction," the investigator said angrily.

"Something rubbing together, eh?" said the boss.

"Yeah," the adjuster said, "the fire was caused by rubbing a \$10,000 insurance policy against a \$7,000 house."

(from Coronet, 12-70)

2. Perhaps many insurance policies are bought on the basis of false declarations of value. The companies usually have someone inspect property that is insured, but sometimes it may be possible that they don't do it, or make mistakes. Anyway, occasionally an "insurance fire" is reported in the papers, and, if it can be proven that fraud and larceny were present, the greedy owner may be prosecuted, fined and perhaps jailed.

3. Jesus dealt with the issue of speaking falsely, of swearing in a way that meant little, when he spoke the words of our Scripture of today.

Introduction:

1. An insurance investigator returned from a recent fire, and his boss asked him what had caused the blaze. "Reaction," the investigator said. "Reaction" is a word that is used in the insurance industry. It means that the fire was caused by a reaction against a 10,000 insurance policy against a 10,000 loss."

(From Coroner, 12-20)

2. Perhaps many insurance policies are bought on the basis of false declarations of value. The companies usually have someone report property that is insured, but sometimes it may be possible that they don't do it, or make mistakes. However, occasionally an "insurance fire" is reported in the reports, and it can be proved that fraud and arson were present, the greedy owner may be prosecuted, fined and perhaps jailed.

3. There are also the issue of... of... in a way... that... who... the... of our... today.

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These words are known by some as the "Third Woe" of Jesus, or the third ~~xxxxxxx~~ rebuke and warning to the scribes and Pharisees about various areas of their practice and conduct. He was speaking of swearing, or making oaths, of declaring solemnly with the intent to be believed. Let us

I. Review the Scripture, Matthew 23:16-22, to be familiar with what Jesus is recorded as saying along these lines. Then we will think about its application to us and our living, although we may do some of that as part of our review.

1. The Jewish rabbis of Jesus' time and of some ~~xx~~centuries before <sup>him</sup> tried to prevent people from making any oaths or vows whatever, since oaths should be taken advisedly and observed religiously. If oaths were made, they sought to make them sacred and ones that people would keep, by insisting that they be made in specific and proper form. Since the common people were incurably addicted to all sorts of oaths, as people are today, the rabbis were gradually

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I review the Scripture, Matthew 23: 16-23, to be familiar with what Jesus is recorded as saying about those lines. Then we will think about its application to us and our living, although we may do some of that as part of our review.

I. The Jewish rabbis of Jesus' time and of some centuries before tried to prevent people from making any other law than the law of Moses, and they sought to make them sacred and ones that people would keep by insisting that they be made in accordance with the proper form. Into the common people were frequently subjected to all sorts of other regulations and today, the rabbis were rebuked.

forced to make terms with popular custom, and they therefore drew various distinctions between forms of swearing, so that some types of oaths were stronger and more to be kept than others, they taught in effect.

2. Jesus was referring to some of these distinctions, and rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for them, in words of this Scripture of today. He said: "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold ~~of~~ the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, 'If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the ~~temple~~<sup>altar</sup>, swears by it and by ~~him who dwells in it~~; everything on it; and he who swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it;"

...to make terms with you, and they have done various  
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...Leaves us referring to some of  
 these distinctions, and regarding the  
 oaths and phrases for them, in  
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 swears by the ~~xxxxxx~~, swears by it and  
 by ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ overlying it  
 it; and he who swears by the temple  
 swears by it and by him who dwells in  
 it."



3. Then Jesus finished up this teaching with ~~an admonition~~, with ~~advice~~, by telling them what to do on this ~~swearing business~~: ".he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by ~~him~~ who sits upon it."

4. This is another of several sayings of Jesus which is difficult to understand. It ~~even~~ seems in some ways to be contradictory to other ~~quotations~~ of his words. In the 5th chapter of Matthew, verses 33 - 37 ~~quote~~ Jesus <sup>quoted</sup> on the matter of swearing or making oaths or solemn promises: "I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by earth,..." ~~etc..~~ He had some other words along these lines, indicating that one should not swear by anything, and ended, "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."

These words <sup>may</sup> seem ~~to me~~ to be contradictory to the closing words of today's Scripture, but ~~really~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> they are not.

II. When we interpret these teachings of Jesus about swearing oaths, they seem to reveal a consistent attitude and philosophy, which he would have

3. The Lord Jesus finished in this  
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some other words along these lines,  
indicating that one should not swear  
by anything, and added, "But that you  
say be righteous in all that you say,  
more than that comes from evil."

These words seem ~~to be~~ to be contrary  
to the other words of Jesus  
in the Gospels, but ~~they~~ they are not.

11. When we interpret these teachings  
of Jesus about swearing oaths, they  
seem to reveal a consistent attitude  
of simplicity, which he would have

his hearers and followers adopt.

1. A man was asked by his friend, "How come your son is doing so well in college?"

"Well," came the reply, "he's bald headed. He doesn't want to grow a beard. Drinking makes him sick. He's much too weak to carry a protest sign. So the only thing left for him to do is to stay home and study."

(Herm Albright, in The American Legion Magazine, 11-70).

Things just worked out in this young student's life so that there was only ~~the~~ one way to go, and that was the way intended when he first went to college anyway, the way that works out best for college students.

*RETURN AN OATH-MAKING TO ITS REAL PURPOSE,*  
2. Jesus was trying to ~~do~~ away with many of the frills and details of making oaths, of making promises, ~~and~~ to simplify the process, so that the purpose of such declarations would be more apt to be fulfilled. That is what this third "woe" is about.

3. The teachings about making oaths to which Jesus referred were

is literature and follows about.

1. A man was asked by his friend  
"How does your son do in college?"  
"Well," came the reply, "he's doing  
fine. He doesn't seem to have  
any trouble. He's making his mark. He's  
much too weak to carry a protest sign.  
So the only thing left for him to do  
is to stay home and study."

(Hornwright, in The American  
Education, 11-10)

Things just worked out in this young  
student's life so that there was only  
one way to go, and that was the  
way intended when he first went to  
college anyway, the way that works  
out best for college students.

2. Lewis was trying to bow away with  
many of the trials and details of  
making copies of making progress, and  
to simplify the process, so that the  
purpose of such decisions would be  
more apt to be fulfilled. That is  
what this kind of work is about.

3. The tradition about making  
copies to which Lewis referred were

"casuistry," which is ~~a way of saying~~<sup>35</sup> ~~that it is reasoning~~ <sup>SOMETHING IN A WAY</sup> which appears plausible and pleasant but which really is false and deceptive. Jesus was pointing out the elements of falsehood.

4. He quickly showed that an oath by the sacrifice on the altar is an oath by the altar, and therefore by the temple, and therefore by the God who made heaven and earth. We might say "an oath is an oath is an oath," and "a promise is a promise is a promise." No matter how you put it, when you tell somebody else, or tell God, or promise yourself, that you're going to do something, it is a sacred utterance, and should be kept. It is sacred because the ever-present and only God of the universe is a party to any oath, any promise. Therefore it is not actually necessary to bring any ~~other~~ names at all in to back up an oath. As Jesus says ~~simply~~ in the reference we've looked at in Matthew 5, "let ~~your~~ what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';."

III. We apply Jesus teachings about

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...the temple, and therefore by the God  
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...sacred because the ever-present and  
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...chapter 5, "Ist xxxxxx what you say be  
...truthful or not?"

III. A really leans for others about

oaths to our own lives and times, and find that life is more meaningful and better in quality, in many ways.

1. The term used so widely today for stating things factually and simply is "telling things as they are." To do so sometimes is funny, sometimes tragic.

2. Like a woman who went to the police to report her husband missing. She said, "He's bald and skinny, has no teeth and no personality. In fact, most of him was missing before he was!" Her picture of her husband wasn't pleasant, but that's the way she saw him, so she said it! (Wall St. Journal, 12-7-70)

3. Or the man who was asked, "Come now, own up. Who is the head of your household?"

He replied, "Well, my wife used to be, but since my daughters have grown up, we have a commission form of government." (from Illustrated Weekly of India, 8-23-70)

It is better to tell things as they are, even tho they may seem ridiculous or tragic. Besides, people will find out anyway!

...to our own lives and lives of others...  
...and their life is more meaningful and...  
...return to reality in some way...

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...things that are usually and always  
"belonging things as they are." To do  
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...like a woman who went to the po-  
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...out, out, who is the head of your  
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3. He replied, "Oh, my wife used to  
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...up, we have a complicated form of gover-  
...nment." (The Journal, 1-27-70)

4. It is better to tell things as  
...they are, than the way some ri-  
...diculous or tragic, besides, people  
...will tell you anyway...



4. There are some religious groups that take literally Jesus' words of the fifth chapter of Matthew, and their members will not swear to anything. When they are called into court, they refuse to take oaths on the Bible, by holding up their hand, or in any other way. They will answer questions, but they will not swear to them, or to anything. Are they right? Ideally, they are. A person should be so honest that his "yes" or "no" is all it takes. A person who will lie, will do it whether or not he is under oath. At least, such goes the argument. ~~And~~ maybe it is a right argument. But if you're going to tell the truth, why object to any serious form of telling it which might impress the hearers more?

5. When we use the phrase "oath" or "swearing," we sometimes think of cursing and profanity. We are not here talking about that type of temper-based usage of some of the same words. We are talking only about the process of making promises and statements seem more believable and acceptable by fortifying them with reference to sacred things, or

4. There are some religious groups that take literally, "swear words of the fifth chapter of Matthew, and their members will not swear to any thing, when they are called into court, they refuse to take oaths on the Bible or anything on their hand, or in any other way. They will answer questions, but they will not swear in their or to anything. Are they right? Ideally, they are. A person would be dishonest that his "yes" or "no" is all it takes. A person who will lie, will do it whether or not he is under oath. At least, such is the argument, and maybe it is a right argument, but it requires going to tell the truth, any object to any serious form of belief in which right impress the bearers more?

5. "Swearing" is the phrase "to lie" or "perjury," as a commoner think of swearing and profanity. Are not some talking about the 5th verse of the longer-based name of some of the same words, who are talking only about the process of making promises and statements to be more believable and acceptable by "affirming them" in reference to sacred things, or

God. We would feel that Jesus is on the right track: any oath, and promise, and statement, should be truthful, and if it is a statement of intent, the intent should be carried out to the best of ones ability. God is present, <sup>EVERYWHERE</sup> God hears, <sup>THAT</sup> everything we say, and an oath, swearing, a promise, is sacred, however and whenever it is made. ~~It should be kept~~

### Conclusion:

1. To put it another way, Jesus was really saying that whenever you say or promise something, you are making an oath, are putting yourself on the line to be believed, are making a statement to God, and you should do so truthfully and with every intent of carrying out all or any promises.

2. To put it in the terms of our sermon topic, whenever you state anything as the truth, you are "swearing to God," however you word it. When you speak, people should be able to believe you because they have always found you trustworthy. If that is not their experience with you, they're not very likely to believe and trust

God, we would not that Jesus is on  
 the right track; my oath, and pro-  
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 God is not the one who says, "I will  
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Conclusion:

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2. To put it in the terms of our  
 common logic, whenever you make any-  
 thing a "fact," you are "showing  
 to God," however you word it, "I  
 am speaking, people should be able to  
 believe you because you have always  
 said you would do it." If that is  
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you more because you put the statement in some fancy oath or form. You're either trustworthy or you're not.

3. Yes, we know that in court you are subject to ~~great~~ punishment if it can be proven that you lie under oath. We realize that this custom stems from the semi-religious, superstitious feeling that when one promises in the name of God or on the Bible, the promise is more binding, and if broken the punishment will be more severe. But you would have a hard time proving that such is so. We have to revert to the statement that either a person is a person of truth and trustworthiness, or he is not. If he is, his word is to be believed whenever he gives it. If he is not, his oath, however worded, is quite suspect.

4. The meaning of our Scripture, Christ's teaching on oaths and swearing, seems to me simply to mean: whenever you say something you are "swearing to God." Your word is sacred. Keep it true and trustworthy every time.

you were because you did the statement  
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 either trustworthy or you're not.

3. Yes, we know that in court you  
 are subject to cross examination. It  
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 oath. The point is that this question  
 stems from the self-reliance, super-  
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4. The essence of our testimony  
 Christ's teaching on oaths and swear-  
 ing, seems to me simply to mean:  
 whenever you say something you are  
 "swearing to do it." Our word is  
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