

– Continued from page 1 –

enhanced oaths just make a mockery of oaths altogether. The solution is to quit swearing.

“Above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No,’ lest you fall into judgment” (James 5:12). Affirmations and denials ought to suffice for the honest. If simple yeses and noes are not enough, then either the speaker, the hearer, or both are dishonest. Christians should not be the type of people who desperately need to convince people they aren’t lying and Christians should not spend time with those who are like that.

While just saying yay or nay ought to suffice conversationally, there are official and legal situations that differ. It is fair to recognize some rules have exceptions and this qualifies.

The Lord was under interrogation in the Sanhedrin, *“But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’”* Jesus said to him, *“It is as you said”* (Matthew 26:63-64).

Christ was conducting Himself in fulfillment of prophecy: *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth”* (Isaiah 53:7). He intended to die for the sins of the people, so He declined any resistance whatsoever; they could accuse Him and He meant to let them. His silence was broken, though, when the High Priest *“adjured”* Him (KJV, ASV, NAS, ESV). At that point, He was a witness compelled to testify. Because He recognized their authority, He complied without protest.

When a person is elected or appointed to a public office, he must take an oath of office. Military personnel swear an oath of enlistment. Court officers and even jurors are sworn in, as are witnesses. These are not instances of ordinary conversation in which speakers are begging to be trusted, so the point Jesus and James taught would not be at issue. In official proceedings, the oath taker is simply acknowledging the truth of what they are saying under penalty of perjury or the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It is an acceptance of accountability prompted by a legal authority. It is not even close to “You gotta believe me; I swear!”

Whether in plain conversation or official situations, honesty is what counts. *“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor’”* (Ephesians 4:25).

MISUNDERSTANDING THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Max Dawson, adapted

There is an improper view of the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23). This is a story Jesus told about a man who sowed seeds in four kinds of soil. The wayside soil was that which never received the seed, the word of God. The stony ground received the seed, but because the seed did not take good root it withered when the sun beat down on it. The thorny ground received the seed, but the thorns choked it out so that no fruit was born. And, finally, the good ground received the seed and it prospered, producing fruit.

These four soils represent four kinds of hearts that are exposed to the gospel, the seed of the kingdom.

The common view is that the first heart never received the word of God. That is correct. This view continues by concluding that the stony ground represents the person who receives God’s word, but in time of persecution falls away. They quit on Jesus; they leave the church. That, too, is correct.

Then, when it comes to the third heart, the soil with thorns, the thorns choke out the word of God, and that person also falls away. The view is that they, like the stony ground heart, fall away, quitting on Jesus and His church. That is the misunderstanding! But the text never says they quit. Rather, it says, he *“becomes unfruitful”* (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19), they *“bring no fruit to maturity”* (Luke 8:14).

There is no indication that the person represented by the third soil (heart) quits the church. Though it is believed by some folks that, indeed, they have quit.

This person may show up at most of the services. Because of his attendance he may be regarded by the church as a “faithful member.” But the problem is, he bears no fruit. He may continue to live pretty much the same kind of life he lived before he obeyed the gospel; he does not bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). He brings forth no fruit that shows his repentance (Matthew 3:8). He may not even bear fruit with his lips, because he doesn’t sing (Hebrews 13:15); he may just sit there as others sing.

His connection with this world prevents him from being what God truly wants him to be (Matthew 13:22). But he does warm a seat in the meeting house! And, for that, he is deemed a faithful Christian. Rather sad, don’t you think?

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS..."**

RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Ancient people found it hard to believe that, in spite of His wrath, God would love them. Most people today find it hard to believe that, in spite of His love, God would be angry with them."

– Wes McAdams

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 40

OCTOBER 6TH, 2024

"DO NOT SWEAR AT ALL"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

In a series of contrasts between the former Covenant and the New, Jesus preached, *"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one"* (Matthew 5:33-37).

Under the Law of Moses, all oaths were required to be taken in the name of Jehovah. *"You shall fear Jehovah your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name"* (Deuteronomy 6:13), *"And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am Jehovah"* (Leviticus 19:12). Christ set forth a different statute under the gospel dispensation. Rather than making sure people tell the truth when they swear, He insists that all tell the truth without even having to swear.

Some would act like swearing in God's name was inadequate and would deepen the appearance of their sincerity by swearing by heaven or earth or Jerusalem. That still happens when people swear on a stack of Bibles or their dead mother's grave. Nonsense. These – Continued on page 3 –

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist