

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARENTUM BIBLE CLASS

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Discipleship—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lesson #29—The Sermon on the Mount-Truthfulness (Part II)

Matthew 5: On the “Extraordinary” of Christian Life

A. Swearing (Matthew 5:33-37)

- If the oath is thus prohibited, then it is also clear that the only goal is that of truthfulness.
- It is obvious that Jesus’ command permits no exceptions, regardless of the forum demanding an oath.
- But we should also note that refusing to take an oath must not serve the purpose of concealing the truth.
- An oath is to be taken only when, first, it is completely clear and transparent what content is included in the oath;
- and second, when the distinction has been made between oaths which refer to past or present circumstances which are known to us, and those which have the character of a vow.
- But because Christians never control their future, a solemn promise under oath, as, for example, loyalty oaths, is fraught with greatest danger for them.
- For Christians control neither their own future, or, what is more, the future of those to whom they are bound after the loyalty is sworn.

- Thus, for the sake of truthfulness and following Jesus, it is impossible to swear such an oath without the reservation of submitting it to the will of God.
- The oath functions solely as witness to the fact that, in following Jesus, we are bound solely to the will of God, and that any other allegiance must be subject to this condition for the sake of Jesus.
- The command of complete truthfulness is only another way of expressing the total claim of discipleship.
- Only those who are bound to Jesus in discipleship stand in complete truthfulness.
- They live unveiled before him. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- Only those who stand in the truth by confessing their sins before Jesus are not ashamed of the truth, whenever it must be told.
- The truthfulness which Jesus requires of his disciples lies in the self-denial which does not conceal sin.
- Everything is revealed and illumined.
- The truthfulness of the disciples has its sole basis in following Jesus, in which he reveals our sins to us on the cross.
- Those who live under the cross can do without the oath as a commandment establishing truthfulness, for they exist in the perfect truth of God.
- There is no truth toward Jesus without truth toward other people.
- Lying destroys community.
- There is no following Jesus without living in the truth unveiled before God and other people.