

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Matthew 5:33–37; 48:

The Gravity of Our Words: The Law, the Lie, and the Lord of Truth

Preaching Date: July 12, 2026

Opening Prayer

Ask God to grant us a reverence for the truth and a deep conviction regarding our careless speech and cowardice. Ask Him to destroy the walls of self-justification we build to excuse our broken promises and half-truths. Ask Him to grant us overwhelming gratitude for Jesus Christ, our perfect Truth-Teller, whose active obedience and flawless record are imputed to us. Finally, ask Him to empower us by His Holy Spirit to wage war on deception in our homes, to let our "Yes" be "Yes," and to build a culture of profound trust within our church.

Recap

In Matthew 5:33–37, Jesus addresses the pervasive sin of deceitful and careless speech. While the Pharisees had constructed a loophole-ridden system of oaths to avoid keeping their word, Jesus reestablishes the terrifying height of the Law, reminding us that every word is spoken in the presence of the sovereign God. He exposes how our cowardice and carelessness slay the truth with a thousand paper cuts. Ultimately, this devastating standard of perfection (Matthew 5:48) drives us to the Gospel, where we find our comfort in the active obedience of Jesus Christ—the only man whose "Yes" was always "Yes"—and challenges us to reflect the truthfulness of our Heavenly Father in our daily lives.

Understanding the Text

1. Why did the Pharisees swear oaths by "heaven," "earth," or their own "head," and how does Jesus use the sovereignty of God to completely dismantle this loophole system?
2. How does the redemptive-historical backdrop—from the first lie in the Garden of Eden to God swearing an oath to Abraham—help us understand the absolute necessity of truthfulness?
3. In what way is the command in Matthew 5:48 ("Therefore you are to be perfect...") both a devastating blow of the Law (Covenant of Works) and a beautiful promise of the Gospel (Covenant of Grace)?
4. How does the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 illustrate God's fierce protection of truth within His inaugurated Kingdom?

Personal Reflection & Application

1. In what ways are you tempted to act like King Vladislaus at the Battle of Varna—using technicalities, excuses, or careful phrasing to redefine reality and excuse breaking a commitment?
2. Jesus knows we fail to tell the truth out of either carelessness (breaking promises to the powerless, like our children) or cowardice (flattering to avoid hard conversations). Which of these two sins do you struggle with the most, and what does it look like in your life?
3. We learned that trying to reform our deceptive speech by sheer willpower is like trying to clear a field of overgrown blackberry bushes with kitchen scissors. How does recognizing your own inability to fix your heart drive you to depend on the heavy machinery of the Gospel?
4. How does resting in the "active obedience" of Christ—knowing that His perfect record of truth-telling is imputed to you—transform your pursuit of integrity from a burden of legalism into an act of joyful obedience?

God Has More to Say

The Power of the Tongue

- Proverbs 18:21
- James 3:5-6

The Absolute Truth of God

- Hebrews 6:13-17
- Titus 1:2

The Active Obedience of Christ

- Romans 5:19
- 2 Corinthians 5:21

The Gravity of Vows

- Numbers 30:2
- Ecclesiastes 5:4-5