

## **Honesty is Required**

Matthew 5:33-37

Lent 5, April 10, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

And so in this Lent series we have covered the basics of reconciliation. We have covered the basics on regarding God pleasing ways to settle conflicts within our families and within our congregation. This also serves as a basis for addressing conflicts in public places as we saw in the chancel drama regarding the young man and the server in the restaurant.

This is not everything that can be said about reconciliation. This is not everything that can be said about dealing with conflict in a God pleasing way. What we have covered this year in this Lent series is only the basics.

All of these basics require honesty or they just don't work.

So take the first in the Lent series about for whom you would give your life. You will never understand the motivation for reconciliation unless you are honest about the fact that you are enemy of God.

If you do not confess that you are enemy of God in your sin, then you will never understand the great love that God has for you when He offers His Son to redeem His enemies and make them His family members who call Him, "Our Father."

If you are not honest about that change in status before God and what it took to change your status before God, you will never understand why you should change the status of someone who has sinned against you. You will never understand the Lord when He commands you to pray for your enemies and bless those who persecute you. You will never understand the Lord when He tells you when an evil person slaps you on the right cheek turn to him the other also.

If you do not understand the great love that Christ has for you when He offered up His innocent life for you, His enemies, then you will never love your neighbor, fellow members of the congregation, fellow members of your family like He does. Instead of loving them and seeking to end conflicts with them, you will perpetuate conflicts among them because you will always seek justice from them.

A person who does not acknowledge his enmity toward God believes that he is ok in the eyes of God by his own merit. Thinking that he deserves God's love he will judge others constantly to see whether or not they deserve his love. And whenever they do not measure up to his own standards, he is angry with them. That anger will produce conflicts between himself and others and the more he judges the more the conflict will increase and the more intractable it will seem.

The only way to keep it from being totally intractable is simply to be honest. Let your yes be yes and your no no. Yes, I am an enemy of God because I am a sinner. It is not maybe I am a sinner or maybe I am an enemy of God. If you say that maybe you are an enemy of God, then you have to say that only maybe did Christ die for you and your salvation is in question. If

you cannot be honest about your sin, then you cannot be honest about your salvation either. So be honest. When it comes to your enmity with God, let your yes be yes and your no no. That way the death of Christ for you can be yes because there is no maybe with God. Anything more than this comes from the evil one.

When it comes to the blood of Jesus purifying us from sin, let your yes be yes and your no no.

In other words one must be honest about the blood of Jesus. The only way to be honest about the blood of Jesus is to acknowledge that He shed it to propitiate God's wrath. That means that in order to be honest about the blood of Jesus we must be honest about our sin. We must be honest about the wrath of God against sin. When He condemns our sin, our answer must be yes yes or no no. When He forgives our sin for the sake of the blood of Jesus our answer must be yes yes or no no.

When Jesus gives you His blood to drink, your answer must be yes yes or no no. One either believes the words of Jesus that you are in fact drinking His blood or one does not believe Jesus. That is why if your answer to Jesus when He bids you drink His blood is yes, then it is appropriate to say, "Amen" while receiving the cup and it is appropriate to say "Amen" to the blessing that I give you because the blessing that I give you is based upon the blood that is in the cup that was shed on the cross.

The blood of Jesus is the basis of the reconciliation between you and God. There is no other basis. Therefore the blood of Jesus is the basis of the reconciliation of you to everyone else. There is no other basis. When one says yes to the blood of Jesus one says yes to reconciliation with God. When one says yes to reconciliation with God one says yes to reconciliation with one's brother. When one says no to the blood of Jesus, then one also says no to reconciliation with God and with his brother.

So let your yes be yes and your no no. In other words let your yes be genuine. Anything else comes from the evil one.

This makes it clear that one must be honest in regards to one's faith.

If you are going to say that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, then have Him as your Lord and Savior. Do not say that He is your Lord and Savior when He is not. If you are going to say the Bible is God's word, then honor the Bible and all of its contents as God's Word. Do not say that the Bible is God's Word and then ignore certain parts of it that you don't like. That is saying yes on the one hand and no on the other. Do not say that you believe in Jesus unless you believe in Jesus. If you say you believe in Jesus and then go on to trust in your own good deeds and look for their reward, then you are saying yes on the one hand and no on the other. This comes from the evil one. If you say you believe in God and then go on to look for your reward among men, then you have said yes on the one hand and no on the other. This is from the evil one.

Do not pray the Lord's Prayer and then refuse to forgive your brother when he is penitent. If you do, you will bring judgment upon yourself. The judgment you bring upon

yourself is the judgment of your own lips which prayed, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." The Father in heaven will answer that prayer just as you have prayed it. If you have said yes on the one hand by praying the prayer and no on the other hand by not forgiving your brother when he is penitent, then you have committed hypocrisy by praying the Lord's Prayer and the Father in heaven will forgive you your trespasses just as you have forgiven your brother his trespasses.

This is why yes and no comes from the evil one.

And finally do not say yes to the grace of God and then go and act like everything is based upon works. In other words do not depend on the grace of God when it comes to God and then turn right and around and do everything by works when it comes to your brother. Do not rejoice that God is not keeping track of your sins and then turn right around and keep track of your brothers' sins. That is saying yes on the one hand and no on the other. This comes from the evil one.

If you say yes to the grace of God, you say yes to grace in every aspect of your life. If you say no to God, then you may go out and be as fair as like and judge as you like, but understand that on the Last Day God in all fairness will judge you. He will use the same standards on you that you used on others.

So if you say no to judgment from God then also say no to your own judgments. Anything else comes from the evil one.

And so you see you cannot say yes to the grace of God without practicing that grace every day. If you don't, then you have said yes on the one hand and no on the other. You are self condemned as a hypocrite.

This is why reconciliation and conflict resolution in a God pleasing fashion require honesty. No oaths are necessary, only a yes that is yes and a no that is no.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Chancel Drama:

One pastor

One person

(Pastor and the person are seated across from each other)

Pastor: Tell me what's going on. Why did you come and see me today?

Person: It is about my wife.

Pastor: oh?

Person: Yes. I don't love her anymore. She does a lot of mean things to me, things you would not believe. She flies off the handle at simple little things. She does not trust me. I am tired of being questioned all of the time. I am going to divorce her.

Pastor: Then why did you come to me? I don't do divorces.

Person: I came to you pastor so that you would know what was going on and would not be surprised.

Pastor: oh. Ok. *(pause)* Tell me about your wedding.

Person: What?

Pastor: Tell me about your wedding. What happened at it?

Person: What do you mean?

Pastor: Well, you took vows didn't you?

Person: Yes.

Pastor: They were the traditional vows, right?

Person: Yes. I am a traditional person.

Pastor: So you promised your wife that you would have her and hold her for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health until death parts you.

Person: So?

Pastor: So, is your word worth anything? Or were you lying before God when you said those words at your wedding?