11/7/21

Sun pm

James: Life as a Servant of Jesus, p13

“Straight Shooter”

James 5:12

James often gives instruction on speech in his letter (1:26; 2:12; 3:2ff; 4:11)

One reason for this is the fact that what is in our heart is manifested in our mouth. Our words and manner of speech reveal what we have going on inside (***Matt 12:33-37***)

Read text

* Oaths

Biblical oaths served to bind agreements between people (like a contract). To take an oath was to attest that what one said was true, calling God as witness and invoking His punishment if the oath was violated.

God confirmed promises with oaths (Heb 6:13-18), Christ spoke under oath (Matt 26:63) and many other men of God. Oaths were permitted on serious occasions and in the name of the Lord.

Jesus, and James, are forbidding flippant, profane, and careless use of oaths in everyday speech with the intent of deceptive purposes.

There were loopholes – rabbinic teaching stated that your oath wasn’t binding if you swore by the temple, the altar, their own heads, etc. Only if you swore by the Lord, were you bound to your word.

* \*Similar to “crossing my fingers” in our culture
* People are liars.
  + I really can’t stand it when someone lies to me.
  + But this is why we so often need reassurance when someone tells us something. Contracts, etc. Or, “Do you promise?”
  + Deception is the native language for those who don’t know Christ
* Let your yes be yes and no be no.
  + We are to be people of the truth (Eph 4:25; Col 3:9). We are to be people of our word. What we say should not be deceptive at all, whether we would call it an outright lie or just letting someone believe that something is true that isn’t.
    - Annanias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
    - Any untruth comes from the Father of all lies (John 8:44)
  + Oh, how about the phrase, “To tell you the truth” or “honestly”? We should be so careful with our words that they never need to be prefixed by, “To tell you the truth…”

Are we straight shooters? We should be…