

JAMES: SHOE LEATHER GOSPEL
WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY
SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
“Faith and Swearing Oaths”
James 5:12
Dr. Josh Wilson

- Most Bible scholars link verse 12 back to the previous section of verses 7-11 focusing on patiently enduring suffering in our Christian lives. But why?
- In times of suffering, it is easy to say things you don't mean, and even make bargains with God.

“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” Job 1: 21

- Job did curse the day he was born (Job 3:1), but he never cursed God or spoke with a foolish oath. Neither did he try to bargain with God.

I. I _____ “but above all....Do not swear-not by heaven or by earth or by anything else”

- James has already addressed the importance of our words as Christians in every chapter so far (1:26; 2:12; 3:2-11; 4:11)
- Swearing: not referring to 4 letter words, dirty talk, or filthy jokes but rather, to the taking of oaths- - a major part of life in Bible times
- Before the days of written contracts, verbal oaths were taken as b _____
a _____ between two people.
- Jews were known for using various oaths to back up their statements. They would swear by heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, or even their own heads. But they would never use the name of God in their oaths because they didn't want to blaspheme God. Thus, the Jews had created an elaborate s _____ of oaths that would be added onto what they were saying to justify what they were saying was the truth.
- The Bible does not forbid the taking of oaths. Examples include testifying in court, being ordained.

Ex. Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21)
Rahab and the Spies (Joshua 2: 12-20)

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all; either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

Matthew 5: 33-37

“When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.” Numbers 30:2

- Oaths are wrong when they are made with the intent to deceive someone else. When the oath is taken flippantly, casually, or insignificantly. Swearing by anything in God’s dominion brings Him into the transaction.
- An elaborate system of swearing, like the Jews had created, to prove our truthfulness, is to take God’s name in vain, empty God’s name of the power He possess....the 3rd commandment of the ten

Examples in our day:

“Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye”

“Let lightning strike me dead if I’m not telling the truth.”

Swearing on the Bible. Swearing on a stack of Bibles. Swearing to God. Swearing on our lives.

II. I _____ “All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No”

- The core issue is our personal integrity _____.
- James is calling us as Christians to a straight forward speech. Christians are to be people of integrity and truthfulness....credible people who keep their word.

“Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “ Ephesians 4: 25

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” Colossians 3:9

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Am I a person of integrity when it comes to my words?
2. Do I consistently follow through with what I say I'm going to do or not?
3. When I say something, are people quick to believe me, or do they scratch their heads and wonder *'Is that really the full truth, or is that some sort of half-truth that can't be taken at face value?'*

- James says we ought to be honest, straight forward, truthful, and people of integrity when it comes to our words. A simple yes and a simple no because people around us have grown to trust our word and that is enough; thus, no oath or swearing is needed.

III. **W**_____ “otherwise you will be condemned”

“Condemned” (krisis): not God’s discipline in the life of a Christian but God’s sentencing to hell “passing sentence”

- If speaking lies and half truths is the unbroken, consistent pattern of our lives, we have serious reason to question the genuineness of the faith we profess. Those who continue to blaspheme God’s name by lying oaths will face eternal separation from Him forever.

III. Javier, scene from Courageous movie