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# THE BLESSED LIFE

## Part 6 - Promises, Promises

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Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is talking about what it looks like when the Kingdom of God takes hold in someone's life, or in a community. It is describing to us the change that takes place under new management. In Jesus, the Kingdom of God has come near, the future is spilling over into the present as the kingdom of heaven invades earth. When this takes hold in people's lives, in a church, in our family here at Riverlife something new happens and the world is changed because of it.

In our passage today Jesus is clearly teaching us that when heaven invades earth there is a birth of integrity and faithfulness.

We live in a world where honesty and integrity are rare. Taking someone at their word is an era that has passed.

In Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, He calls us to have integrity; to make our speech simpler, less exaggerated, more down to earth, and even in a certain sense less outwardly spiritual, less filled with spiritual formulas.

God had given some clear commands in the Old Testament that words are not cheap (Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21). Words have tremendous power, the ability to invoke trust and the ability to break relationships.

### No Need to Promise

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were experts at creating ways to circumvent the intent of words (Matthew 23:16-22). They twisted, and stretched, and reworked promises in order to justify themselves and still look as though they were keeping their word.

Jesus exposes them and radically simplifies things - just let your "yes" be "yes," and your "no," "no!" (Matthew 5:37).

Oaths are made because of the presence of evil. If evil was not at work there would be no need for oaths. When you make an oath you empower a lie.

How would our life, our family relationships, our workplaces, our society change, if we as kingdom bearers could be taken at our word and there was no need for an oath?

What if you stopped trying to give people the answer you wanted them to hear, but in love were able to simply let your yes be a yes and your no a no?

## Keep it Real

Words are used in our world to control, to manipulate, to impress, to exemplify, or to exaggerate. They can also be used powerfully to bring life, healing, reconciliation and encouragement.

Jesus encourages us to stop trying to get the formula right but just to get the intent of the words right. It's about integrity in word and deed. We need honesty back in our communications.

However, be respectful in truth telling, allow for grace to sweeten the sourness that truth can often be. Jesus came full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Kingdom living requires a Kingdom heart. The Sermon on the Mount isn't a new set of rules to abide by; this is a changed life by meeting the change maker. It is having the heart of God inside us that changes everything including our conversations.

Kingdom living starts with an internal change (Matthew 12:34) and an internal change brings about an external impact!

Christian speech is described by Jesus as having two characteristics, simplicity and honesty.

Honesty → Simplicity

The more sincerely we speak, the more simply we speak, and others will learn to believe our word alone.

## **Your Kingdom Come**

We are called to be people of integrity. Let our word be our word in all circumstances. Let our word be trusted. It's in doing these things that others will be impacted by the kingdom of heaven.

Unfortunately, many Christians have brought the suspicion of taking people at their word into our relationship with God and we don't take Him at His word either. Will you take God at His word?

All of God's promises are yes and amen! When He calls us to be salt and light, a people who have encountered the life changer who will bring new life to others by bearing the kingdom of heaven – will you take Him at His word?

Tomorrow is your great opportunity as a doer of the word to allow the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to bring about change in your life and let your speech be different, let honesty and integrity bring a slice of heaven's kingdom into your sphere of influence.

## **Discussion Questions**

Share your response to the message.

1. How does honesty in our dealings with others glorify God? Does it really make a big difference?

2. Picture your place of influence (work, university, friendship circle etc). Imagine what it would look like if it were to change in honesty and integrity of speech. That's a picture of the kingdom of heaven at work. What can you do to be a part of that change?
  
3. Do you think you are becoming more or less honest in your speech, and why? Are there certain topics or situations where you find it difficult to be honest in your speech (exaggeration, lie etc)?
  
4. Pray for faithfulness to your word and for kingdom change to come about through you into your sphere of influence.