



A NEW HUMANITY: 'YES' BE 'YES'

If you are joining for the first time, we are nearing the end of our series A New Humanity. We have been wrestling with the impact the Kingdom of God has upon our lives. On this incredible journey we are learning what it means to be this new humanity in the Reigning Kingdom of God.

OG Question: In your own words, describe what it mean to be human under the rule and reign of Jesus?

Recently at a Coldplay concert they streamed at a local theater, there was a moment where Chris Martin said, "Thank you for giving me hope in humanity."

It caused me to reflect on the profoundness of that statement. In today's age many of us watch the news and lose hope in humanity. I know with the rise of violence even in Hawaii, I question, at times, the fallenness of humanity.

OG Question: What is humanity? What does it mean to be human? It's not often that we think about these things.

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"Be certain that you do not die without having done something wonderful for humanity."
- Maya Angelou*

"The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices." - Jimmy Carter

*"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive."
- Dalai Lama*

I'm sure we could philosophize all day about humanity. However, we want to get the mind of Christ on A New Humanity which he came to establish. The bottom line, Jesus came to reclaim what we have ruined. He came to make all things new. We become a new person and together a new humanity. And with the greatest sermon ever preached he begins to unpack what this person of a new humanity would look like, would think like, and would act like. Basically, he says this person would look like someone who would fulfill all of the old testament laws. And as we learned last week, outside of the most common ten commandments, there are hundreds of laws.



However, Jesus simplifies it for us when the Religious leaders tried to trap him by asking Him what the most important commandment was in the Law of Moses.

The Most Important Commandment

³⁷ Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments," (Matthew 22:37-40 NLT).

Everyone say RELATIONSHIP. Remember the first 4 commandments of the 10 commandments were to keep our love relationship with God healthy; and the last 6 were to keep our love relationship with others healthy.

So throughout the entire sermon on the mount Jesus been referencing the old testament laws and helping the people go deeper to the root issues that distort and damage our relationships.

The kingdom is about God remaking the world and humans to be a world of healthy whole and loving relationships. Turn to your neighbor and say, "Everything is about Relationships."

In our series we are covering just a few root issues that damage and corrode our relationships. Last week P. Glenn addressed anger & un-forgiveness. Today our message is entitled "Yes be Yes". Turn to your neighbor and say, Let your yes be yes! We find this in ...

³³ "You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.' ³⁴ But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!' because heaven is God's throne. ³⁵ And do not say, 'By the earth!' because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Do not even say, 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. ³⁷ Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one," (Matthew 5:33-37 NLT).

Before we get to verse 37 and did into what Jesus meant by Just say a simple Yes or No; lets understand context of verses 33- 36. To take a vow is like saying I swear by. Back in the old testament times the people of God new at the very least they should not swear by the name of God. Why Because the law of Moses (10 commandments) tells them not to take the Lord God's name in vain.

"You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name," (Exodus 20:7).

However, it goes further than just misuse, because to say I swear to God and then to be wrong or not follow through is to bring shame to the name of God.. This idea of shaming the name of God can further be seen in ...

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*"Do not bring shame on the name of your God by using it to swear falsely. I am the Lord,"
(Leviticus 19:12).*

The hebraic people felt so strongly that about the name of God they don't even say the name of God today. They vaguely refer to Him as "the Almighty," "the One Above," or as "Hashem," which I understand to be Hebrew for "the name." They actually don't even spell out the name fully when writing the English word for G-d. They only pronounce G-d's names when reading the Torah or prayers.

So what the people did instead was swear by all kinds of things like heaven, the altar, a donkey if need be. Why? It's as if that puts more weight and credibility behind their words. Instead the Lord is instructing us to now swear by anything and just make your yes yes and your no no. What Jesus is really getting at in these verses is our excessive concern about appearances. More importantly how we use our words to present ourselves in a way that is not honest, simple or truthful. Jesus is talking about the way we bend and distort reality in order to control how people perceive us. If you know what I'm talking about say amen.

Look at instagram.. we only put up photos that give the best impressions of ourselves to this world and yet we could be totally falling apart.

OG Question: You know that saying what you see is what you get? Well let me ask you a question. When you are with people can you truly say that what they see is what they get? Do you allow others to see all of you? Or are you just showing the best parts of yourself? Why or why not?

Often times we don't even know ourselves so how can we show everything you may be wondering. When I was just starting out as a minister here at NHCO, I remember P Mike using the iceberg illustration and many of you might have seen or heard this before but it fits well with what we're talking about today.



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What most people see is the tip of the iceberg, but fail to see what is below the water line. Unfortunately in many cases what's below that line can be very dangerous as it was for the titanic. Every time I faced conflict relationally or situationally, P Mike would remind me that all is ok. The Lord is just dropping the water line exposing more of what was below the water line an exposing it.

We have all these surface behaviors we present to the people around us. We observe each others surface behaviors and draw conclusions and make judgements. We shouldn't because we don't know the whole story. We don't see the whole picture. For some of you your tip is very small and what's under the water line is very large. You like that folks can't see what's under the water line. As a matter of fact you work hard at keeping it under the water. For others of us we have a lot more exposed above that water line. Letting yourself be exposed simply just comes more naturally to us. We just have more out there for everyone to see and unfortunately we face criticism and judgement more frequently.

Why is this so important? Because Jesus doesn't want just behavior modification. He wants transformation. In order to get true spiritual transformation we need to get to the root issue of why we bend and distort how we talk about ourselves or present ourselves in front of others.

OG Question: Why is it that we live in a culture that is always "trying to save face"? When we do this, do you realize we are simply hiding our true selves from one another? What kind of true christian community can we experience if what we are presenting is a fake or partial presentation of ourselves to those we are in community with?

I've become more intensely aware of this cultural issue as I'm learning more about Public Relations and managing your image especially following supposed influencers in the world.

- Spin the truth
- Media and the news
- We present ourselves to others in ways that are not truthful and every single one of us has been guilty of this at one time or another. EXAMPLE: How are you doing? ANSWER: Good

When we are not genuine, honest and truthful, it runs against the command to love God and love others. You aren't loving and honoring people when you aren't being honest and truthful about who you are, or when you are embellishing what you are saying in order to sound more spiritual and mature, or when you aren't willing to share your weakness and flaws and only want to show your strengths and act like you got it all together all the time.

Tim Mackie believe this pretentiousness, overstating things, spinning truth, or keeping up appearances (say it however you want to say it) may be the greatest obstacle to a healthy community of loving relationships. So, again, Jesus in verse 37 is simply saying just make your yes - yes and your no - no. Don't over state things.

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What does that look like in today's church? Well it's when you see everyone using religious language or Jesus' name so loosely. It's basically using religious language to make ourselves seem more holy or sanctified. Every decision you make you have to throw in well the Lord told me this and the Lord said that. We have to challenge ourselves and ask "Did he really say it?" If so great! Follow him in that. But if not and your just saying it to sound spiritual, or make it sound a little more weighty then Jesus is saying stop it!

If we read Matthew 5:33-37 in the Message translation, it sums it up.

33-37 "And don't say anything you don't mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk, saying, 'I'll pray for you,' and never doing it, or saying, 'God be with you,' and not meaning it. You don't make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong," (Matthew 5:33-37 MSG).

If you think about it... in some ways it's a form of manipulation.

The aim is to impress others with your seriousness or piety so that you get what you want. It's a device of manipulation designed to override the judgment or input of others in order to possess them for our purposes. It's manipulation, or, as we say in our culture, "spin." And Jesus says it's evil. Instead of loving and honoring others with truthfulness, the intent is to get one's way by verbal manipulation of the thoughts and choices of others.

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

OG Question: How do I live in such a way where I can take off all the masks and present myself in a simple and honest way? How do I become a person who lives genuinely and whose yes is yes and no is simply no?

When I was prepping I asked the Lord to give me an example of someone in the Bible who fell to this hiding. And he told me Moses wore a veil. And then I said, "Oh yeah, I remember that. Where is that in the Bible again." Then my friend google helped me out. LOL!

13 "We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away.¹⁴ But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ,"
(2 Corinthians 3:13-14 NLT).

[Now interestingly in my original NLT it says it like this "we are not like Moses who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory fading away"]

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¹⁶ "But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image,"

(2 Corinthians 3: 16-18 NLT).

Jesus takes your veil away so that you can know truth, and live in truth - this is freedom. Why would you now go through so much effort to veil yourself again? Turn to your neighbor and say take off the veil!

Through the Holy Spirit, God provides freedom from sin and condemnation. When we trust Christ to save us, he removes our heavy burden of trying to please him and others. He removes our guilt of failing. By trusting Christ we are loved, accepted, forgiven, and freed to live honestly for him. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!

But P. Theresa, I'm okay to expose myself to God (tip: He can see it all anyways), but I'm afraid to take off the veil and expose myself to others. I understand. We risk judgment from others; even though the cross removed judgment from the Lord. But please realize that always trying to please man is bondage and the Lord wants you to be free. He want you to walk in the fear of the LORD, but He wants to remove fear of man from you!

How? God's Perfect LOVE! In closing we will tie everything together by looking at 1 John 4. At the root of all our smoke screens, embellishments, and controlling perception is fear. Fear of rejection, fear of not being good enough, fear of not be accepted or loved. When we read through 1 John 4 and meditate on LOVE, the spirit of the living God can break us free.

⁷ "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us," (1 John 4:7-12).

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¹⁶ "We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

¹⁸ *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.*

²⁰ *If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? ²¹ And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers," (1 John 4:16-21).*

You may be thinking, How can we love like this?

To love as God loves, meeting daily with Him through prayer is essential. Without it love dies. Mother Teresa stressed its importance by saying, "What blood is to the body, prayer is to the soul." But to enter into prayer, silence is necessary, for "in the silence of the heart God speaks" (Where There Is Love, There Is God. Mother Teresa).

In conclusion..

To be the people in covenant with God who serve as the sign of the kingdom means to reflect the very character of God. The Church reflects God's character in that it lives as a genuine community - lives in love - for as the community of Love the church shows the nature of the triune God (Theology for the Community of God, Stanley J. Grenz, p483).

gen·u·ine | truly what something is said to be; authentic

MAKE YOUR YES - YES!

OG Question: Do I have fear of punishment or judgement? Have I experienced the perfect love of the Father? If not what holds you back from the love of God? How does this affect your ability to love others? Take time and pray for one another to experience the fullness of God's love.