

**“Worship by the Book — Swearing on Sundays”**  
*Sermon Notes*

*What do we do and how do we do what we do when we gather on the Lord’s Day?*

**We gather for corporate worship *by the Book***

1. God **calls** us to worship (Ps 96; 99; 100)
2. **Benediction:** We receive God’s blessing (Num 6:22-27; 2 Cor 13:14)
3. **Pray** (1 Tim 2:1-8)
4. **Sing** (Eph 5:19; Col 3:15-16)
5. **Read** the Word (1 Tim 4:13)
6. **Preach** the Word (2 Tim 4:1-5)
7. **Confess** the faith (Heb 10:19-25)
8. **Baptism** (Mt 28:18-20)
9. **Lord’s Supper** (1 Cor 11:17-34)
10. **Greet** one another (Rom 16:16)
11. We give and receive **ministry reports** (Acts 14:24-28)

➤ **When we gather for corporate worship by the Book, we swear oaths and vows**

*\* When swearing oaths and vows on the Lord’s Day...*

1. Forsake oaths and vows that are idolatrous, sinful, vain and rash (Exod 23:13; Josh 23:6-7; Matt 23:16-22; 1 Sam 14:24-46; Jdg 11:30-31; Ecc 5:1-7)

2. Render oaths and vows to God alone as witness and judge (Psalm 89:3; 110:4; Deut 6:13; 10:20; Psalm 50:14; Exod 20:7; 2 Cor 1:23)

3. Keep your oaths and vows with all sincerity (Deut 23:21-23; 2 Cor 1:15-20; James 5:12)

- An oath is an appeal to God to attest the truthfulness of a claim
- A vow is a promise to do a specific action before God

**Next Week: Various Texts “Worship by the Book”**

## MEFC Study Guide

For the week of October 20th - 26th

The questions below will help you to dig deeper and apply the sermon message. If time is limited, feel free to pick and choose, as I've given headers to help in your selection.

1. **Getting started.** What is an oath, and how does it differ from a vow? What are common oaths or vows made by people in our society? What do you hear people swearing by (e.g. On my mother's grave!)?
2. **Bad Oaths and Vows:** Where do we see oath-breaking in our society? What are common examples of vow-breaking in our society? Bad forms of oaths and vows include idolatry, sin, vain, rash, and trivial ones. What are biblical examples of each of these? What are examples you've witnessed?
3. **To swear or not to swear:** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches:

*Matt 5:33-37 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."*

Did Jesus prohibit the swearing of any and all oaths? If yes, why? If no, why? What was the problem that he was pointing out (consider also Matthew 23:16-22)?

4. **Oath sworn — Who is my witness?** How is an oath an act of religious worship? What is stake? On what authority does someone stake an oath? In whose name should every lawful oath be made (see Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; Psalm 50:14; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Romans 1:9; Galatians 1:20)? How is it wrong to swear by false gods (Exodus 20:7; 23:13; Joshua 23:6-7; Jeremiah 44:15ff)? Therefore, how serious is it to swear an oath or pledge a vow (2 Corinthians 1:15-20; James 5:12)? Upon what occasions and for what purpose is it proper to swear?
5. **Baptism and Lord's Supper:** A.A. Hodge comments "Reception of either of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper involves very sacred and binding vows to God; and the same is repeated whenever in prayer, orally or in writing, we formally or informally renew our covenant promises to God." How are the ordinances forms of swearing oaths and vows?

6. **Membership Covenant:** The membership covenant at Mound Free reads as follows:

*Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, baptized as a visible and tangible expression of the gospel, and desiring to fully engage in this church's mission to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.*

*With God's gracious help, as fellow members of this local church zealous to manifest the work of the gospel in our lives, we will love one another with brotherly affection, consider others more significant than ourselves, rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep, be at peace with one another, speak the truth to one another, confess our sins to one another, pray for one another, instruct one another, build one another up, seek to do good to one another, outdo one another in showing honor and offer hospitality to one another with a glad heart.*

*Furthermore, as an expression of our sincere desire to support the vitality of the ministries of this fellowship, we eagerly resolve to attend weekly worship gatherings, confirm and nourish our faith in the taking of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, participate in community group life, discover and deploy our spiritual gifts in loving service, contribute cheerfully and sacrificially of our financial resources to the advance of the gospel through this local church, obey our leaders and seek to hold them accountable for their leadership and engage in personal evangelism with those in our sphere of influence. If we move from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.*

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.*

How has the Lord blessed you to be a part of our church family? How has the Lord empowered you to live out the membership covenant at Mound Free? Where do you desire the Lord to grow you in these one-another responsibilities?

If you're not a member at Mound Free, what is holding you back from entering into membership? What might you be missing out on?

7. **Ordination and Commissioning:** Read Acts 13:1-3 and 14:24-28 for an example of ordination and commissioning. Thinking about swearing oaths and vows, what is taking place when a pastor or missionary is set apart before the Lord to minister the gospel?

8. **Child Dedications:** How are child dedications, as we practice them at Mound Free, a form of the biblical worship element of swearing oaths & vows?

9. **Personal Promises:** What oaths or vows have you made? Did you consciously make those before the Lord? If not, what would you do differently? If you have made them before him, how has he empowered you to fulfill them? What oaths would you be willing to make before the Lord? Are there other oaths or vows you would willingly make before the Lord in the presence of his gathered people?

10. **For further study — the Westminster Confession of Faith:** If you're interested in studying oaths and vows further, consider reading through and reflecting on the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 21.5 and 22.

WCF 21.5 “The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasion; which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.”

#### “CHAPTER 22

##### Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.
2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.
3. Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.
4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.
5. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.
6. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.
7. No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance of which he hath no promise or ability from God. In which respects, monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.”