

# COMBER FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“How to experience close fellowship with the Lord”

Bible studies in Psalm 15 with

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(Moderator of Presbytery)

## MESSAGE 5

### **The Believer's Will** V4

The person who enjoys close continuous fellowship with God. sets his will to keep his promises and doesn't change even when it begins to cost him.

We live in a day when honesty and commitment are becoming very rare. Even marriage vows are taken lightly. It is imperative for us to stand by promises made to ourselves, to others and to God. If we don't mean it we should not say it. Scripture has much to say on the subject of VOWS. Obedience is not solemnly swearing to do something but the actual doing of it (John 13:17).

#### **1. MEANING OF A VOW**

The Westminster Confession ch 22 deals with the subject of 'Lawful Oaths and Vows'. Men's words ought to be binding even without oaths. However in this present evil world falsehood remains so common that special solemn occasions may require oaths and undue proper circumstances, they may be made.

When called upon by lawful authority to swear by the Name of God refusal to do so is sin. Perjury is the act of making a false oath. This sin is committed when ministers break their ordination vows and deny the truths they swore to defend.

Scripture also describes voluntary vows that a person may make to God (Read Num 30:1,2; Ps 76:11; 116:12-14). When we confess

Christ as our Saviour we are in fact declaring a vow

God makes promises, vows and oaths and we often read of occasions when He swore by His own Name. (Ps 89:35; 110:4; 119:106; 132:2, 11. In v2 David swore unto the Lord while in v11 the Lord swore unto David; Is 62:8; Jer 11:5; 44:26; 49:13).

It is good to know in this world of liars, cheats and deceivers that we worship the God who cannot lie. (Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18). The Bible is a storehouse of promises in writing signed by the Creator Himself. Unlike sinful man God does what He says.

## **2. MAKING OF A VOW**

Eccl 5:1-6 urges us to exercise great care in the making of a vow for once it is made it is a serious offence to not carry it out.

Ps 24:4 warns against swearing deceitfully. Such people will never ascend into the Hill of God.

Some people make vows simply because they are in extreme difficulty and when things are calm the promises are forgotten.

Others can vow to make some great sacrifice in order to create a big impression upon those around. Such vows are rarely honoured as we the case with Ananias in Acts 4:36 - 5:11.

Yet there are vows that should be made after soul searching and prayer. These are made, conscious of the great need for God's grace to enable us to fulfil them.

2 Chron 23:3 and Neh 9:38 - 10:39 are instances when a whole group entered into solemn covenant.

In joining the church we are solemnly vowing to stand together in love to serve the Lord and each other. We are following the example of believers in Nehemiah's day.

The 'one another' passages in the New Testament describe what we have promised to do for each other.

### 3. MOTIVE OF A VOW

Vows to God are not to be made in an attempt to try to force Him into blessing us or to gain merit with Him. Rather they are to be entered into out of gratitude for His blessings Ps 116:12-14.

A careful study of Matt 19:27 - 20:16 will show that it is the motive that determines the value of the ministry. Peter like the first group in the parable was concerned with what he would get out of serving Christ and had his eyes on others. We should serve out of love and be content to leave the wages to Christ.

In John 21:21, 22 Peter was still too interested in what others were being asked to do instead of concentrating on his own dedication in following the Lord. Previously in this chapter Peter was asked by the Lord, 'Lovest thou me?'

Let us be careful what we sing, pray and say.

Think over our vows. Honour them. Review them. Confess when we have failed to keep them.

When we recklessly make vows and break them with abandon, we reveal an inadequate concept of God's Holiness and Majesty and disqualify ourselves from fellowship with Him.

Have you solemnly sworn to be the Lord's?

#### EXAMPLE OF A MAN WHO MADE A VOW

Jacob in Gen 28:20-22 made a vow unto the Lord when he was saved. Read Gen 28:10-22.

He saw a *VISION of God.*

He heard the *VOICE of God.*

He made a *VOW TO God.*

Later after years of backsliding, God called him back to the place of his vow, BETHEL in Gen 35:1-15. This resulted in closer fellowship with the God of Bethel.

