

Calvary Assembly



The Foursquare Church
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

Bunbury, Australia



The Sword of the Spirit

The Word of God

From the Pastor's heart

Integrity



Gen 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

The meaning of perfect here is given as follows. (*entire, (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) integrity, truth: - without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright (-ly), whole.*)

It is quite clear by the instruction of God in verse one to Abraham that the promise and blessings that follows in verse two are conditional. Integrity is a big deal with God but not so with man. Though man does value integrity, it is hardly found these days. As a result, when it is found it is a pearl of great price. Integrity has got to do with character. Yet, it cannot be found instilled at birth in a person, it is developed and tested in life. I do believe there is a measure of integrity in each human being just as there is faith instilled in a person; both must be worked out through the trials of one's faith.

Integrity in what God is seeking from us is basically obedience in all matters concerning His commandments. His commandments are what He says. So, anything that is said by God must be fulfilled by us with utmost integrity so as to show that we are people of God. The trials and temptations that come to undermine integrity are so subtle at times that one can easily be caught out. In the case of Annanais and Saphira, they lost out on integrity because they determined to honour God with the proceeds of the sale of their property but kept back a portion for themselves. They were tempted of the evil one to dishonour their commitment to God. So then, honour is critical to integrity. Keep your word at all times and keep it to the fullest.

The heart of man is the seat of integrity. So, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If the mouth speaks and you did not keep what you said; it is dishonour and a lack of integrity. An honest man is hard to find but a man of integrity is next to impossible. Integrity in the context of God is more important to understand and train oneself in than in a secular sense. Keeping good company means to keep company with people of integrity. These are people who have no hidden agendas. They seek the welfare of everyone at all times. They also keep their word. It hurts them to break their word even though situations sometimes are beyond their control. **Personal integrity is developed and is often taught by hard problems that come our way.** To choose the way of integrity over compromise is not often easy. Yet, when integrity is chosen, one feels at peace about their choice and know that they have done the right thing.

In Australia, 'doing the right thing' is a big issue among society. However, the right thing can be elusive to those who want to do it because of the difficulty that such choices bring. Yet, deep down in the heart of man, he is convicted when he has chosen wrong and done the wrong thing. When a person does do the right thing after that, it accounts for integrity restored. The lesson is hopefully learned and relationships restored and trust re-instated. Trust is what is eroded when integrity is lost. So much so, responsibility is not given by those who have to interact with a person who lacks integrity.

Punctuality, saying the right thing, being honest, going the distance are all things that have to do with integrity. When responsibility is given, one must fulfil that responsibility according to the guidelines. When that is not followed, integrity is lost because the person who is given the task chooses to do their own thing. Integrity is applied to money in more ways than one. It is a matter of the conscience. That is why conscience is defiled when integrity is lost. God does not reward dishonesty. In fact, He punishes it. Many believe that because they live under grace they can do anything and get away with it. Every action has a reaction and every act or speech has a reward or consequence.

I remember the story of a person who in the old days had to travel three days to do his grocery and supplies shopping because he lived in the woods. Those were the days of horse and single tracks and so often time the person walked while the horse or donkey carried the supplies that would have to last him months. One time, this particular person after having bought his supplies and had travelled back two days found that he had been given more money back than he should have after paying the bill. He walked back for two days to return the excess money. That is honesty that is born out of integrity. That story touched my heart very much and I have valued what sacrifice integrity produces that then produces great rewards of peace and righteousness.

Jesus our Saviour was a man of integrity. He kept and did what His Father in heaven had told him to do. He even went to the cross based on a commission by God that would test His word to His Father regarding the salvation of souls. He had the option to escape the cross but He did not. He kept His word. That is what makes God honest. He even honours His word over His name. We find that people in the world are so bothered about their reputation or family name that they try and keep that as integrity in their daily living. They do the craziest of things to protect their name that they even steal, kill and destroy. Their word is often lost in their desire to protect their own situation in life. Yet, we see God having given His word, saves us at a great cost to Himself to keep that word. That word of promise can never be broken by God. Only we can lose out by not believing it.

Over the years I have come across many people of the faith and different faiths lose their way over God's integrity. Yet God has never failed His word. People have desired and even manipulated God to keep His word according to what they think He said. They have not submitted to His sovereignty and so have missed out about His word. They have been impatient and unwilling to submit to God's timing and have gone about their own way. The devil always seeks such people to bring down God's true intentions and heart toward us. He puts doubt into people's minds about God's existence and words of truth. He corrupts the truth and turns it into a lie. Yet, he fails when truth bears fruit of God's integrity. Faith arises out of what the word accomplishes and has accomplished. The devil is defeated not by might or strength but by the integrity of God who is unmoved in any situation. At the end of the day, God always wins because He is truth and true to His word as He cannot lie.

Life is full of surprises and changes. This world is full of broken promises that have resulted in wars and many disasters for mankind out of the lack of integrity. Today, millions of refugees are on borders of countries because of this. Keeping covenant is God's promise to us. This is what He honours. That lesson and instruction to Abraham was clear. Even though he was chosen by God, he had to keep covenant. It was conditional on him doing so. Let us remember this when it comes to keeping God's word. When we keep God's word, we keep covenant.

In the parable of the servant who was dishonest with his master's goods, he created a scenario for himself in the years of his abuse. When he was found out, he negotiated with the dishonest people he had dealt with and reduced their debt to his master thereby securing a future for himself with them. What he did not know was that he had condemned himself to perdition. Rather than come clean and restore integrity, he chose the other way. Jesus paid the debt we could not pay and when we do not receive our Master's integrity, we become dishonest before God and go into perdition because we make a covenant with the devil instead of God. Repentance is the way back to God to restore all that is lost. Let us learn to come to that place more readily than ever before. The last days hold many traps for people who are dishonest with God. The consequences are great and in some cases unbearable. Judas betrayed Jesus over 30 pieces of silver and lost everything. Annanis and Saphira lied to the Holy Spirit and lost their lives. Many along the way have started well with God and have lost their way with God because they have chosen to go their own way.

To keep integrity is not easy. Yet, it is essential. At all times, one must be open to the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts because of the following verses. *Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Be blessed in all that you do and make sure that you are keeping covenant with God and abiding by His word. Also, keep your word to your fellow man. You will be blessed in doing so.

*Lots of love
Pastor Noble
16/10/2016*