

## Honesty

Written and typed: 6/7/24

- Brother John Croft from the Radford church of Christ delivered a sermon on honesty on 6/5/24 @ the West Side church of Christ during their summer Wednesday night series
- I took notes during this sermon and this sermon is derived from the notes that I took
  - This is not verbatim from John, but it is based on the notes I took from his sermon
- The topic is honesty
- How can we renew our honesty? If we do not have it, how do we develop it?
- Honesty is certainly a quality of a faithful Christian
  - Matthew 5:37 – *“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’, and your ‘No’, ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”*
  - Let your yes be yes and no be no – this is how Jesus tells us to behave in this regard
  - Anything else is from the evil one
  - So dishonesty is from the devil
  - And this makes sense
  - John 8:44 – *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*
- Honesty is praised by all – even the dishonest
  - John Adams said the following: *“I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on this House and on all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof.”*
  - Thomas Jefferson: *“Honesty is the first chapter of the book wisdom.”*
  - Spencer Johnson: *“Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.”*
  - William Shakespeare: *“To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.”*
- God demands honesty
  - Galatians 5:22-23 – *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*
  - Can you have peace with yourself if you’re not honest? How about kindness – is it kind to be dishonest?
- Let’s begin by defining honesty
  - Merriam-Webster: free from fraud or deception: legitimate, truthful, genuine, real, humble, plain, reputable, respectable, marked by integrity
  - Words used in the NT translated honesty: kalos, semnos
  - Kalos: good, beautiful
  - Semnos: to be venerated for character, honorable of persons
  - So from all the definitions, we can conclude that honesty entails being genuine, having integrity, being a good & beautiful person, being honorable
  - Honesty is a beautiful trait and is something that all Christians should strive to possess
- Honesty is the foundation for all relationships

- The marriage, friendships, family relationships
- But honesty is more than just not telling bold faced lies
  - Have you ever said something and the words you are saying is true, but the way you are saying it implies something that is not true – that’s dishonest
  - Have you ever asked someone a question or done anything with an ulterior motive? That’s dishonest
  - Have you ever said you were going to do something and you didn’t? That’s dishonest
  - Or perhaps have you done something behind someone’s back knowing they wouldn’t approve or they were planning to do it? And you do it because you want the glory? That’s dishonest
  - God would not approve of any of this
- As Christians, we need to make honesty part of our character
  - It isn’t something that we prove to anyone, it isn’t something we occasionally use when it’s to our benefit
  - It needs to make up who you are
  - Have you ever heard someone say: “I’ll believe that person when I see them do it”, or “You can’t believe anything that man or woman says”
  - Have you ever heard someone say that of a Christian? Or you?
  - This should never be the case
- Scriptures pertaining to honesty
  - 1 Timothy 2:1-2 – *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”*
    - Pray for those in authority, government leaders, etc. that we may live peaceful and quiet lives
    - You think honesty is a part of that? Of course
  - Romans 12:17 – *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.”*
  - 2 Corinthians 8:21 – *“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.”*
  - 1 Peter 2:12 – *“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*
  - Matthew 5:16 – *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*
  - 2 Corinthians 13:7 – *“Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed.”*
    - Do what is right in front of everyone – that requires honesty
    - Even when no one is looking and even when others aren’t being honest with you – the Christian needs to be honest, don’t do things with ulterior motives, don’t tell lies, let your yes be yes and no be no
    - Live a good, honest, integrity filled life – others may see that and want to replicate your Christ-like qualities and eventually come to Christ

- Proverbs 19:1 – *“Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.”*
  - Notice that being honest is better than having earthly riches
  - And the one whose lips are perverse is called a fool by God
  - Do you want to be called a fool? Or do you want to be told well done good and faithful servant?
- Let’s look at some benefits of being honest
  - Hebrews 13:5 – *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”*
    - Contentment is a benefit of being honest
  - 1 Timothy 2:2 – *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”*
    - A quiet and peaceful life is a benefit of being honest
  - Acts 6:3 – *“Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them”*
    - You will be trusted with responsibilities if you are honest
    - A sentiment that is reiterated for us in Matthew 25 as well
  - Hebrews 13:18 – *“Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.”*
    - Having a clear conscience is a benefit of being honest
    - Perhaps there is nothing more valuable than a clear conscience
- So we’ve defined honesty and given some benefits of it, what God expects of us when it comes to this Christian like character trait
- How do we apply this?
  - 1 – we need to be honest with ourselves
    - 1 Corinthians 3:18 – *“Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise.”*
    - 1 John 1:8 – *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*
    - Do not deceive yourself
    - Do not depart yourself from reality
    - Accept the truth in all situations, acknowledge any errors that may have been committed, and don’t try to justify a bad situation for yourself or others – you are only hurting yourself in the long run
  - 2 – Tell the truth
    - Colossians 3:9 – *“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices”*
    - Acts 5:1-11
      - Ananias and Sapphira were struck down for not giving all their money from the sale?
      - No – for lying about that amount they sold it for

- Do not lie – God does not lie (Titus 1:2)
    - Christ did not lie
  - Do not craft your words to be deceptive or misleading, do not have ulterior motives – all of this is dishonesty and these should not be qualities of the faithful Christian
- 3 – Do what you promise
  - Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 – *“When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.”*
  - Proverbs 20:25 – *“It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.”*
  - Let your yes be yes and your no be no
  - If you can’t fulfill your promise, do not make it
  - When you say you are going to do something, the person you tell that to should have no doubt whatsoever in your execution of the task
  - This is admirable in God’s sight
- 4 – Don’t flatter when you don’t mean it
  - If you flatter someone, make sure it is genuine – otherwise, just don’t say anything
  - Someone has done a terrible job at whatever you’ve hired them to do and you tell them “Great job” – that’s dishonest
  - You need to be honest with them or don’t say anything at all
  - Proverbs 28:23 – *“He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.”*
  - Proverbs 29:5 – *“Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet.”*
- 5 – Make your word mean something
  - James 5:12 – *“Above all, my brothers, do not swear – not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No’, no, or you will be condemned.”*
  - Matthew 5:37 states the same thing
  - Notice that not practicing this yields condemnation – you think dishonesty, misleading, being deceptive, having ulterior motives isn’t a serious offence in God’s sight?
  - Read James 5:12 and think again
- 6 – Pay what you owe
  - Romans 13:7-8 – *“Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.”*
    - This applies in a physical earthly sense
    - Pay your taxes
    - If you owe respect to someone, give it – don’t be too self-righteous to acknowledge the good that someone is doing – respect them for it and support them

- Especially if it is being done for the benefit of the Lord's church and to glorify God
  - The only debt one should owe is the debt of love he owes his fellowman
  - Fulfilling this debt is to fulfill the law
  - In a spiritual sense, this applies as well
  - Acts 20:28 – *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”*
    - The only other debt you need to owe is the debt that you cannot pay
    - That is the debt to Christ
    - He bought you – the price was His blood
    - Give your life to God – you owe it to Him
    - Else be eternally condemned
- Finally, how do we instill this quality in others? Our children perhaps?
  - Quite simply: be the example
  - Ezekiel 16:44 – *“Everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: ‘Like mother, like daughter.’”*
    - People learn from what they observe – children are no different
    - If others see you being dishonest – they will be as well
    - If others see you being deceptive, misleading, lying, not being fair to others, etc. – they're going to do the same
  - Matthew 7:12 – *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”*
    - Be honest with yourself, tell the truth, do what you promise, don't falsely flatter, make your word mean something, pay what you owe, live an honest life
- Make honesty YOU just as Jesus did
- Jesus exuded honesty and integrity
- **Matthew 26:36-39**
  - Jesus prays “if it is possible, take this cup from me, but not as I will but as you will”
  - Jesus' fleshly desires obviously did not want to go through the cross
  - But He knew that He had to for us
  - Not only did He know the plan, but He was the plan
  - Luke 9:51 – *“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”*
  - Jesus set His eyes on Jerusalem – He knew the cross was in His future
  - But He wasn't going to let anyone or anything get between Him and that cross
  - Because He knew that He was the only redemption that you and I would ever have
  - This is the greatest integrity and honesty that anyone could ever show
- If you haven't given your life to Christ, it's time that you do so – why do you wait
- The plan of salvation is simple and will never change
  - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
    - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*

- **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
- **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
- **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
  - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
  - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*