

Week Beginning: 12th February 2017

Worship Series: #3 in series



living sharing growing



live life abundantly

Theme Verse

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the Lord. Psalm 119:1

Remember This Week

A life of integrity is a life that is so immersed in the love of Jesus that it has no other option but to flow out and live for the sake of others. It's a life that always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres. It's a life that builds and strengthens communities like nothing else in this world. It's radical living at its best. It's the way of life in Jesus.



**Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
He guides the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way.
All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful
toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.**

Psalm 25:8-10

Lord God, your ways are always faithful and true. Teach us your ways for our lives that we may live with integrity in everything that we say and do. Let the actions of our lives reflect the love we have in you and for you. Be with our group now as we study your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

1. *Share your highs and lows for the past week?*
2. *Accountability time! How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *When you are watching or playing sport, how readily do you accept the umpire's decision?*
4. *What do you understand by the word 'integrity'?*
5. *Who is a person that you would consider a person of integrity?*

Like many old ruins, buried beneath dust and hidden in the Australian bush, integrity seems to be an abandoned relic of a bygone era. Whether it's the telling of little white-lies, or embellishing facts to sell ourselves on our CV's, whether it's politicians using parliamentary privilege to make claims that don't need to be substantiated (and which can ruin reputations), or being loose with travel claims, integrity is being buried in the dust of a world which is chasing after whatever it can get its hands on. Today Jesus draws a line in the dust and calls his church to live lives of radical integrity which not only reveal who we are, but build and sustain communities in which all can find nurture, health, peace and blessing.

Read Matthew 5:16-37

Today's reading follows straight on from last weeks, where disciples of Jesus are called to be salt and light in the world. Now Jesus ups the ante with some teaching that hits far closer to home that perhaps we would like. He goes beyond the letter of the law to look directly at our hearts; to examine both the intentions and motives behind what we do.

6. *Which part of this reading do you think is particularly hard to hear in 2017?*
7. *What part of the reading is most challenging personally for you? Why?*
8. *Why do you think Jesus get so personal?*
9. *This passage speaks a lot about the 'law'? How do you react to passages in the Bible that deal with the law? What role do you think the law plays in the life of Christians today?*





Integrity from a biblical perspective means wholeness of heart toward God. In the Old Testament, the word for integrity (*tom*) occurs around 20 times. It means "complete." The simplest comparison in our own language would be the word integer--a number, a single number, a whole number, an integer which cannot be divided. Integer and integrity are related terms in our language, and the concept in the Hebrew means the same thing. It's whole. It's complete. It is not compromised or eroded by personal dishonesty.

10. *We often rely on our conscience to tell us what is right and wrong. In what ways can your conscience be dishonest or lie to you?*
11. *Read Acts 13:22 - David was called a 'man after God's own heart' and yet we know he sinned (2 Samuel 11). Why do you think is still called a man after God's own heart? (Read 2 Samuel 12 and Psalm 51 to give you a help)*

In the New Testament, integrity takes on a different language. The word integrity isn't used. There are two words: "the peace of God ruling in the heart," and also the concept of worth--being worthy, walking worthy. The word 'worthy' doesn't mean how many brownie points you've gained with God. It means your willingness to keep the full weight of you personality from being eaten away by insensitive responses to the prompting of your heart by the Spirit of God. It means having integrity of heart.. So integrity is a gift that which keeps your heart soft, sensitive and responsive. It is having absolute honesty with God and yourself.

12. *Someone once described Integrity as 'the inner umpire of the heart.' How is the Law of God like an umpire that shows you how to walk in the way of God?*
13. *How does that change the way you read and understand God's law in the Bible?*
14. *Luther in his explanation of the 10 commandments (listed on next page) speaks of how living as followers of Jesus is not just about refraining from doing something, but doing something positive which helps to build and enhance community. Read through the explanations and discuss how the commandments (the law of God) help build and protect community.*
15. *Read 1 John 1:6-8. According to John what happens when we walk in the light of God's ways?*

This reading from Matthew gets to the heart of the matter

- it is not enough just to refrain from murder. We should also treat each other with respect and that means not speaking hateful words.
 - It is not enough to avoid physically committing adultery. We should also not objectify other persons by seeing them as a means to satisfy our physical desires by lusting after them.
 - It is not enough to follow the letter of the law regarding divorce. We should not treat people as disposable and should make sure that the most vulnerable -- in that culture that often meant women and children -- are provided for.
 - It is not enough to keep ourselves from swearing falsely or lying to others. We should speak and act truthfully in all of our dealings so that we don't need to make oaths at all.
16. *In which area of your life are you lacking integrity at the present time? Your anger? Not being honest about your sin? Lying to others? Other? Where does this text convict you?*

Spend some time reflecting on Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24. Ask God to reveal the areas of your life where you are not whole, where you are divided, where there is no peace in your heart. Maybe use Psalm 51 as your confession. Read 1 John 1:9 for God's promise to you when you are honest before him.

17. *How can you use the 10 Commandments (God's law) as a mirror in the week ahead to help you live with integrity in your relationships with others?*
18. *What is one area of your life that you are going to endeavour to live with more integrity in the week ahead? Share it with your group.*

- * Pray for all Christians that they would let the light of Christ shine into the places in their lives where temptation and evil thoughts undo their righteous living.
- * Pray for those who are struggling to live with integrity in their relationships with others.
- * Pray that God would continue to work in power through your life that there would be a wholeness that shines brightly as a witness to God's glory.
- * Pray for each member of your Group in the area where they want to live with more integrity.



Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, may your life in Christ be filled with a radical integrity. Amen.

LUTHER'S EXPLANATION TO THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IN THE SMALL CATECHISM

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honour them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbour's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbour's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.