

"A FAITH-SHAPED LIFE: INTEGRITY/HEARING AND DOING"

Luke 6:43-49

You know what starts back up in August that makes many people salivate and jump for joy? For some it might be school, that is, depending if you are talking to the parent or the student. For some it might be the changing of the season where drives to the countryside display the splendor of God's beautiful creation. But for a number of us it revolves around sports and so for some it is volleyball, for others cross-country, for others like my family it is soccer- I say soccer because our youngest daughter, Ashley, plays, and still others it is football. I've already been hanging my black and gold Pittsburgh Steelers flag at our house. And let me just say that if the Browns beat my Steelers this year I will be forced to admit the rivalry is back.

Anyway, regarding football- I recently heard the story of a young Christian man who played for a southern university, He made the football team as the starting split end.

And he continually was before God saying, "Help me in the climax moments to be absolutely honest. I pray for honesty—that one mark of integrity. I want to be that, Lord, and I'll work on it through the season." The rival team came in that night, homecoming. He ran his route and went into the end zone. The quarterback threw him the pass and he got it low. He landed on it, and the referee shouted, "Touchdown!" But the boy knew he had trapped the ball. (For you who aren't into football, it means that he didn't really catch it. He landed on it while it was on the ground and it looked like he caught it.) The stands were cheering, making him the hero of the game. He said, "Wait a minute." Can you imagine this? Walked up to the referee and shook his head. He said, "I trapped it." The referee canceled the touchdown and they lost the game. Now you may not understand much about football, but you know what it is to be a fan. That young man stood all alone, not only against a team that said, "What does it matter, man?" but

against the stands full of people. He said, "I can't take the credit. I did not catch it." James K. Krames, "Tender Loving Heart," *Living Free*

Now I ask us all to consider this question- would we have done the same? Integrity. Someone once said, "Integrity is not only the way one thinks but even more the way one acts...." -- Ted Engstrom, *Integrity*

Well, today we finish up our series where Jesus is preaching to the people on the Level Place or the Place. Luke 6:17 tells us that He is preaching to a great multitude of His Disciples and a great multitude of people- or potential disciples. So there are those who are tracking with Jesus and there are those who are hearing, maybe even shaking their heads in agreement but the heart and the head might not be on the same page and so some might just be processing what He is saying but not buying into it and living it. Just a side note- You can also read some of the same things that we are reading in Luke 6 in Matthew's gospel and in Matthew's gospel it is better known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Here in Luke we read not as many teachings as in Matthew. But here in our passage we find two sections that I have broken down as **INTEGRITY AND HEARING AND DOING**. Let's focus on the Integrity issue.

One verse earlier from our section today, Jesus, in verse 42 uses a pretty strong word. Can you figure out what it is? The word is "Hypocrite."

A hypocrite is a person who plays pretend, who acts the part, who wears a mask. The word hypocrite comes from the theater. And so now Jesus makes the transition from those "other people"- those hypocrites and brings it home to the disciples and is saying, those who follow me should not be called a hypocrite because "No good tree bears bad fruit" and besides that, He says, "nor does a bad tree bear good fruit." You see, what Jesus is saying is this- **what one is, and what one does, and what ones says**

are all intertwined, they are an inseparable union, just like a tree and its fruit. And when you look at verse 45 there seems to be an even

greater emphasis on what one says, for Jesus says, "out of the abundance of

the heart ... the mouth speaks." So the issue is does our words and our actions line up, are they consistent, do they match? I mean, here is a way to bring this truth home- just because we say we are a Christian doesn't mean we are, and you've heard me say it before and I'll say it again, just because I go to church doesn't make me a Christian anymore than if I live in a garage it makes me a car.

Jesus is making a distinction in our passage between

PROFESSION and PRACTICE. And it all comes back to the issue of integrity, does it not? On a scale from 1- being the lowest and 5-being the highest, how would each of us rate our integrity when it comes to Christian commitment? And if it is not where we want it to be then what steps are we going to take to get on track- whether it is a commitment to worship, to service, to devotion and prayer? And believe me, there are ways already in place to address these issues and others right here at this church- just ask me and I guide you to the group or ministry.

Jesus is talking in our passage of a faith-shaped life and how the true evidence of our commitment to Him is in the way we live. Just as our check book says a lot about what is important to us or not important to us, so the way we live out our lives says a lot about what we truly believe.

Jesus gives us three points or examples of ways we can truly show that our word is our word. Let's look at them.

The first way we can show our word is our word is by our fruit.

We have already discussed verses 43-44 where Jesus says that "each tree is known by its own fruit." What does our fruit reveal, what does our heart reveal? We either are bearing good fruit or bad fruit and if we say we are bearing no fruit then that is as good as bad. And if we have been bearing bad or no fruit at all the key is connecting with Christ, being tapped into Him. Jesus said in John 15:4, "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you

unless you abide in me.” You see, it all comes back to Jesus and our relationship with Him.

The second way we can show our word is our word is by our faithfulness. Jesus asks a very damning question in verse 46. He asks,

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you?”

Here it is again- the issue between saying and doing. People can be born and raised in the church; they can come all their lives and not be a Christian. And others can be in church every Sunday, they can have devotions and be in a small group and do all they can for the Lord and leave that service or that group or that setting and go into the work place and be cut throat, neglect their family, put making money over every other aspect of their life, feel stressed out and go to the bar and drink too much and go back the next night just to escape the pressures and neglect their other responsibilities whatever those responsibilities might be. You get the picture? Now I know we are not perfect and we sin.

And we will sin because we live in a sinful body and we live in a sinful world.

And so the key is this- have we been transformed from within? And if we have then we will be convinced and convicted to continue to take this transformed inner life and make it realized outwardly- in the way we live out this thing called Christian faith.

Life is filled with tests, the question is, will we pass the test and come out in favor of the world or Christ? After his Sunday messages, the pastor of a church in London got on the trolley Monday morning to go back to his study downtown. He paid the fare, and the trolley driver gave him too much change. The pastor sat down and fumbled the change and looked it over, counted it eight or ten times. And, you know the rationalization, "It's wonderful how God provides." He realized he was tight that week and this was just about what he would need to break even, or at least enough to buy his lunch. He wrestled with himself all the way down that old trolley trail that led to his office.

And finally he came to the stop and he got up, couldn't live with himself, walked up to the trolley driver, and said, "Here, you gave me too much change. You made a mistake." The driver said, "No, it was no mistake. You see, I was in your church last night when you spoke on honesty, and I thought I would put you to the test." – Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700*

Illustrations The questions are: Are we transformed both inside and out and will Jesus find us faithful? How will we answer?

And the third way we can show our word is our word is by our

Foundation. Jesus gives the example in verses 48-49 of two different men- one who built his house on a foundation of rock and the other who built his house on the ground without a foundation and of the certain demolition of the house minus a foundation when the river burst.

Back in 1958 a small community in northeastern Pennsylvania built a little, red brick building that was to be their police department, their fire department, and their city hall. They were oh so proud of that building; it

was the result of sacrificial giving and careful planning. When the building was completed, they had a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and more than 6,000 people were there—nearly all the town’s residents. It was the biggest event of the year! Within less than two months, however, they began to notice some ominous cracks on the side of this red brick building. Sometime later, it was noticed that the windows wouldn’t shut all the way. Then it was discovered that the doors wouldn’t close correctly. Eventually, the floor shifted, and left ugly gaps in the floor covering and corners. The roof began to leak, within a few more months it had to be evacuated, to the embarrassment of the builder and the disgust of the taxpayers. A firm did an analysis shortly thereafter and found that the blasts from a nearby mining area were slowly but effectively destroying the building.

Imperceptibly, down beneath the foundation, there were small shifts and changes taking place that caused the entire foundation to crack. You couldn’t feel it or even see it from the surface, but quietly and down deep

there was a weakening. A city official finally had to write across the door of that building, "Condemned. Not fit for public use." Ultimately, the building had to be demolished.

Friends, what is the foundation of our lives built on? And how deep is our foundation? Everyone has a foundation, the only one that lasts is the one built on Christ. Amen and Amen.

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Introduction: You know what starts back up in August that makes many people salivate and jump for joy?

Integrity- Someone once said, "Integrity is not only the way one thinks but even more the way one acts...."

Verses 43-44: What Jesus is saying is what one ____, what one _____, and what one _____ are all intertwined, they are a union, just like a tree and its fruit

Jesus is making a distinction in our passage between _____ and _____

Jesus gives us three points or examples of ways we can truly show that our word is our word

The first way is by our _____ vs. 43-44

John 15:4

The second way is by our _____ vs. 46

The questions are: are we transformed both inside and out and will Jesus find us faithful?

The third way is by our _____ vs. 48

Conclusion: Friends, what is the foundation of our lives built on? And how deep is the foundation? Everyone has a foundation, the only one that lasts is the one built on Christ.