INTEGRITY – FEAR OF THE LORD

(Sermon for Sunday 25th November 2018-NP2c) – Stephan P Dyer

*Today I’m going to talk about* ***Integrity*** *and also I will touch a little on the* ***‘fear of the Lord’***

*What does this mean.*

*We hear people talking about integrity, But what does it really mean.*
**The dictionary says**.
The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.
"a person of complete integrity"
synonyms:
honesty, uprightness,
honour, honourableness, upstandingness*, is that actually a word? Well the dictionary says it is.*
Good character, principle(s), ethics, morals,
righteousness, morality, nobility, high-mindedness, right-mindedness, noble-mindedness, virtue, decency, fairness, scrupulousness, sincerity, truthfulness,
trustworthiness
"I never doubted the persons integrity"
2.
the state of being whole and undivided.
"upholding territorial integrity and national sovereignty"
synonyms: unity, unification, wholeness, coherence, cohesion, undividedness,
togetherness, solidarity, coalition.

*As you can see. All those things about a person, that are good, honest and proper.*
*Let's take a peek and see what the* ***great architect of man*** *has to say in the* ***human manual. The bible.***

*All through scripture we can identify the importance of* ***integrity.***

*In the world we live in today, it is obvious that in most cases our integrity is somewhat imperfect.****Perfect integrity*** *can be found in our Lord Jesus, and through Him we are able to aim towards* ***true integrity*** *for ourselves.
Here are some verses for a better understanding*
**Proverbs 11:3 Amplified Bible (AMP)**
The integrity and moral courage of the upright will guide them,
But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.

*The Bible has much to say about spiritual integrity, honesty, and living a blameless life.*

*It also speaks of sincerity, loyalty, obedience, character, and maintaining* *consistency under pressure.*

 *These qualities are all prerequisites for Christian leadership.*

*The following Scriptures provide a broad sampling of passages dealing with the topic of moral integrity.*
*God demands our loyalty.
He seeks people who put Him first above everything and everyone else in their life:*

To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity**. (2 Samuel 22:26, NLT)**

*One of the rewards of integrity is pleasing the heart of God.*

*We show our love to God* ***through obedience****:*

**(1 Chronicles 29:17, NLT)** *Says*
I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find **integrity** there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

*\*God singled out Job as an ideal example of* ***a man of integrity****.*

*The Lord cherishes followers like Job who choose him and stick with him no matter what:*
Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—**a man of complete integrity**.

He **fears God** and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause." **(Job 2:3, NLT**)
*notice in there that it says…*

*he* **fears God***.*

*That’s not about fear* ***as in*** *knocking knees and biting of nails in fear of some form of retribution, but its talking about a* ***healthy fear****, understanding the greatness of our God, He is to be feared.*

**\*Fearing God** *means to have respect for Him and to obey Him. It means that you acknowledge Him to be your Creator and that He has the right to be your Lord.*

 *It means that you act out of reverence for Him.*

*In the Old Testament, a clear connection is made between fearing God and keeping His commands and serving Him:*

*In* **(Deuteronomy 10:12)** *It says* “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

**\*In the New Testament, ‘fearing God’**

*comes up a couple of times too. In* **2 Corinthians 7:1** *it says:* “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in **the fear of God**.”

*Here fearing God is connected to* ***holiness*.**

**Fearing God** *means that you keep in line with His will and are kept from grave sin*

*It gives direction to your life. It can lead to salvation, as was the case with Noah,* *who in reverent fear of God built the ark* **(Hebrews 11:7).**

*This passage brings us* *to the following theme connected to fearing God:* **judgment.**

***In* Luke 23:40** *the one thief rebuked the other, saying*: “*Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?*” *These two men were dying, they would soon stand before God in* ***judgment*** *and they were both under the sentence of condemnation.* ***God has the right to judge****. But as we know, Jesus offered the thief grace and he was saved from condemnation.*

**In Revelation 14:7** *fearing God is connected to judgment again:* “And he said with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of

**His judgment** has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.'”

*So what will happen to us if we don’t fear God*? ***He has the right to judge us****. Do not defy Him, but acknowledge Him as your Creator, Saviour and Lord. Give over your life to Him, live it out of reverence to Him and be saved from condemnation*.

*Integrity should be the hallmark of a Christian. Temptation is all around, but God* *is our rescuer and refuge. We can depend on God to be victorious in this life*:

*In* **(Psalm 25:19-21, NLT)**
See how many enemies I have
and how viciously they hate me!
Protect me! Rescue my life from them!
Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge.
May **integrity** and **honesty** protect me,
for I put my **hope** in you.
***Our integrity*** *does* ***not earn our salvation****, but it does bring God's approval. Know the truth and live it:***(Psalm 26:1-4, NLT)**
Declare me innocent, O Lord,
for I have acted with **integrity;**
I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.
Put me on trial, Lord, and cross-examine me.
Test my motives and my heart.
For I am always aware of your unfailing love,
and I have lived according to your truth.
I do not spend time with liars
or go along with hypocrites.

*Before Jesus Christ came, followers of God had to look forward to a Saviour*

*They turned to God for redemption:*Don't let me suffer the fate of sinners.
Don't condemn me along with murderers.
Their hands are dirty with evil schemes,
and they constantly take bribes.
But I am not like that; I live with **integrity.**
So redeem me and show me mercy.
Now I stand on solid ground,
and I will publicly praise the Lord. **(Psalm 26:9-12, NLT)**
*A person of* ***integrity*** *seeks to follow* ***the Lord's will*** *in everything.*

*Good people don't always win — in this life. But belief in Christ guarantees eternity with God where we will live in his presence forever.*

**(Psalm 41:11-12, NIV)**

I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever.

*One of the few things we* ***can*** *control is our* ***character.*** *With God's help we can behave wisely and make wise decisions:*

**(Psalm 101:2, NLT)**
I will be careful to live a blameless life—
when will you come to help me?
I will lead a life **of integrity**
in my own home.
*Our joy is tied to valuing the instruction of the Lord. The key to* ***integrity is knowing******what God expects of us****. Ask God to transform your character to that of Christ:* **(Psalm 119:1, NLT)**
Joyful are people **of integrity**, who follow the instructions of the LORD
*The Bible is the best source of wisdom, for it is God's word. The closer we live according to Scripture, the more blessings God will grant us, such as the treasure of common sense:***(Proverbs 2:6-8, NLT)**
For the Lord grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.
He is a shield to those who walk with **integrity.**
He guards the paths of the just
and protects those who are faithful to him.

*Breaking God's law or man's laws brings painful consequences. You don't have to keep looking over your shoulder if you live a good life:***(Proverbs 10:9, NLT)**
People with **integrity** walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall.
*See the opposites here.*

Dishonesty is like spiritual leprosy, eating away at the soul. Better to be honest and sleep well at night:
**(Proverbs 11:3, NLT)**
*Honesty guides good people; dishonesty destroys treacherous people.
Children do not learn honesty and integrity from society; they learn it from the example of their parents. Teach the value of a clear conscience:*
The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them. (**Proverbs 20:7, NLT)**

*Riches gained in a dishonest way are filth in the sight of God. Choose things with eternal value instead:*

Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich**. (Proverbs 28:6, NLT)**

*Take the Bible to heart. Cling to it. Live by it. Follow its advice and receive the fruit of God's friendship:***(Luke 8:15, NLT)** *says*And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God’s word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest
*Passionately desiring God — seeking to know and follow him with all of our hearts — in spite of our sinful nature, is the true purpose of life.*

*But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said,* 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.**' (Acts 13:22, NLT)**
*Paul taught Titus to lead by setting a good example.*

*Self-control shows spiritual maturity, which manifests God's Spirit in aspects of daily living. A life* ***of humble integrity*** *is above criticism:*
*and to finish let’s hear what Titus tells us*

*Similarly, encourage people to be self-controlled.*

7. In everything set them an example by doing what is good.

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

 **(Titus 2:7-8, NIV)**

**FINISH**