

LUKE

“The Integrity of God’s People”

Luke 6:37-49

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³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.” ¹

Heavenly Father, I pray that your Spirit would illuminate your word in such a way that our hearts would be in awe of your amazing grace. May your grace awaken us to live lives of grace with and toward one another, and may your grace motivate our hearts to joyous obedience to your authority over us. We pray this in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

I. Introduction

Story: forgetting to square the foundation while building a home in Juarez.

The lesson of this story is this: foundations matter. And as today’s text is going to show us: ***integrity is foundational to the witness of God’s people.***

We’ve been walking through Luke 6, where Jesus has gathered his disciples before him and is unfolding his vision for what it means to be the people of God. In the last few weeks, we have talked about the values of God’s people and the power of God’s people.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Lk 6:37–49.

Today we are going to talk about “*The Integrity of God’s People.*”

II. Text

1.) The Humility of Integrity.

- “*Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you*” (Luke 6:37–38, ESV).
- God calls his people to righteousness and holiness. Nevertheless, here Jesus issues a strong warning against judgment and condemnation toward others.
- Now of course we make necessary judgments every day. Here Jesus is warning his people against judging the eternal worth and value of people as if we were God.²
- Contrary to how many people in our culture interpret this verse, this does not mean God’s people are called to be indifferent to sin.
- Stein: “What is being forbidden here is not the legitimate exercise of judgment in lawcourts or in church discipline but the tendency to criticize and find fault with others... It forbids a Christian from finding “status by negation,” i.e., looking better by criticizing others as worse.”³
- Thus rather than promoting indifference to sin, this command is to posture us toward confronting sin with gentleness, humility, and the intent to restore.
- As Paul says in his letter to the Galatians: “*Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*” (Galatians 6:1–3, ESV).
- Such practices of grace beget a culture of grace within God’s people that legitimate and give integrity to the Christian witness. When we practice grace with one another we give the watching world a glimpse of the grace of God. Even the most extravagant grace we can show another person cannot be compared to the exponentially greater grace God’s bestows on us as his people.
- Jesus then offers an illustration that a carpenter like himself would have vividly understood: “*He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye”* (Luke 6:39–42, ESV).
- Jesus is preventing what I like to call “comparative justification,” wherein we bolster our own sense of righteousness by finding someone who is doing worse. “I don’t need to be perfectly

² “In their own day-to-day conduct the disciples are forbidden to usurp the place of God in judging and condemning other people.” I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 265.

³ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 211.

- righteous, I just need to be more righteous than that guy.”
- This text was vividly illustrated in *“The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind”* (1568) by the Dutch Renaissance master Pieter Bruegel. **SHOW IMAGE.**
 - Here we see a line of blind men beginning to fall into a river. Each of the men have various causes of blindness. Some have their eyes gauged out. Some appear to have severe cataracts. They have formed a train of sorts by holding each other’s canes. The first man has already fallen to his death, and a second has just begun to fall. The next four men walk forward unaware of their pending destruction.
 - If you look closer, the blind man who is about to fall would seem to be looking at the church. It seems he is more focused on a false sense of his own religiosity and righteousness, and yet is blind to his real condition. **SHOW IMAGE OF DETAIL 1.**
 - The message is ***self-righteousness blinds us to the very sins that destroy us.***
 - Finally, the man who is in the process of falling appears to look at the viewer, as if saying, “Beware, this could be you too!” **SHOW IMAGE OF DETAIL 2.**
 - If you justify yourself by the unrighteousness of other, Jesus invented a word for you – hypocrite. The word for “hypocrite” (ὑποκριτᾶ) in verse 42 means “play-actor, role-player... pretender.”⁴ A hypocrite is one who “...professes piety and righteousness, especially in censuring others, but other aspects of his behaviour conflict with this, and so he is guilty of inconsistency. His real character is impious; his ‘righteous censure’ of others is thus play-acting.”⁵
 - Everyone hates hypocrisy (recent examples: Tim Murphy and Harvey Weinstein).
 - How often do we condemn others while failing to live according to our own standards of virtue?
 - The purpose of this passage is to call us to self-awareness of own subtle forms of hypocrisy so that we can be vigilant to vivify humility and mortify our hypocrisy.
 - Bock: “If there is to be accountability, it must start with ourselves. We often are aware of little faults in others, such as our children or our spouses, while we ignore our own great faults. Jesus calls such priorities hypocrisy. He calls his disciples to self-accountability. Those who do the best job of restoring others in their walk are those who can restore themselves.”⁶
 - We are called to a humble self-awareness of our own need for grace and restoration that only the gospel can provide so that we can, in turn, share that grace and restoration with one another. The cross of Christ has equally exposed us all. Our sins were so great that the Son of God had to die for them. But his love was so great that he died so that we could be set free.
 - This truth is meant to push us toward one another in by gracious humility. God’s people are called toward humility can both give and receive grace-filled words of truth – even when those grace-filled words come in the form of correction. Our relationships are to be based on “redemptive empathy rather than condemning detachment.”⁷

⁴ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1038.

⁵ Marshall, 271.

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 199.

⁷ William F. Warren. “Focuses on Spirituality in the Sermon on the Mount.” Quoted in Michael J. Wilkins. *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 309.

2.) The Heart of Integrity.

- *“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”* (Luke 6:43–45, ESV)
- Here in verse 45, Jesus is emphasizing the primacy of the “heart” (“καρδιας”); the central part of our being that is the seat of our desires. Our actions are determined by what we love most.
- As Philosopher James K.A. Smith has written, “We are what we love.”
- But how do we direct the desires of our heart? On this topic I have found great clarity in Proverbs 4: *“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil”* (Proverbs 4:23–27, ESV).
- Preach the gospel to yourself. Put away from you anti-gospel talk.
- Audit your habits. What are they teaching your heart to desire? What is the trajectory of the path you are on?
- Aim the desires of our heart toward the truth of God. Stir your affections for God.

3.) The Hope of Integrity.

- *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”* (Luke 6:46–49, ESV)
- We can place our hope on a foundation that has integrity or one that does not.
- Which foundation are you functionally resting the hope of your life: the authority of God’s word or the authority of ourselves?
- Evangelicals are sadly often more prone to study the word of God rather than obey the word of God.
- You can say Jesus is Lord, but your actions reveal that you are Lord.
- What you believe about authority is revealed by actions.
- Example: Thomas Jefferson’s Bible.
- How we live reveals our hope.
- *To say you believe Jesus is Lord without submitting to his word is an act of self-deception that ends in self-destruction.*
- But is Jesus calling us toward legalism or salvation by works? Certainly not! Jesus is grace-motivated obedience.
- I have very young children. My wife and I are trying to teach them to obey for the right reasons. We want them to obey not just out of a fear of punishment. So many times in a day, when we are doing it right, we will slow down and say, “You are my son. I am your father. I love you and only I want what is best for you. Listen to me, trust me, and obey me. This will lead you to joy.”
- In the same way I believe the Jesus is calling us to obey a God who loves us and seeks our good.
- Jesus’s words are challenging. Many would have found this a hard saying. But Jesus wasn’t just

willing preach hard truths. He would soon walk a hard road for our redemption.

- He is the judge who humbly stepped into the place of the condemned and was judged in our place so we could be forgiven; the righteous one who died and rose again so that our dead hearts could beat again by the power of the Spirit; the one who took the floods of our justice, so that his righteousness could be the rock of our hope and obedience.
- He has purchased us with his blood so that we may find hope and live for him!
- As the first question and answer of The Heidelberg Catechism state many years ago: “*What is thy only comfort in life and in death? That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing.*”⁸
- Redeemer Christian Church, may we be a people who are so moved by the grace of God that we seek to display that grace through lives of integrity. AMEN.

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. *Self-righteousness occurs when we bolster our own sense of moral goodness by seeking to compare ourselves to people we think are doing “worse” than us. How does this habit produce blindness to our own sin (see Luke 6:37-42)?*
2. *In Luke 6:43-45, Jesus describes how our actions flow from our heart. How does Proverbs 4:23-27 help us to aim the desires of our heart toward righteousness?*
3. *It is possible to call Jesus “Lord,” but live in such a way that shows we are the functional lords of our lives (Luke 6:46-49). How should we seek to be a people who submit to God’s word – even when it is difficult for us to do so – with grace-motivated obedience?*

⁸ Heidelberg Catechism, [Heidelberg Catechism](#), Revised Edition. (Cleveland, OH: Central Publishing House, 1907), 19.