

Integrity of Heart

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of integrity in our lives, highlighting the need to submit to God's will, acknowledge our sins, and seek forgiveness and guidance from Him.

Duration: 1:18:18

Scripture: Genesis 16:8, 1 Chronicles 29:15, 1 Chronicles 29:17-18, Hebrews 4:12-13, 1 Peter 2:11

Topics: "Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of David and how he tried to cover up his sins until God exposed him. The preacher then shares a story about a little girl who had a powerful encounter with God when she saw a great eye looking at her. This eye revealed all her sins, including stealing, and she was deeply convicted. The preacher also talks about a man who had a life-changing encounter with God and how he shared his testimony with others. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our sins, seeking God's forgiveness, and sharing our testimonies with others.

Transcript

Remembering the great things which took place regarding the faith on that certain day. At that time, it was the Roman Catholic Church which ruled the whole world, the whole Christian world. And God raised up Martin Luther who began the Reformation.

Because the belief had been that you can save yourself by your own works, by your own efforts. Luther had been very young and wanted to study law. One day, while he was travelling with a friend, walking with a friend, a storm gathered and there was much thunder and rain and they ran for refuge under a tree.

And he said, when I judge one day, I need to rather consider seriously the things of God. His father was very upset when he changed his career direction. And he said, I thought I had brought a real young man into this world who would make a success of life and now he becomes a priest.

But he said, I cannot but do this. I must obey God. And so he studied theology to be a priest, to be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

Despite his great desire to live for God, he was troubled by sin and he was so distressed by evil thoughts and bad temper and getting irritable and things like that. And little things distressed him greatly. They became huge things to him.

His counsellor one day advised him and said, don't be so distressed by such minor things. These are just for little, these are things of dolls. Sins that belong just to dolls.

He said, don't be distressed just by these minor things. And so he kept quiet about them. But it troubled him.

He said, I cannot be quiet about my sins. He was told and advised to trouble himself with penance, fasting, lying on a cold stone floor in order to feel the pain of cold. And then go through the normal rituals of the day where they would go to some of these cathedrals which had many steps leading up to it and at the first step, on his knees, he would say the Our Father.

Finish it. Then on the next step, say the prayer again. And on the next step, that his knees would be raw by the time he got to the top.

Troubling and causing himself to suffer. One day while he was kneeling, climbing these stairs, he said, I cannot be quiet about my sins. Finish it.

Then on the next step, he would say the prayer again. Suddenly, the Lord spoke to him in his heart from Romans 3.28, man is not justified by works but by grace. This was an enormous illumination to him, a revelation of not saving yourself through your own efforts but by Jesus.

And he trusted God. His life was changed. And then on the 31st of October, he being a preacher there in Wittenberg at one of the cathedrals, he wrote down many points one after the other regarding error in the church.

He wrote down 95 different points and then he took those and he nailed it to the door of the church. Saying, if we follow in this direction, this is not God's word, this is not the right direction. And revival broke out.

And that is why on the 31st of October, the Sunday closest to it is known throughout the Protestant world as Reformation Sunday. If God hadn't raised them up and worked in such a phenomenal way, maybe we too would be suffering under that same thing. And so we remember that matter at this time.

How did it begin? With the word of God. The word of God came and spoke to his heart, showed him his error and brought about true repentance. These days I was visited by a man, a person who was very ill.

And I asked the Lord as to which verse I should read to him. And I found a place in 1 Chronicles 29, verse 17. It's in the Old Testament.

That's 513. In my Zulu Bible it's numbered. You'll find it in 1 Chronicles 29.

In 1 Chronicles 29. Let me start with verse 15. I'm just going to read them.

I'm not going to comment on all of them. For we are aliens and pilgrims before you, as were all our fathers. Our days on earth are as a shadow and without hope.

O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build you a house for your holy name is from your hands. And is all your own. I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.

I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. And is all your own. I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.

As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. And now with joy I have seen your people who are present here to offer willingly to you. And I know also that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.

And is all your own. I know also that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. And is all your own.

O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of your people and fix their heart toward you. We'll read thus far. What I want to emphasize is this verse where it says, I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.

I know, my God, that you test the heart and that you love uprightness. The things of God, the things of faith are a mystery. As I read this text to this very ill person, they said, I'm amazed that in the Old Testament something like this should be written.

What I want to emphasize is this. You know your God have shame. You have no shame.

You have no shame. You have no shame before God. And they said, you know, in life, when you are well, things are often not understood or taken for granted and you just think, well, this is how it is.

But when you meet with death, you're confronted with the reality of death. You begin to understand. You have to face up to the reality of what really matters.

And I say to the person, indeed, the Greek has a certain, the Greek language has a certain word, epignosis, which refers to understanding brought about by revelation. And that's an experiential knowledge. Experiential knowledge.

You may be taught in school and taught when you're younger about the things of God, but it just goes in one ear and goes out the other. And you have no comprehension of what it really means. But how wonderful if before you die, you meet with it experientially, that you recognize the reality and truth of it.

And I noticed how this person, as I was reading the scriptures, was listening so attentively, not wanting to lose a single word. And when we sang a hymn, also singing along as much as they could in the little strength that they had, really paying attention because of the reality of death. And then he told me, because he owns a farm, he says, I've collected all the laborers on my farm and announced to them, I'm going to leave you.

He said, you know my life. You know what I've done and said. However, on a certain day, I've met with God.

You know my life before I met with the Lord, what I used to do, and you are the witnesses of what happened in my life and how I changed when I turned to the Lord and when I met with God. And you are my witnesses to the fact that the things that I used to do, I no longer did. Wonderful if a person meets with God in such a real way and experiences such a great change.

Here, David was dying. And he was preparing for Solomon to take over his position. He was praying for Solomon and for the whole nation.

And he said, Lord, keep forever the intent and the thoughts of the heart of your people. And fix their hearts toward you. David would often pray for God's people, for the nation of God.

And here he prays that the thoughts and very motives of the hearts of God's people would be with integrity. And that their heart would be fixed toward God. Listen to the way he prays in verse 17 where he says, I know my God.

He doesn't just pray about God in general, but he says, my God, that you test the heart. David knew God as the one who tested his heart. Many Christians don't know that.

But he said, I know my God, that you test the heart. That's why they can deny the very thing which they know full well that they have done. Instead of being like this man of God who could say, my God, you are the one who tests the heart.

A person who walks in integrity, who is not bluffing their way. They live on a different level. They are not like the nothings who walk on this level of self-deception.

Do you know that people... You can recognize people who have met with revival. There are marks and characteristics about them which you can recognize. You can say, this person, no, they haven't.

Sometimes just on the face. I remember so often the days where we poured out our hearts in prayer, crying to God, come down, O Lord, come, be in the midst of your people. Where we pleaded with the Lord to get rid of everything that was of ourselves, but that which was of Him, of His Spirit, would remain.

I remember those days were unlike any other days. It was as if God would take the heart of a person and just expose it openly on the table. That's why I'm constantly astonished by people who can fight, by Christians who can have an argument, and they can get so upset with each other that they even part company.

I'm astonished, I'm disappointed, I just don't know what to say when I see such a thing. One has to say, well, even if they're Christians, but they're living in the flesh, they certainly do not walk in the Spirit. They don't know God in a proper, real, deep way, they just know Him superficially.

My God, you who test the heart, do you know God in that way? You who test the heart, do you know God in that way? You who seek the Lord, do you know God in that way? You who seek the world, do you know God in that way? Do you know God in that way? This God, this Jesus who said, if you look lustfully after a woman, looking at her with lust, you have already committed adultery, you have divorced your own wife, you've sinned, you've committed adultery. This is the God that David knew, the God who tests your heart. David went through a time where he covered his sin.

With various plans and cunning and strategies, he covered up until God exposed him in a way that he had to say, this God who knows and tests my heart, the God who sees me. When the revival first began at Mapumulo, a certain little girl sat under a lemon tree. It was a time that she was sitting there, and then God said to her, if you look lustfully she got such a fright when she saw a great eye looking at her.

Gazing at her, she wondered what is this huge eye looking at me for? When this eye was upon her, God said to her, look, instantly she recognized all her sins, they just began to be revealed to her. Her arguing with other children at school, her lies, her hatred, her grudges, her stealing, couldn't leave something without wanting to take it. She had a demon of stealing.

All this was revealed before her. That eye had tested her heart. God said to her, if you look lustfully she had to say this, this God who knows and tests my heart, the God who tests my heart, this God, this God, this God, this God, this God, this God, this God.

There was no pen or paper around but she found a piece of cardboard and a bit of burnt coal and she used this to write her sins down by name on this scrap of cardboard saying I don't to forget even one sin. For this great eye of God who sees all things also tests the depths of our hearts. She wrote all of it down with this coal.

Then she sent this cardboard piece to me. I am sorry that I have lost that in moving places sometimes one loses mementos I'd wanted to keep that as a reminder of that experience that all-seeing eye. Have you met with that eye which sees all? And she felt pain in her heart about the sins she had committed.

And she wrote to me that God had shown all her sins not only the things that she had known about but also the things that were covered up and where she had cunningly deceived about it and the Lord had exposed it. Wonderful is the work of God when God works when he is at work Blessed is such a person. When Jesus met with that woman of Samaria the Samaritan woman.

Eventually she ran back to her town she called all the citizens of her town and said come and see the man who has told me all the things that I've ever done. Isn't he the Messiah she said. That colored woman met with the God of David.

David who had said oh my God you test my heart. And this woman had met with that one as well the one who tests the heart. She ran and called all the people saying he has exposed me exposed to me and revealed all the things that I've ever done.

This woman. Or you're still in the level of having to be caught. You still need to be told and confronted.

Listen to Hebrews 4 12. Sorry verse 13 12 and 13. Even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and there is no creature hidden from his sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Even our thoughts and intents and inner motives are revealed by the one who is the word. There was somebody during the time of the revival a lady gave birth to a child and called him word or the word. The father called him word.

Calling him by this name of Jesus. Jesus because when Jesus comes in he separates between soul and spirit between marrow and joints food and there is nothing covered that is not naked before his eyes. For everything is naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

We are still going to give account. We're still going to speak before him. Oh an American who referred to the importance of accountability, somebody to whom you are accountable, we would refer to that person as a counselor.

But we, to God himself. To God, we will be accountable. We must give account of everything that we've done since our earliest age, before we even went to school, right through life, everything.

Remember the person who came from Cape Town who had had a very big operation done on their neck? Remember the person who came from Cape Town who had had a very big operation done on their neck?

Remember the person who had had a very big operation done on their neck? Who had asked for prayer beforehand and the doctor, the specialist who operated on him, said, I've experienced a miraculous thing as I, my hands were moving, it was like a hand came down and was moving my hand in operating. and was moving my hand in operating. He said, when he woke up, he felt like he had come out of a big, a deep pit.

He said, when he woke up, he felt like he had come out of a big, a deep pit. And he then asked the sister, and because she had been watching him as he was lying there in the ICU, he asked her, sister, is Jesus really alive? Is he there? And she said, yes. He asked, can Jesus forgive my sins? The sister kept quiet.

She didn't know what to answer him. Because she didn't know the forgiveness of her sins. And then he told her about what he had seen And then he told her about what he had seen from the time that he was so young.

Going to school. A primary school. To primary school.

He experienced again, he saw again everything that he had done. He saw his life at secondary school and at high school. Then his life at university.

He said, I saw everything. My sins were completely naked. And he said, that's when I woke up with such suffering and so troubled and asked the nursing sister, can Jesus forgive my sins? Troubled.

Do you know that? Or are you still sitting in your sins? Has Jesus forgiven all your sins? Can you say, my God, Can you say, my God, you who test the heart of a person. I know my God, that you test the heart. When God sees a person, the first thing he sees is their heart.

born. He sees us. God sees us.

I think of Hagar. Remember Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was barren. And then in her old age, she decided that she would never be able to have children.

Sarah then said to her husband, Abraham, you can see that I'm barren and I'm never going to be able to have children now anymore. Take then my maid servant from Egypt and rather have children with her. Take my slave.

That's what Abraham did. Hagar fell pregnant. When Hagar realised she was pregnant and Sarah was barren, she began to be haughty and looked down on her husband.

She thought herself as being more important than Sarah. Then Sarah went to Abraham and said, let God be the judge, but isn't it the case that she is now haughty and being proud and looking down on me, this slave girl, and Abraham said, but you the one who said that this should be done, you do with her what she says. You decide.

Then battle broke out. Sarah abused Hagar. Hagar would back chatter.

You know how women can be catty and fight when they are together, the offspring of Eve, how awfully catty they can be? That is why having more than one wife, those who've experienced such a thing say, we don't want to have anything to do with it. One wife can be problematic enough, having two or three, but oh how this jealousy of yours can be at work. That is why the Japanese, the Chinese character, the written character for battle is a house with two women in it.

How true. Chinese, an old nation, and they know it. Two women in one house.

That is battle. They don't have to spell out the letters of battle. They just draw it, a pictorial description of two women in a house.

Hagar said, well, I'm not going to stay here. I'm going to get up and go. So off she went.

She then got to a well of water and sat there, and the angel of the Lord came. It's Genesis 16 from verse 7. The angel of the Lord found her at the spring of water in the wilderness by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarah's maid, where have you come from and where are you going? And she said, I'm fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarah.

Here is a great message. Where do you come from and where are you going to? We don't think. If you just pack up and leave, think about where you're going.

She said, I'm fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarah. So the angel of the Lord said to her, return to your mistress and submit yourself under her hand. Do you hear what God said to her? It doesn't help for you to submit.

Don't try and escape your circumstances. Go and submit under her hand. And the angel of the Lord said to her, I will multiply your descendants exceedingly so that they shall not be counted for multitude.

And the angel of the Lord said to her, behold, you are with child and you shall bear a son and you shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has heard your affliction. He shall be like a wild mule, his hand shall be against every man and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

This is the father of the Muslims. This is the mule that is not tamed, is against everyone and everyone against it. Just see what Islam is like today.

That's the Saddam's. Those are the Bin Laden's. There are some in Africa who even write the names of these men as heroes on their homes as if though they are heroes, they don't realize that these are untamed mules.

These are the type who encourage suicide bombing, strapping bombs around themselves, blowing themselves up. These are the wild mules which cannot be tamed. The offspring of Hagar, but as a result of Sarah.

And Sarah then complained about it. So you be careful, you might decide something, make a plan and yet you the very one who mourns the consequences of your plans. Maybe you've brought children into the world.

The type of children who just become rebels, who need to be expelled, who are wild on the streets, falling pregnant before marriage. Maybe you are the one who fell into a lustful relationship. You did it according to your own cunning, not with God.

In the middle of the next verse, verse 13, you are the God who sees. For she said, have I also here seen him who sees me? Have you seen the one who sees all as she then named this world, which means you who are the God who sees. So she named God as the one who sees.

How will you name your God? He is named with many different names. He is named with many different names. I told you recently of the man who said he's never found in the Bible, the God who is love, love, love with thrice says love, but it does speak often about the God who is thrice holy.

Samuel the prophet said, Samuel I have discarded King Saul from being the king of Israel. Samuel cried and wept for days on end, crying about King Saul that was so painful to him. Then the Almighty spoke to him.

You find that in 1 Samuel 16. Samuel for how long will you mourn for Saul? For I have discarded him. For the Lord says you who deny him he will deny you, you who confess him he will confess you.

He said fill your horn with oil and go to Jesse the Bethlehemite for I have provided myself a king among his sons. And he went there. I make the matter short.

He asked Jesse do you have a son? He said indeed I have got 8 of them. He said call them. For God has called me to anoint one of them.

He called his sons and they came. The first one came. He entered in.

Samuel was very impressed by the first son and thought his height, his appearance, it looked so manly. It must be him. And God said no don't be deceived by his appearance.

For God said no Samuel this is not the one. Samuel was shocked. Then he said Jesse is there another? After him.

He brought him in. He passed him in front of him. And the Lord said neither this one.

Then the next and the next till all 7 sons came by and God said no this isn't the one. Oh the prophets of God were amazing. They heard God speaking to them.

Have you heard the Lord speaking to you? Jesus said my sheep hear my voice. If you are not hearing his voice maybe you should check up. Perhaps you are a goat and not a sheep.

You are a goat of the devil. Samuel was amazed. He said what are these the only sons because all of them the Lord had denied.

Then he said no there is one more he is out there shepherding the sheep. He said call him. All the older ones were soldiers of Saul.

The three oldest ones. They were trained warriors men. Then he said Samuel said isn't there another one? And he said there is call him.

Then he said there is another one. He said there is another one. He said there is another one.

And they waited and waited as the boy was called and who came in but this the youngest of all this boy he was ready of complexion bright-eyed and good-looking and the Lord said to him this is the one and he anointed him with oil. And God said Samuel I am not like man for men see the outward appearance but I see the heart. I choose him for I see his heart.

He is upright and has integrity of heart. If you want to be a real man of God pray earnestly really pray that the Lord would deal with your heart. The heart that is acceptable upright has integrity before God.

Faithful able to stand for the truth. This little boy when a lion would come to steal a lamb He would confront the lion and rescue the lamb from the jaws of the lion. He denied his life even for a single lamb.

On another day a bear came and David wrestled with it as it took a sheep. He was upright. He was of righteousness.

He was of ready complexion. It is known that redheads are strong characters know what to do to stand for what they know is right. Would that we would all be redheads in being faithful and standing for what is right.

Now don't go and buy dye for your hair to dye your head red. Go to Jesus. Go to Jesus and ask him to make your heart to be upright.

And this boy the eighth of all these others the seven who were rejected he the last one who was accepted had the heart that God wanted. On this Reformation Sunday let there be a reformation of your heart indeed. This is the second of November 2003.

The year is coming to an end. Pray and say Lord give me an upright heart. How sad it would be if we celebrate Reformation Sunday but there's no reformation in your heart.

Let us pray. Lord you reveal to us today on this Reformation Sunday that what is necessary is the reformation the change of heart. Lord be attractive to people.

Be tall and nice and liked by people but without a good and upright heart Lord we have nothing. Lord search our hearts today. May each one of us be able to say that I know the God who searches the heart.

Take out the evil heart and put in your good heart. Take out the heart of stone and put in that soft heart of flesh. That we may be people who are truly upright in the Lord.

Amen.

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