

Living With Integrity

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Preacher: Pastor Scott Johnson

[0 : 0 0] class vacc oldu■lores academy students delete about bundle people enjoy Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 5 3] Thank you.

God goes before us. God walks beside us. God is behind us. God is within us. God is working through us, on us, in us, and around us.

And it is indeed a joy to know that in a world that often feels gray and often that feels bland, that often feels ordinary, that God's people and God's spirit will bring beauty and flavor and joy into that space.

Amen? Amen. So let us pray together. Lord, let the spirit that empowers me go out into the world and bring courage and power to others.

Lord, let the spirit that enlightens me bring brightness and warmth into the lives of others. Lord, let your spirit, which gives such praise and joy and freedom to all of us, go out and bring joy and freedom and peace to all the world.

[4 : 3 0] Amen. Amen.

In the streets of every village Every city soaring town Empty people live in darkness Every minute, every hour Hear the cry of desperation From a million broken hearts With a need so great Where do we even start?

Let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Free my mind from all distractions Please come and set the captive free Fill my feet to follow after you Change the world Let it start with me You have given us the orders There's a place for everyone I don't want to miss my passion In the planet you've become I promise you will lead me To the edges of a wall

And change everything That keeps me from your door Let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Free my mind from all distractions Fill my hands Set the captive free Put my feet to follow after you Change the world And let it start with me Take my hand Open up my own Everything I have is yours Everything I have is yours Everything I have is yours Everything I have is yours Let it start with me Open up my eyes Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion

Free my mind from all distractions Use my hands Use my hands Use my hands To set the captive free Use my hands Use my hands To follow after you Use my hands Use my hands To set the captive free Give my feet to follow after you Change the world Let it start with me Open up my eyes Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Free my mind from all distractions Use my hands Fill my hands Fill my hands Open up my eyes Use my hands To set the captive free Give my feet to follow after you Change the world And let it start with me Amen Please be seated

[8 : 51] So let it start with me We as a congregation Sometimes think about how it is And what our role is In making a difference In this community where people have so much And one of our special offerings Or special opportunities for giving Which can happen any time of the year Is the Matthew 25 Fund And the Matthew 25 Fund Is for people who are not a part of our congregation Who might need some temporary assistance So what does that look like?

Well it might look like A Topps car to get some groceries or gas It might look like A young man from a congregation Who finds themselves across the country And needing not only A little food But a little pastoring So we United Methodists Who are connected Actually all around the world Can call a United Methodist pastor Across the connection And say I got this young man And I'd be glad to give you money To get him some groceries Or to But more than anything Could you just go sit with him And have lunch And see what help There can be The pastor said No worries Don't send any money We've got funds For that May it be so With us

To be that place That church Those pastors And as we come Before God With our Gifts And our offerings And our Hearts And our prayers And all the ways In which we give May we be mindful The lights need to stay on The heat needs to stay on Especially today But at our core That is just the foundation That's just the basis For which we can do The other things God has called us To do So let us give Our hearts Our gifts Our talents And our service Amen Our influence Our behalf Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

Amen Thank you.

youtube.com Thank you.

[13 : 01] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

O God, we come to you in this time of generosity with our gifts, our hearts, our love, all that we are and all that we hope to be and all that we're not and all that you can make us be.

We surrender to you in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. As we share in a time of celebrations and needs in the life of our community, we're aware that there are those online watching who have concerns and needs and we're grateful for them to be sent.

[15 : 17] We always invite people to send prayer requests, prayer celebrations so that we pastors and the prayer team can be a part of lifting them up in prayer.

I will say specifically this week that last week we talked about Chet Timbrowski fell, ended up with stitches and went home and then went back to the hospital but is home now and Carol says at least 14 lives.

He's already used up 14 and he's probably got 25 so we continue to lift them up in prayer. I invite you to be in prayer with me.

O Lord of all creation, help our spirits, our hearts, our bodies to settle into being with you.

You remind us who we are in your presence. We know a lot about what we aren't but you remind us who we are.

[16 : 48] You know our names and you call them with love, acceptance, forgiveness. And joy.

You call us to live a life that stands next to what we learn. A life of hope.

So in a time when sometimes things are overcrowded, pressured, when things are too quiet, when things are too loud, when the hurt is too big and the people can't be found, come to us with your Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit. Surround us with your blanket of care and warmth and also with your Spirit to shove us a little.

Push us where you would like us to go. And we ask ourselves. And we ask ourselves. And we ask you. And we ask you. And we ask you.

[18 : 04] Is it I? Is it my hands? Is it my feet? Is it my feet? May we each look. May we each listen. And may we each reach out. In Jesus name. Is it my hands? Is it my feet? May we each look.

May we each listen. And may we each reach out. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Isaiah 58, 6-11, and Matthew 5, verses 13 and 17-20. Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen, to lose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, when you see the naked, to clothe them and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

[19 : 59] Then your light will break forth like the dawn and your healing will quickly appear. Then your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Then you will call and the Lord will answer. You will cry for help and he will say, Here I am. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like noonday.

The Lord will guide you always. He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a watered garden, like the spring whose waters never fail.

You are the salt of the earth, but the salt loses its saltiness. How can we be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.

[21 : 40] This is the word of the Lord. Good morning again, church.

Would you pray with me, please? Almighty and gracious God, your people have gathered today and we have opened our hearts. We have opened our hearts and sung your praises.

We have heard your word and we have come to you in prayer. And now, Lord, with our hearts open, we pray that you would plant a seed in us, a seed that will grow and bear fruit for the honor and glory of your name.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. Amen. So today, I'm going to keep in this series that we have been having together called, Who Are You?

And today, we want to focus on this idea of living with integrity. Living with integrity. So to start, I want to ask everybody a quick question because these have become such a huge portion of our lives.

[22 : 55] How many masks do you own? How many masks do you own? You can either say or maybe put your hand up and say, what, three, four, maybe one or two, or maybe you stick in the disposable club. Yeah.

Yeah, I have at least four and I probably lost more than I have. So the thing is, though, these have become, as we said earlier, a huge part of our lives, right?

For a very valid reason. Masks protect us from this virus and it's important that we do our part in that way. And because we know we need them, people have decided to have a little fun with them.

I can look out here and I'm seeing a lot of blue and red today. So that tells me a little something about what may be on people's minds. We also have other things that we do with our masks. Folks show that 716 pride, other places we work, things of that sort.

So people are making the most of it, having a little fun with their masks, which is key. And that's a good thing. But let's not pretend that it took this pandemic to make us think about wearing masks.

[24 : 03] Folks have worn masks pretty much as long as there have been folks. In the sense that sometimes our masks are visible, like we have them now.

And sometimes our masks are invisible. Because there are times when we don't really want to show the world our truest self. Times when we want to maybe cover up because we're afraid of letting the world know who we really are.

And so people have been wearing masks, both visible and invisible, for some time. Now this mask issue gets us to this question of living with integrity, which is our focus today.

because the mask thing brings up some interesting questions for us. Especially in relationship to the verse that's really our anchor today.

And we heard it read, but I want to take us back to it because our anchor today is going to be Matthew 5.13. Matthew 5.13. And I want you to hear it again.

[25 : 11] You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Salt losing its saltiness.

It's an interesting question. And that's where this idea of integrity comes into play. So when we think about what is Jesus trying to tell us, what is Jesus really trying to get at in this teaching, I think we need to fast forward to what he says after that in verse 17.

So follow along with me here. Because Jesus then moves and kind of shifts gears and he says this, Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Not to abolish, but to fulfill.

[26 : 18] So, that verse carries a little more weight sometimes than we give it. Sometimes we think that Jesus is just simply saying, well, he's here and he fulfills the prophecy, which is true. Okay?

But think about this in a different way. Because there was a lot of law. Sometimes we think about the Ten Commandments, but remember, there was a lot of law in the Bible.

There was a lot of law that people were expected to follow and obey. Right? And so when people think about all of those rules, people would do their best.

They would go out and they'd want to make sure we didn't break any rules. But, the key here is that you could follow all those rules and you could make a few mistakes, but you could follow all those rules.

But, even in following all those rules, there was a question of, so how does this help? I mean, are we just doing this because God said so? Don't get me wrong, that's not a bad reason.

[27 : 20] But the thing is, is that if you follow the rules, but don't get why the rules are important, and you don't know why you're following the rules, then maybe the rules don't mean as much to you as you think.

Which is why Jesus' point is so important. I didn't come to turn the rules on their head. I didn't come to throw them out. I came to fulfill them. In other words, if you get the rules, if you put the rules into practice, you'll be doing the sorts of things that I'm doing.

I'm what the rules look like when you live them from your heart. And don't just worry about tripping up over the lines. That's why what he says in verse 20 becomes so important.

So follow along here. In verse 20, what he says is that, for I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

You will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven. A lot going on there. So let's see if we can't bring these threads together.

[28 : 36] Because on the one hand, Jesus is saying, I've come to fulfill. And yes, if you walk like me, if you talk like me, if you look at how I'm living my life, you'll realize that this is what the law does to you.

You don't have to worry about breaking laws if you're in this for these reasons. And when you think about all of the ways in which people are tripping and making mistakes, remember who we are talking about, right?

Because so many people worry about, am I doing the right thing? But what Jesus is trying to get us to remember is that maybe it's not so much about worrying about breaking rules that we need to be concerned about.

What's really going on in our hearts? What's our connection to these rules? You see, the Pharisees, these were a group of everyday people who had made this promise that we are going to believe that Moses brought us these laws, God handed them to Moses, he brought them down from the mountain, he knows what they meant, and we are promised to follow all of them to the best we can.

We are going to take this pledge, we're going to walk all these laws. More than 600 of them, we're going to do our very best. Most of us can't get through 10. We talk about 600. Right?

[29 : 55] And so, but that's what they did. And the fact that they had taken that pledge, that they had this degree of being set apart from the others, because that's actually the root word for Pharisee, right?

It means set apart. So they were doing this, and so with all of that, it got them a little status, it got them a little privilege, and everybody said, wow, aren't these guys great?

But here's Jesus' point. You can follow the rules and still not get it. You can follow the rules and still not be connected.

You can follow all the rules and still not be in a good relationship with God. That's our challenge.

You know, a friend of mine taught me something a while back, and I've held on to it, and I don't know where she got it from, so I can't credit the source properly, but what she says is, you know, going to church makes you a Christian about as much as standing in your garage makes you a car.

[31 : 02] I want you to think about that for a minute, because this is how we get modern Pharisees, okay? Because people will see you engaged in the practices.

People will see you do the things. In other words, you get up on Sunday morning and go to church. You can crack your Bible every so often. You can say the words to the Lord's Prayer and still not get it.

And still not get it. Okay? That's the challenge we have. Because we can do these things.

We can do these things and these things matter. I'm in no way saying that the things don't matter. And that was Jesus' point. The law doesn't disappear. It's not that it's not important. No one's challenging that.

But the key is, is that you have to be in this because God matters to you. You have to be in this because you understand that God has done these amazing things and changed your life.

[32 : 10] And that's why you follow the rules. That's why you engage in the practices. Then all of that flows so much more easily.

All of that is not really a burden. It can be a challenge. And yes, we will trip up and fall. But what we remember is that God has done this in my life. God has done these amazing things and I have been changed because of who God is.

Not simply, hey, look at me because I'm doing all these cool things. You see, that's why that passage from Isaiah is so important.

Isaiah was reminding the people that yeah, you can go around and you can have your festivals and you can do your fasting. But hear what God was telling them. because we start in verse 6 and what he says is that is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen?

To loose the change of injustice, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke. Is it not to share your food with the hungry and provide shelter for the poor wanderer?

[33 : 27] That's very different than walking around and saying, well, I'm fasting. Right?

Now, don't get me wrong and that's what we've been saying all along. Fasting is a good thing. Fasting is a good thing. But what drives you to it?

Why decide to engage in it? That's the disconnect because we can do the things and not get it.

And the point that I want you to hear, church, is that because in this world, especially as we move through 2021, doing the things, getting up and going to church, saying the words to the prayers, singing along with the songs, giving to the causes, all of those things can become for us a new and different kind of mask.

Because we can look the part, but underneath it, behind it, not really get or be connected to God at all.

[34 : 56] And that's where this question of are we living with integrity gets its weight. Are we living the faith that we profess? Are we really going into the world as Jesus' people and doing what Jesus commands us to do?

Living as Jesus expects us to live? That's what brings us back to our key verse. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, what good is it? See, when we think about that saltiness quotient in our lives, it comes back to what degree are you anchored in this relationship?

To what degree is the spirit fueling what you do every day? So that when you go out into the world, that non-believing world understands there's something going on with you.

There's something different about you. The way you move through the world looks, feels, different. And it makes a difference in the lives you encounter.

[36 : 19] That the people who are hurting feel better because of the conversations you have. The people who are in need get what they need because you give so freely and lovingly.

The people who are lost find the direction they need because you point to the one who found you when you were lost.

That's what it means to be the salt of the earth. When the world is gray, when the world is bland, when the world has no flavor, God is able to move through God's people and actually season the world in a different way.

Bring it to life. Make it more vibrant. Make it more interesting and layered. Make a difference in the lives of those who don't understand who God is because of wherever they are in their circumstances.

You are the salt of the earth. And you see, when we look at this non-believing world, it says, why would I want to do that? I could be having coffee with my friends on Sunday morning.

[37 : 34] Why would I want to do that? When my bills are already tight, why would I give to somebody who isn't working for anything? Why would I want to do that?

When I see all of y'all doing all that stuff, but the world around us doesn't look that different. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, it's not good for anything.

That's our challenge. So we are called by our Lord to live with integrity.

Who are we? Meaning that when we have professed the name of Jesus, when we have walked in the path that he has set before us, when we know he has changed us, that we go into the world and we are clear about that change.

[38 : 45] That we make a difference because he's made a difference in us. That's who we have professed to be. So let us make sure that we are not hiding behind our masks.

That no matter how we feel about ourselves, no matter how broken we may be, no matter how conscious of our own sin we may be, we proclaim that we have been redeemed because of who our Lord is.

We also want to make sure we are not like those folks, those ones who do the things love us, but don't have the heart, don't have the core.

We know why we're here. Because our Lord has changed us and he is worthy to be praised.

That's why we are here. And when we go into the world, when we leave this place, our Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday selves are the same as our Sunday morning selves.

[40 : 04] We live with integrity. integrity. We don't hide behind any mask. And yes, we leave the world well-seasoned behind us because we are the salt of the earth.

And we make a difference because God has made a difference for us. Amen? Amen. Let us pray together.

Almighty and gracious God, we thank you for the ways in which you have transformed our hearts and transformed our lives. That you have indeed shown us salvation.

You have shown us grace. You have shown us the way. And because you are who you are, you continue to work through us, touching the lives of those who do not understand, touching the world.

so that those who are lost may be found, those who are blind may come to see. So, Lord, always keep us mindful of what it means to be the salt of the earth because you are the one who makes all things possible.

[41 : 30] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We come this morning to the table of the Lord, a holy sacrament before our God, before whom we are always unmasked, before our very selves are laid bare, before our maker, and offers us grace.

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. God. It is bright and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth where you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God and spoke to us through your prophets. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

[43 : 13] Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ, in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation.

Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit.

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread. He gave thanks to you. He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and said, eat of this, all of you.

[44 : 25] This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to you.

He gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this, all of you. This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant poured out for you, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink from this often, remembering me. And so in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us.

As we proclaim the mystery of faith, Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine, make them be for us, the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world, the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

[45 : 48] Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen. And now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us saying, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. If everyone could please carefully remove their masks if you'd like to participate in this time.

And on the bottom of your chalice there is the bread. the body of our lord broken for you.

The other side is the cup the blood of our lord shed for you. we eat and drink remembering the grace receiving the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ glory be to God Amen Be thou my vision

[48 : 04] O Lord of my light God be all else to me save that thou art thou my best thought my day or my night waking or sleeping thy presence my mind Be thou my wisdom and thou my true word I ever with thee and thou with me Lord Thou and thou only first in my heart Great God of heaven my treasure thou art Great God of heaven my victory won

May I reach heaven's joys O bright heaven's sun heart of my own heart whatever befall still be my vision O ruler of all O Lord There are so many for whom the world remains gray and bland and tasteless and you are sent by our Lord that the spirit that works within you might work through you to make that life more joyful more flavorful more colorful

You are the salt of the earth Remember who you are Now in the name of God our creator and king In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our savior And in the name of the Holy Spirit our counselor and our sustainer May God bless us now as we leave to love and serve God and all God's children Amen good still ease to or small streams and walls and

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.