



SOUTHSIDE

MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

7.15.20

Honesty – Kevin

We've looked at a couple of endangered qualities the past few weeks – commitment and courage. Today the endangered quality is honesty.

I've read about professors who have noticed a rash of deaths among student's relatives, primarily the week before finals or before papers were due. Guess which relative most often dies? Grandma. According to research, grandmas are 10 times more likely to die before a final exam. Even worse, grandmothers of students who aren't doing well in class die at an even higher rate. Turns out, the greatest predictor of mortality among senior citizens is their grandchild's GPA. (See Ariely, [The Honest Truth About Dishonesty.](#))

Do you know of any lies you've been told this week? Where does the idea of being honest seem a little scary to you? I believe we often struggle with honesty. Honesty with God. Honesty with ourselves. Honesty with people you meet. Honesty with people you date. Honesty with friends.

We have a love/hate relationship with honesty. We want people to be honest about themselves, but we don't want to hear about all of their problems. That would be too time consuming. We want to be honest about ourselves, but we are afraid of not being accepted. Creating a culture which welcomes openness and honesty leads to all kinds of good for a group and for individuals.

One truth about Jesus – he is a straight shooter. He is always honest. His honesty is measured out in proportion to the amount of delusion and deception he's up against. In Luke 10:38-42 Jesus is pulled into a sibling rivalry between Mary and Martha. Martha wants Jesus to take her side. Jesus has the courage to say what everyone else knows but doesn't say. His words don't run her off. He says just the right words with just the right touch. Jesus is absolutely honest with Martha.

How rare is this kind of honesty? Many of us could go through life and never have anyone speak honestly and with love like Jesus did to Martha. Why aren't we more honest with each other? Honesty might cost us – makes relationships messy – we're cowards – we don't care enough – easier to look the other way – we hate conflict – we fear rejection – it takes too much time – we don't want criticism to bounce back.

Think about those you definitely want to speak truthfully to you. Your doctor, mechanic, accountant, home inspector. People pay lots of money for someone to speak truth to them. That person is called a therapist. What would it be like to have someone in your life who knows you well, loves you regardless and is willing to be completely honest with you? We need to both be that person and welcome that person. Consider the key people in your life. Are you telling them the truth, or have you been keeping peace? Are you hearing truth from them, or closing your ear to what they are saying? Keeping honesty on the endangered quality list is not helpful to anyone. We each need to be honest with one another and listen to honest words lovingly sent our way.

My New Favorite Word – Barrett

On every other Tuesday evening at 7:00 PM, Karen and I meet with our life group on Zoom to discuss the book, *Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King Jr. The book is a compilation of his sermons. In our most recent meeting, we discussed chapter 3 which is one of the best sermons ever crafted about the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. In this sermon MLK described the goodness of the Samaritan in one word – altruism. Now, that’s not a word I use every day. In fact, I don’t know if I have ever used it in a sentence. And that is unfortunate because I have become convinced that altruism is the very behavior our society desperately needs right now. The dictionary defines altruism as “regard for, and devotion to, the interest of others.” MLK preached that “the good Samaritan was altruistic to the core. He was good because he made concern for others the first law of his life.” I think the apostle Paul would agree with MLK and add that altruism is also the best word to describe the attitude of Jesus Christ. Jesus had an altruistic attitude. Paul reminded the church in Philippi in Philippians 2:3-5 (NLT), “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had.” I don’t expect our politicians to have an attitude of altruism. In fact, I don’t expect Americans to have an attitude of altruism. However, I do expect those of us who proclaim Jesus to be our Lord and Savior to have an attitude of altruism. Our society has become divided in so many ways. May the Lord bring healing and reconciliation by filling His people with the altruistic attitude of Jesus Christ.

A Shepherd’s Prayer – Hunter

Today I listened to the last chapter of Genesis and the first few chapters of Exodus. Because of famine in Canaan, Jacob came to Egypt where his son Joseph, an Israelite, had been serving Egypt’s Pharaoh as Vizier - Pharaoh’s right hand man! Even after his brothers had sold him into slavery, God blessed him to rise to be second in command in all of Egypt. Joseph was able to save his family because God blessed him! He went on to see Jacob pass away, mourning him greatly, yet keeping his promise to his Father to return his body, in a long and complex processional, to be buried in property Abraham bought for his burial in Canaan.

Later at the age of 110, Joseph died and was placed in a coffin in Egypt. But before he died, he made the Israelites promise to carry his bones with them into the Promised Land. For 40 years, the children of Israel carried Joseph’s bones until he could be laid to rest in Shechem. Joseph, like his Father, wished to be buried where God’s people were, even though the burden of carrying him for 40 years in the desert seems like a huge promise to keep! We serve God who is the Ultimate Promise Keeper!

Many people are like Abraham and Joseph because, not only in life, but also in death, they want to be where God’s people are. It’s a topic that is especially important when we are asked to stay away from each other for medical reasons, for jobs, or for other reasons beyond our control!

But God is still blessing His people and keeping His promises! We at times may also forget that, just like the Israelites did! We can always be assured that God will bless His people! We may have a hard time seeing His blessings - and it may feel like we are completely forgotten or even being punished! Hindsight reveals to us that God was blessing us all along, even when we aren’t aware of it at the time! Place God First in your life, trust Him to keep His promises, because time and time again in the Bible we see His Promise fulfilled.

Most Honored Heavenly Father, please help us to serve you, honor you, and give you all honor and glory! We know that you are the One True Promise Keeper, and the Gift of your blessed Son proves that to us everyday! We love you and ask that we always live to serve our Lord and Master!
In Jesus’ name, Amen