Jo Hebert

I love the word “integrous.” It does not seem to be, in fact, a real word…but a google search shows that a few others besides me have used it. I use “integrous” to describe a person of integrity, or a respectable decision that shows integrity, honor, and truth. I believe we all inherently desire and expect truth. We want someone to be who they say they are, do what they say they will do, sell the quality product they purport to sell…just be honest.

Sometimes when there is a blatant disregard for the truth, it shows up as a news story. We all remember Lance Armstrong being stripped of seven Tour de France titles for doping. Undeniably, he is a remarkable athlete…but he broke the rules and lied about it. As sad as that story was, I felt a strong sense of justice and rightness with that decision. Something within us knows cheaters shouldn't win. More recently, Brian Williams was suspended from his NBC news anchor position after the facts of some of his reported events were called into question. We expect a newsperson to deliver the facts. Not to do so is recognized as wrong, universally.

To me, the most poignant recent story along these lines is the one about the Chicago Little League baseball team stripped of its title for falsifying geographical boundaries to include players that most likely helped them win the Little League Championship last year. Though district presidents denied it until they no longer could, it appears that they knowingly broke the rules to stack a winning team. Little League International CEO, Stephen D. Keener, said this “heartbreaking decision (to take away the title) was necessary to maintain the integrity of the Little League program.”

I don't know who all was culpable in that bending of the rules…did the parents of the players outside the legal district know what was going on? Who could have spoken up before that time? It took the persistence of a ridiculed league vice president, Chris Janes, to bring the injustice to light. When facing a lot of criticism in the early stages, he said, “I have no regrets. I feel like we're doing the right thing and we just have to keep moving forward.”

What is the lesson here for us? I think we ought to renew our commitment to follow godly principles each time we find ourselves criticizing the wrongdoing of another. We ought to “beware lest (we) fall from (our) own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked. But, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:17-18). We all can feel tempted to break the rules, or embellish our story, for the praise of men. But, once we give in to that temptation, trust is destroyed…our integrity crumbles, affecting all of our relationships.

We are all in need of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, no matter where we are on our journey with Him. And, what a joy to know we get to keep learning from our Father until the day we will meet him face to face! Not only is He able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 2:24), but He is also our steady provider of Truth. Proverbs 22:20-21 is a comfort and strength to me: “Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who sent you.”

So, even if it's not popular…even if you are ridiculed, keep doing the right thing—moving forward in an honorable way. If you end up in the news, let it be because of your righteousness and not your deception. Line up your life with the certainty of His truth. Be integrous!!

Jo is a Licensed Professional Counselor at St. Mark's. She has flexible hours in the morning and evening. You can reach her by phone (601-259-1749) or email (jhebertlpc@comcast.net).

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Wednesday, April 1 – 6pm
Musical Drama “The Debt”
Dinner at 5pm
(All in the Christian Life Center)

Thursday, April 2 – 6pm
Maundy Thursday Communion Service
(In the Sanctuary)

Friday, April 3 – 6pm
Good Friday Nail Driving Service
(In the Sanctuary)

Saturday, April 4 – 6pm
Decorate the Cross
(In front of Wesley Center)

Sunday, April 5 – 8:20, 10:45 and 11:00
Easter Services
(9:30 Sunday School for All Ages)
Save the Date!

ANNUAL YOUTH GARAGE SALE
COMING MAY 1 & 2
WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS!
Saint Benedict wrote his *Rule* to guide monks in their life of piety and prayer. He said that “the life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent.” Benedict was also practical and understood that not too many, even among the most devout, have the stamina to live Lent all year long. He suggested that we ought to be especially observant when Lent rolled around because it would “wash away the negligence of the other times.”

What we most neglect, a lot more than I would care to admit, is our relationship with God. If giving up chocolate, or dessert, or whatever helps you to think more about God, then go for it. But if all your abstinence does is make you think more about what you gave up, then here are some suggestions from folks like Benedict for something else you can do until Easter –

**Have a one-on-one with God.** “Take time to be holy,” the old hymn says. So take off for an extended conversation with the Lord. Go to the woods or the park or the quiet room and “have a little talk with Jesus.” And don’t forget to do some listening, too.

**Cut back a little.** Over the past decade Americans have added a whole week of work to their schedules. Rather than having work at the center of who you are, imagine your soul back in the middle and back off with regard to your schedule.

**Get some sleep.** Our compulsive sleep deprivation is really a spiritual issue. One of the desert spiritual fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries, John Cassian, told those who sought his advice to get enough sleep because it takes energy to properly pursue spiritual things. Shut your eyes more than when you pray so you can really pray.

**Detach.** Even from the “good” things. If there’s something you want during Lent, put off its purchase and give the money to a worthy cause, whether here at the church or somewhere else. The delay of gratification will help you to clarify your legitimate needs.

**Take care of yourself.** Scripture tells us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3:16). So take care of God’s dwelling place during Lent. Eat better, exercise more, and follow your grandmother’s direction when you get under foot: “Go outside and play.”

And remember the church sign: *God’s love is not lent, it’s given.*

Bro. Warren
Children’s Corner

WE NEED TEACHERS:
4 YEAR-OLD CLASS
(Months: March May June)
PLUS SUBSTITUTES FOR ALL GRADES!
Our kids LOVE their teachers!
Be a blessing for our students at St. Marks!

Children’s Council: Mar. 1st @ 12pm
Parlor — Lunch $5

Path 345
St. Mark’s UMC

PATH 345 for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders: 6:00pm in CLC for sports & study
3rd Grade Bible Presentation
Sunday March 1st during worship.

Hometown Nazareth
Where Jesus was a Kid

Mark your calendars!
St. Mark’s VBS
Holy Land Adventure Returns
June 14th – 18th, 2015

INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH VBS THIS SUMMER?
JOIN US FOR A PREVIEW HOUR AND PLANNING LUNCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH & MAY 24TH
PARLOR @ NOON
MARCH SCHEDULE:

1. No MERGE (D-Now Weekend)!
2. Movie Night! (Watch for more details)
3. “Insider’s View: Palm Parade”
4. No MERGE (30 Hr Famine)
5. “Insider’s View: Passover Plans/Clean Feet

Sun., March 8 ~ Cost: $5 (+snacks)
Time: TBA ~ Theatre: TBA

Go M.A.D. about World Hunger!
March 21-22 @ St. Mark’s!
7:30 am Sat. - 2:30 pm Sunday
Cost: $10
Games ~ Competitions ~ Bible Study ~ Fun ~ Worship ~ Prayer ~ Service Project ~ Sleep ~ Laughter ~ Surprises!
Deadline to register is Sun., Mar. 15th!
(Modified fasts are available. Contact Jeanne for more info.)

FUEL
“High octane for the soul midweek”
March 4 - “Empty Your Basket”
March 18 - “Coloring Your Life”
March 25 - “A New Easter Outfit”
Note: No FUEL 3/11 due to Spring Break!

Grades 6 - 12
MissionFest
June 7 - 11
@ Millsaps College
Cost: $185
$50 deposit is due April 5th

Grades 9 - 12
HS Area One Camp
June 21 - 26
Lake of the Ozarks, MO
Cost: $285
$85 deposit is due April 5th

Grades 6 - 8
MS Global Youth Camp
July 13 - 17
Chatsworth, GA
Cost: $285
$85 deposit is due April 5th
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR and
11TH HOUR PRAISE TEAM
Join together for a
HOLY WEEK MUSICAL DRAMA
Wednesday, April 1
6pm in the Christian Life Center

We all have pains and burdens that we carry. As the story unfolds in “The Debt,” the audience will hear the message that Jesus’ grace is freely given for all who follow him. He paid the price for all of us.

Trendsetters will have a lot of fun in March 2015

Tuesday, March 10 - Bowling and Burgers
Bowl a couple of games at Fannin Lanes and then lunch at Five Guys
Pay as you go on your own

Thursday, March 19 - A Day in Leland, Mississippi
Cost is $25.00
Lunch at Connie’s Kitchen

Also see
“Rainbow Connection Bridge” “James ‘Son’ Thomas” Grave Leland Blues Murals Highway 61 Blues Museum

Remember to sign up for San Antonio/Fredericksburg trip
November 30-December 4 Cost $750 for food, entertainment, hotel and charter bus