

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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God Demands Honesty

(Jerry Fite)

To be honest is to be “not given to lying, cheating, stealing...not characterized by falsehood or intent to mislead...” There is a Biblical mandate to be honest. God hates “*a lying tongue*”, and “*a false witness*” (*Proverbs 6:16-19*). No one dwells in God’s house who “*worketh deceit*” (*Psalms 101:7*). A man has “*ceased to be wise and do good*” whose words are “*iniquity and deceit*” (*Psalms 36:3*). If we are to please God today, “*all wickedness and guile*” must be “*put away*” (*I Peter 2:1*).

Many today who believe they please God and are wise and do that which is good have no problem being deceptive when a greater good can be achieved. For example, President Obama made promises in securing the passing of “The Affordable Health Care Act” which we now realize were not true. To some, even if he lied, he did right for he achieved the greater good of getting a law passed that gives access to health care for many poor Americans.

Are honest statements not expected from our Country’s leaders? Is deceit in one area of our speech commended if it facilitates your agenda for good? Instead of upholding God’s mandate for honesty, is “the end justifies the means” a greater virtue?

Paul does not agree. Even though the Jews disobedience brought about salvation for the Gentiles it does not mean that we “*should do evil*” so “*good may come*” (*Romans 3:8*). The Jew cannot escape God’s wrath for their evil because it brought about some good for the Gentile. God was not therefore unrighteous in visiting His wrath on the Jews, for the means (the Jews’ disobedience) is never justified, even if it meant salvation for the Gentiles in Christ.

Abraham learned that the end does not justify the means. The end he was looking at was his physical protection for himself among a foreign people (*Genesis 20:11*). Regarding Sarah, his wife, he said, “*She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took her*” (*Genesis 20:2*).

His “means” to the end of self-preservation was not a “bold-face” lie, but was telling a “little half-truth”. Sarah was his “half-sister”, the daughter of his father, but not the daughter of his mother; but the complete truth is as Abraham finally confesses, “*she became my wife*” (*Genesis 20:12*).

The “end” which we see justifying our dishonesty is often shortsighted and limited. Abraham failed to regard the sin Abimelech would have committed by taking Sarah, the wife of Abraham, to his own bosom, but focused only upon his own personal safety. Often our end which we are willing to sacrifice honesty for, is not so totally “good”. Often the end is crafted in “selfishness”, instead of “godliness”.

Honesty is not only the best policy; it is demanded of us by our Lord. Following the Lord’s mandate will keep relationships strong and thriving. Once trust is lost because one has ceased to be honest, relationships deteriorate. Be wise and be honest and do that which is good.