

Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Scripture used: Galatians 5:19-23 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

Guest preacher Pastor Robert Cowan used a driving navigation metaphor to get us started on the theme of kindness. We can be subject to misdirection, and end up where not intended. Our Scripture today aims to clear confusion by emphasizing the inner work of the Holy Spirit as our directional guide. Importantly, we don't merely work harder trying to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, because we eventually will get tired of the effort. Instead, as we get closer to Jesus and deepen our relationship with Him, God will naturally cause the fruit of His Spirit to flourish in our lives. The presence of fruit is a measure of whether our relationship with God is authentic. A life characterized by the fruit of the spirit, including kindness, is one driven by Holy Spirit inspiration that goes beyond worldly skills and training. [Matthew 25:31-41](#) defines kindness as based not on who you know (the safe bonds of reciprocity, and treating people we like with kindness) but as proactively seeking people to help in the name of Jesus, especially those who are normally overlooked by the world.

KEY POINTS

- 1) God's design for our lives is to "**see**" people who are hurting, voiceless, and disenfranchised. This is the foundation and early origin of the church, from Jesus' ministry to the early Christian settlements around the Mediterranean basin. The church is not about **me**, but about ministering to those desperately needing a difference in their lives.
- 2) [Isaiah 1:10-20](#) shows God exhorting communities which have lost their way. God refuses their token sacrifices and worthless offerings. God exhorts them to seek justice, help the orphan & the widow, and stand up to the ruthless. The Holy Spirit manifest itself when we stop talking and start **doing**. God will offer His whole forgiveness if we obey Him by following His direction in this matter. Far from empty worship, this is our call to get engaged in restoring people, laying hands on them literally and figuratively. It's about collective kindness more than our own individual fulfillment and prosperity.
- 3) The first steps are desiring to be clean (free from sin and destructive choices in our lives), repentance, and introspection. We have to look earnestly at our selfishness; our sins; our pursuit of pleasure, payoff, and gain. We must stop living life purely to avoid risk and pain. We have to forget our "busyness" (being continually occupied by this and that), and recognize the needs of the lost, the isolated, the ailing. We will derive joy, glory, and exultation from showing kindness to others. In [Corinthians 11:23-28](#), Paul shows himself to be vulnerable. He has been beaten, is risking death, yet endures in his ministry: his "battle" he sees as a blessing from God because he has the opportunity to live a life that truly matters.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - As you consider Galatians 5:19-23, where does your life express more of the "flesh", your own desires that often lead to conflict with God and others, and where do you see the fruit of God's Spirit being expressed?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider Matthew 25:31-41 as God's definition of true kindness. Who are the people that God has placed in your life that you have an opportunity to express kindness to? What are the biggest obstacles (busy-ness, personal priorities, desire to be comfortable) that makes expressing kindness difficult?
- 3) **DO** - What is one practical step that you can take this week to express kindness to someone God has placed on your heart? Share this step with another person in your group, and commit to doing it! Ask God to show more of Himself to you and to help your relationship with God to grow deeper as you express kindness to others around you.