

Sermon Series: *The Fruit of the Spirit*

The Fruit of the Spirit is Kindness

Galatians 5:22 (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Why This Sermon Series?

If you asked me, “Why are we in a 9-week summer sermon series on the fruit of the Spirit?”, I would not answer you by saying, “So that we will all do more. It’s not primarily about becoming more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled people.” I do not think that is the main reason.

It is true that we all should grow in each of these areas. I’m sure we all have room in our lives to be more loving, to be more joyful, more peaceful, more patient, more kind, good, faithful, more gentle, and more self-controlled. However, I’m not convinced that is the primary invitation of the Lord during this sermon series.

Not To Do More, But To Love More

I think the primary invitation of the Lord to us during this sermon series **is not to do more, but to love more**. The primary invitation of the Lord in this series is love Him more deeply. Love deepens and grows only as knowledge deepens and grows. I think the Lord is inviting us to love Him more by knowing Him more. He is inviting us into a loving, experiential knowledge of all the fulness of His manifold and glorious characteristics. So this series about the fruit of the Spirit is primarily about Him and not us. It’s about us knowing and understanding who this Spirit is who dwells within us.

It is not that we do not know Him, for we do. The question is can we know Him more and if so do we really want to know Him more? Knowing God more was Paul’s prayer for the Colossians.

Colossians 1:9-10 (ESV)

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Notice the connection between increasing in the knowledge of God and His will for us and bearing fruit. God is infinite and there is always much more of Him to know and discover and experience and love. **Increasing our knowledge of Him will increase our love of Him**. The more we know of Him the more fully we will embrace Him in love “with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, and all of our strength” (Mk 12:30). Charles Spurgeon’s morning devotion for 4 August included the following,

Knowledge strengthens love, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour [sic]. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the

portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree.¹

We must know Jesus if we are to love Him. And we must love Jesus if we ever hope to be *like* Jesus. We will never be like someone we do not love. And we will never love someone we do not know. Therefore, we must know Him if we are to love Him.

The fruit we are looking at in this verse is the “fruit of the Spirit.” The Spirit we are talking about is the “Spirit of Jesus” who is the same Person as the Holy Spirit of God.² This fruit is produced by the Spirit and not merely by our own self effort and willpower. The Spirit produces this fruit, not us because the fruit is simply the evidence of the Spirit’s work in our lives.

So we can tell you every week, “Be more loving, be more joyful, be more peaceful, be more patient, be more kind, etc.” but if you don’t love the God who is at work within you, then nothing we say will cause this fruit to be more manifest in your life. If we do not love the Spirit of Jesus who is at work within us then we will resist the fruit that He is trying to produce in us.

So my goal this morning is to be used by God to move your heart to fall a little more deeply in love with Him. My goal is not to command you to be more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, more patient, and more kind. My goal is simply to paint a picture of who this God is that we serve and who is at work within us and hopefully, through the work of the Spirit, He would cause you see His Spirit’s presence and produce (i.e. fruit) in your life as a wonderfully beautiful work in which you desire to cooperate with Him and not to resist Him.

The Fruit of the Spirit Is Kindness Because God Himself Is Kind

Today, the fruit of the Spirit before us is kindness. Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. This means that the Spirit produces kindness in His people because He Himself is kind.

Do you think of God as kind? I wonder, if you were to each take pencil and paper and list the qualities of God, would kindness be among them?

Kindness might make the list if we were listing the qualities of Jesus, but I sincerely doubt that kindness would make the list if we were thinking of God the Father. However, Jesus said, “*If you have seen Me, then you have seen the Father*” (Jn 14:9). He also said, “*If you know Me, then you will know My Father also*” (Jn 14:7).

The essential nature of Jesus and the essential nature of God the Father (and the essential nature of the Holy Spirit) ***are identical***. They are exactly the same. They are two persons with one personality (We might even say one Spirit). God the Father does not have a different personality from God the Son. If we can think of Jesus as being kind, then must also be able to think of God as being kind. After all, who was it who sent Jesus into this world? God the Father did³ and that commission might be the kindest thing that has ever been done in the history of humanity.

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening : Daily Readings*, Complete and unabridged; New modern edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006).

² Acts 16:6-7; Rom 8:9-11, 14; Phil 1:19.

³ See Jn 5:23, 36-37; 6:44, 57; 8:16, 18, 42; 10:36; 12:49; 14:24; 17:21, 25; 20:21; 1 Jn 4:14.

So ***the Holy Spirit produces kindness within the heart of God's children because God Himself is kind.*** God is kind and He desires that His children also be kind. Therefore, it is the role of the Holy Spirit to produce the kindness of God within the heart of God's children. The Bible teaches us that God is kind.

Psalms 145:17 (ESV)

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.*

David teaches us that the LORD is kind in *all* His works. Kindness pervades the work of God because it flows from the character of God. Do you believe this? Is this true? Let's offer a definition of kindness and put this to the test.

A Definition of Kindness

The best definition I have found comes from Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary. There are two aspects of kindness—an inner disposition and an outward demonstration.

KINDNESS

- *As an inner disposition:*
 1. Good will; benevolence; that [inner] disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their needs or alleviating their distresses. Kindness ever accompanies love.
- *As an outward demonstration:* (the above qualities in action)
 2. An act of good will; any act of benevolence which promotes the happiness or welfare of others. Attention to the needs & desires of others are deemed acts of kindness.

Kindness is an inner disposition which delights in cheerfully advancing the happiness of others and in meeting their needs, fulfilling their wishes, and removing their distresses. It is also an outward demonstration in real actions.

What an amazing definition? Let's apply it to God. What do you really believe about God the Father? What is the inner disposition of God like? What do you believe most accurately describes God's internal motives.

Is God benevolent? Or is He malevolent? Does God possess an inner disposition which delights in advancing the happiness of others? Or is He more content in diminishing the happiness of others? Does He cheerfully satisfy the desires of His children? Or does He begrudgingly fulfill your needs? Does our God take pleasure in answering the prayers of His children? Or is mostly He annoyed with your continual requests? Is God internally pleased with your ceaseless praying to Him? Or in the quiet recess of His soul, does He secretly think you talk too much? Does it delight the heart of God to alleviate the distresses of His children? Or does He enjoy it more to see you lay in the bed you have made for yourself?

Do you believe that God, in His essential nature, at the very core of who He is, is kind? ***The fruit of the Spirit is kindness, because the inner disposition of God is kindness.***

Luke 6:35 (ESV)

35 *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.*

We are to be kind to unkind people because God is kind to unkind people. The reason we are to love our enemies is because God has shown love to His enemies.

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:10 (ESV)

“While we were His enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.”

Why are we to lend and expect nothing in return? Because God has given abundantly to us more than we could ever repay even if we lived ten thousand lifetimes. And we will demonstrate that we are His children if we act like He acts.

How Is God Kind To the Ungrateful and the Evil?

How is God kind to the ungrateful and to the evil? Matthew 5 gives us the answer.

Matthew 5:45 (ESV)

45 *He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Every day millions of evil people wake up to a beautiful sunny day that they do not deserve. Every day millions of people who don't give God a second thought enjoy the warmth of the sun. Wicked people all over the globe are warmed by a sun that belongs to God—it's His sun, not theirs and no one has a right to enjoy the use of something that does not belong to them—and yet God allows everyone to enjoy the benefits of His sun. Millions of people enjoy the benefits of the sun and yet never say thank you to God. **God is kind to the ungrateful and to the evil in allowing them to enjoy His sun.**

Every day millions of evil people wake up to a beautiful rainy day that they do not deserve. Every day millions of evil people eat food made possible by the life-giving rain which is sent by God to water the earth. These evil people do not deserve one bite, because they could not care less about the One who sent the rain. Every day people who hate God are blessed by beautiful foliage provided by God through the sending of rain. Every day wicked people enjoy a quiet walk around a beautiful lake surrounded by beautiful flowers and think nothing of the God who provided them, much less take the time to thank Him for them or the rain that sustains them. **God is kind to the ungrateful and to the evil in sending the rain.**

God Is Not Kind Because He Allows Evil To Exist

Some might argue, “God is not kind because He allows so much wickedness to happen in this world. He allows bad people to hurt good people. If He was really kind He would put a stop to all the grief in this world.” Paul answers this question for us.

Romans 2:4 (ESV)

4 *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

Paul says that God is not just a little kind or slightly kind, God is richly kind. God's kindness is overflowing. In what way? God shows His kindness through forbearance and patience in delaying His judgment of the wicked and evil. God allows wicked people to continue to live not because He affirms their evil, but in order to give them an opportunity to repent. The extension of the life of wicked people is intended to lead them to repentance. The lengthening of the days of evil people does not deny God's goodness. It confirms it—God in His kindness is allowing time to repent.

Would you be angry at God for allowing evil people an opportunity to repent and receive His grace? God delays judgment of the wicked not because of a flaw in His moral character, but because of the perfection of His character. God is full of kindness even toward the wicked and undeserving sinners.

God Will Not Delay Judgment Indefinitely: His Kindness Will End

However, Paul also tells us that God will not delay the judgment of sinners forever. There will be a day when God's kindness comes to an end. God will one day judge all wicked and evil people who have no faith in Jesus. Those who refuse to have faith in Jesus will be judged one day. Judgment, though delayed, is not indefinitely deferred.

Romans 11:22 (ESV)

22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen [i.e. who died in unbelief], but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

A Living Example of the Kindness of God

So God is kind and His Spirit is at work producing His kindness within us. What exactly should the kindness of God at work in our lives look like? What should kindness, the fruit of the Spirit, look like in our lives? Perhaps a living example will help.

This following scene takes place after David has been installed as King over all Israel. He had just brought the Ark of the Covenant successfully into Jerusalem. He had defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites, Amalekites, and the Ammonites. God had blessed David everywhere he turned and God had given him victory over all his enemies. The kingdom of Israel was firmly in David's hand and where do his thoughts go?

2 Samuel 9:1-8 (ESV)

1 And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2 Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

3 And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."

4 The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."

5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

6 And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."

7 And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you **kindness** for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.”

8 And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

Eight Observations About the Kindness of David

1. **It is kindness directed toward enemies.** The house of Saul is the object of David’s kindness. *David was Saul’s enemy.* Saul tried repeatedly to kill David. Saul sent assassins after David to murder him while he was sleeping. He himself twice threw his spear at David while David was trying to comfort Saul’s own troubled soul. Saul even led the entire Israelite army out to kill David. Yet David decides to be kind to the house of Saul. David was showing kindness to one of the descendants of the man who had been intent on killing him.
2. **It is kindness cheerfully exercised not begrudgingly enacted.** David was not required to show kindness to the house of Saul. He was in no way obligated to demonstrate kindness to the house of his enemy. No one was forcing David to do this. Yet he willing and happily chose to be kind to Mephibosheth, the grandson of the man who hated him.
3. **It is kindness based on a promise** (v. 2 & 7). David wanted to show kindness to the house of Saul because of a promise he had previously made with Jonathan, who was Mephibosheth’s father, Saul’s son, and David’s closest friend. David had promised⁴ to protect the sons of Jonathan and David kept his word. We are not told that anyone other than David and Jonathan had known of the promise, yet David chose to keep his promise.
4. **It is a kindness that actively seeks out its object.** David had to seek out the person to whom he would be kind. He actively sought to be kind to Mephibosheth. He did not wait for a descendant of Saul to make himself known, David sought him out. He had to ask questions and call servants and do some investigative digging. I imagine it took a fair amount of seeking in order to be kind and yet David chose to put forth the effort.
5. **It is a kindness that cheerfully embraces no repayment.** Mephibosheth was crippled. He was completely unable to take care of himself. He had to have help in order to live. He was **totally dependent** upon others for the basics of life. He could not work in the field. He could not work because he could not walk. Someone had to carry him or see to it that he got from place to place and David sees this as no barrier to his display of kindness. David welcomes Mephibosheth even though Mephibosheth will never be able to repay David for his kindness.
6. **It is a kindness that drives out fear.** David’s first words to Mephibosheth after speaking his name were, “Do not fear” (v. 7). In the culture of the day it was not unusual for a newly installed monarch to execute all descendants of the deposed king in order to eliminate all rivals to the throne. Mephibosheth could quite possibly be wondering if David had called him in order to kill him. But David immediately removes his fear saying, “Do not be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan.” David’s kindness removed Mephibosheth’s fear.
7. **It is a kindness that gives what one does not deserve** (v. 7). David made an amazing promise to Mephibosheth. He promised to give him all of the land that had once belong to Saul. “I will restore to you all the land of Saul.” Restoring it meant someone else had been possessing it,

⁴ 1 Sam 20:8, 42; 23:18.

possibly David.⁵ It would have been natural and expected for the new king to take over the palace of the old king as a sign of complete domination. Mephibosheth was not living on His family estate. He was living in the house of Machir in Lo-debar. David chose to restore the family estate back into the hands of the house of Saul. Mephibosheth did not deserve this kindness, but David chose to give it to him.

8. **It is a kindness that brings one into a new family.** David did not stop at all this. He kept going. He even went so far as to say, “*You shall eat at my table always*” (v. 7). This is the richness of kindness. On top of all this kindnesses that David had already shown, he invites Mephibosheth **to eat at his table always!** This is amazing!

He was the grandson of the man who wanted to kill David. David chose to keep a promise that no one would have known about had he chosen not to bring it up. He willingly and cheerfully chose to be kind to Mephibosheth. He had to go out of his way in looking for him to even be kind to him. Then he discovered he’s a complete invalid. Then David returns to him the previously lost family estate and then he tells him, “*You will never have to cook another meal. You are welcome at my table always!*” David welcomed into his own family the grandson of the man who hated him. This is not the kindness of David, *this is the kindness of God!* No man in his own flesh can show this kind of kindness.

Remember the definition of kindness? Did this kindness “gratify the the wishes” of Mephibosheth? Did this great kindness “contribute to his happiness” of Mephibosheth? Did this amazing act of kindness not “supply all the needs” of Mephibosheth? And did it not “alleviate much of his distresses?” Evidently David took great pleasure in “contributing to the happiness” of Mephibosheth.

This is indeed the kindness of God but the kindness of God gets even kinder.

Do you believe that God’s inner disposition is kindness? If not, perhaps you will be convinced of His inner disposition by way of an outward demonstration. The kindest demonstration of the kindness of God is seen in the sending of Jesus.

Titus 3:4-7 (ESV)

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,
5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Eight Observations About the Kindness of God

1. **Jesus demonstrates God’s kindness toward His enemies.** God sent Jesus to us while we were still hostile towards Him. God showed His kindness toward us by sending us a Savior even while we hated Him and wanted nothing to do with Him. He saved us while we were His enemies (Rom 5:10).
2. **Jesus demonstrates God’s kindness because He gave His life for us willingly and not begrudgingly.** Jesus said in John 10:18, “*No one takes my life from Me, but I lay it down of my own*

⁵ It appears from 2 Samuel 12:8 that David had taken possession of Saul’s “house.”

accord.” In other words, Jesus chose to die. He allowed Himself to be killed. He was not obligated to die for guilty sinners. No one forced Him to do it. Jesus happily⁶ chose to lay down His life so that others might live.

3. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness because He came in fulfillment of a promise.** Jesus’ coming was based upon God’s previous promises to Israel that He would send a Savior/Messiah who would be a deliverer like Moses (Dt 18:18-19) but only infinitely better (Heb 3:3). The coming of Jesus fulfilled in every way even the slightest prophecies about Messiah. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God’s promises (2 Cor 1:20).
4. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness because He came to seek and save the lost** (Lk 19:10). God did not wait for the lost to find Him, He went out seeking the lost in order to find them and bring them in to Himself. This is the point of the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the two lost sons (a.k.a the parable of the prodigal son).
5. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness by giving salvation away for free and expecting nothing in return.** Read again Titus 3:5. We are not saved by any works done by us but we are saved by faith in Jesus alone through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.
6. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness because in Him there is no fear.** In Jesus we need never be afraid of being rejected by God. If we are in Jesus, then we are secure children of God forever.
7. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness because through Him we receive what we do not deserve.** No one deserves to be saved. Sinners deserve to be punished for their sins. God does not owe anyone salvation. He is not obligated to save anyone. Every human being on the planet is a sinner and deserves eternal death. We all deserve to be eternally separated from God and yet in Jesus we receive the salvation that we do not deserve.
8. **Jesus demonstrated God’s kindness by welcoming us into His family.** Jesus does not say, “You can come into heaven, but stay over there in the corner out of the way and don’t let me see you running around or I’ll throw you out!” No. Jesus says, “If you come to God through Me, then I will put my Spirit within you and make you my own son or daughter. If you have faith in Me, then come into My Father’s kingdom and you will eat at My table always!” Through faith in Jesus we become fellow heirs with Jesus. He shares His inheritance with us! He treats us like one of His own—like a son or a daughter and not a foreigner.

Is this the kind of God you can fall in love with? A God whose inner disposition of kindness and benevolence has caused Him to delight in advancing the happiness of all who will in faith lovingly embrace His only Son. A God whose cheerfully fulfills the desires and bountifully supplies the needs of all who will trust in His only Son, Jesus. A God whose loving-kindness has been demonstrated by sending a Savior who will alleviate all distresses and who offers us an incredible invitation “You will eat at My table always!”

⁶ Hebrews 12:2.