

- Scripture has a **high view of Christians** – kingdom of priests, warriors, filled with the Spirit, the temple of God, etc.
- In this way a **new community** of a **new humanity** who live and love differently than the world
- This is to be a **kingdom of peace** – this is one of the ways to bring joy to those who labor for your joy (1Thess5:13)
- A **primary responsibilities** to equip you for the work of the ministry - Eph 4:11-12 – this is what Paul does here
- Last week we saw Paul's call to **live at peace** – moves from leaders to all the people
- Rom14:17 – the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit

### Two Things Necessary to See the Increase of the Kingdom of Peace

#### Service to the Body in Discerning Ministry - v.14

- 1.) **Warn the unruly** - those who are lazy, idle, or unruly; like soldiers who won't obey orders, servants who know their master's will and refuse to do it – to instruct or teach - to even do this in gentleness (Gal6:1)
  - 2.) **Comfort the fainthearted** – those who are discouraged, feeling resources too small, or have diminished motivation; to console, encourage, or rousing up hope; coming up close and speaking in a friendly manner
  - 3.) **Uphold the weak** - those who are sick, delicate, helpless - to be loyal to, hold firmly to strengthen
- All of this is to be done **with patience**, regardless of condition
  - There are **in the NT church** all these kinds of people
  - **Conversion doesn't cure** everyone instantly - **work in progress**, everyone is struggling and fighting
  - This is a call to **all Christians** - no way pastors can do this alone
  - This necessitates more than **casual relationship**; not **shallow**, but **sanctifying** (otherwise don't know)
    - A culture that doesn't encourage this relationships – not entertainment or events
  - This calls for discernment of **different conditions**– not merely "hit them with the hard truth" – medicine/children
  - This calls for your own knowledge of **Scripture**
  - This calls for **deep sympathy** when words aren't the primary need of the moment
  - This will enable you to grow and love - more aware of **selfishness**
  - It is **easy to judge**, it is more difficult to discern and help (learn more than you knew)
  - One thing that will happen is as you do this, you yourself will **learn and grow**
  - Application in regards **to evangelism** and our dealing with the lost (as Christ did)
  - **Applying the Gospel** to the unruly, fainthearted, and weak – not a canned presentation
  - This means our **getting to know** those without Christ in our lives, what their conditions are, their struggles

#### Pursuit of Good to All, Even when Recipient of Evil - v.15

- Evil **will be done** to Christians (as to all) – the difference isn't that we escape it, but what **our response** it to be
- We know our hearts well enough that our quick response is to do to others as they do to us
- Here the church is called to make sure that we are **not allowing one another** to do that to others
- There is **no distinction** - this includes those within the church, but also to anyone; this includes unbelievers
- No one "deserves" good, but a sinful response is never appropriate
- In contrast, it is **pursuing** what is good, responding to evil with what is good – Rom12:17ff
- This is not sometimes, but **always**; this is not just for self, but for all
- This includes two things: the good of their body, their **physical well being**
- This also includes their ultimate good – **spiritual well being**
- **Are we pursuing** the ultimate good of others through their salvation?
- Have we lost that initial passion when we were really convinced that people were going to hell?

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- **Being at Peace** does not mean disengagement, but loving relationships where mistakes and sin can happen.
  - This is where **the Gospel** is necessary and is displayed.

#### What does this have to do with the Gospel?

- **This IS the Gospel - what Christ has done for you.**
- He did not return evil for evil, but pursued to His own death what was good for us – and ultimately for Him
- Our good and His glory are not at contradictory purposes in the Gospel
- What we need is to know more of Christ – to see and adore Him in Scripture to have resources to care for others
- **This is the ongoing work of Christ to His people** – 2Cor7:6
- As we minister to the body, we are actually ministering to Christ – Mt25
- This is the ongoing work of the **compassion of Christ to the lost**
- As His body, we display both His **prophetic and priestly** ministry of sympathy

- I would want to do so for those of you outside of Christ this morning