

Spirit works with sanctifying power in our lives, also this fruit of kindness, He involves us and makes us responsible and diligent in the cultivation and exercise of this gracious, royal fruit, to God's praise and for our neighbor's good.

Will you so live with this fruit of the Spirit, kindness? With all of us, if we are honest, isn't there reason for conviction of sin in being unkind all too often still, towards all too many yet? May this message draw and drive us to Jesus for forgiveness of sin and renewal of life through His blood and by His Spirit also with this Word. Let no one either be indifferent about this fruit of the Spirit, kindness, for if you care not for it, doesn't that mean you are still unsaved? Definitely it does! God's kindness to you and me calls us to repentance and faith and holiness before Him. Is this your testimony as well?

The fruit of the Spirit is kindness. In preaching on this, my aim is to promote this fruit of kindness. In view of that, having thought already about the importance of this fruit, the foundation for it, and the exercise of it, notice yet still also the power of this fruit. The power of kindness, Christ-like kindness, needs hardly be stated. "We have it within our grasp [walking by the Spirit] to enrich the lives of our contemporaries by caring for them in a personal, meaningful, Christ-like manner." Through the fruit of the Spirit, kindness we, as it were, make God more real in our world and make the gospel more attractive, we do good to others and bring glory to God. A kind person in the home is a blessing. We read in Proverbs 31:26, speaking of the godly woman wonderful to have as wife or mother, "*in her tongue is the law of kindness*". The law of kindness is living by kindness, always seeking to show the kindness of God in all our relations and communications with others. How wonderful when this is shown in and outside the home, and what a power that brings for good and true religion.

The power of kindness doesn't have to be in grandiose ways just, but even more in all kinds of little ways. The power of simply showing thoughtfulness and respect and regard and care for others is very great, especially also when we are kind consciously in Christ's Name and for His honour, praying God to bless the kindness to His praise and for the wellbeing of others.

To whom might you show the fruit of the Spirit, kindness, to today in some special way? Will you do so, by the grace of God? Amen.

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August 27, 2006

Publication No 273

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - KINDNESS

Continuing with our summer series on the fruit of the Spirit as Paul speaks of that in Galatians 5, this week we have the fruit, kindness. In the Old King James the word is translated as gentleness. The word in the original refers to having a tender attitude and outlook towards others, showing a sweet kindly disposition towards others. The fruit of the Spirit, kindness, is not just about outward acts of care and gentleness and thoughtfulness, but it is also the heart attitude of really thinking in a compassionate, loving, unselfish, helpful, and encouraging way to another. A little kindness and a whole lot more, who will not agree how good that would be in our homes and churches, schools and work places, and all of society! We will focus on four main points about this fruit of the Spirit, kindness - the importance of this fruit; the foundation of this fruit; the exercise of this fruit; and the power of this fruit.

I begin with the importance of this fruit of kindness because it can be that somehow you and I might think that this message about kindness can't be and isn't all that important. You may think and say even, "A good gospel message, or a sound doctrinal message, how much more important that would be." Yet we may not minimize also this part of God's Word and discount what the Spirit proclaims to be of utmost importance as well. How often also God's people are exhorted in the Bible to show kindness and to behave kindly one toward another. How often too do we not fail in showing this Christian fruit of kindness as we ought to.

Let me mention here a few Bible verses urging for kindness in our relations with others. In Ephesians 4:32 Paul states, "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.*" In Hebrews 12:15, we hear the warning about letting the root of bitterness [so also unkindness] spring up and trouble us, to which the inspired author adds, writing to the believers, "*and thereby many be defiled*". What a warning this gives not to be unkind and live in unkindness! Paul urges in Romans 12:10, "*be kindly affectionate to one another, with brotherly love...*" and "*Love suffers long, and is kind*" [I Corinthians 13]. Peter exhorts in II Peter 1 to God's people "*with all diligence...add to your faith... [among other things] brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity [love].*"

The Bible also tells approvingly of some great deeds of kindness on the part of people. Can you think of some real examples of kindness in Scripture and also some Biblical examples of unkindness? In III John the apostle mentions Gaius and Demetrius as examples of kindness and in the same short letter he speaks also of Diotrephes as a most unkind person in the churches at that time. John writes in reference to that all in III John verse 11, *“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that does good is of God, but he that does evil has not seen God.”*

Without question then, you see the importance of this fruit of the Spirit, kindness. This fruit must be evident in our lives and what we care to have ripen in our lives more and more, if it is well. Do you show the fruit of the Spirit, kindness, in your life? The importance of this can hardly be exaggerated. This will be brought out more later, but now let us go on and consider the foundation of Christian, Spirit-worked kindness.

The foundation of the fruit of the Spirit, kindness, is the fact of God being kind, and of His ultimate kindness shown to people like us in and through Christ Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Paul speaks in Titus 3:4 about the gospel of Jesus Christ and being saved now and forevermore by grace through faith in Him as the gospel message telling the *“kindness and love of God our Saviour”*. He says in Ephesians 2:7, speaking again of salvation by grace, how that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is such *“that in the ages to come [God] might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* God’s kindness in all His ways as Creator God and God of providence and God of salvation is described in the Bible as *“great kindness”* [Nehemiah 9:17]; *“marvelous kindness”* [Psalm 31:21]; *“everlasting kindness”* [Isaiah 54:8]. Many times the Bible speaks of God’s *“loving kindness”*, a most rich term, and in Isaiah 63:7 even it tells of *“the multitude of [God’s] loving kindnesses”!* In Luke 6:35 Jesus states, *“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.”*

The Holy Spirit through the Word of God brings out the amazing kindness of the Lord to us in Christ Jesus. Here we deserve on account of our sins and sinfulness only and always, and forever even, God’s eternal and just wrath upon us. But instead God has sent His Son to be the Sin-bearer and in the sinner’s place to suffer the wrath of God and to save His people from their sins, to give us life instead of death, peace instead of punishment, mercy instead of misery, salvation instead of damnation, reconciliation instead of rejection, and heaven instead of hell. God in kindness gave the promise of His salvation from sin through His Son even the day of man’s fall. And all through history, though even with His chosen people there was a constant stream of rebellion and ingratitude and unbelief before God, yet, He in kindness to people like us in the fullness of time sent His Son, and Jesus,

in kindness unfathomable, gave Himself for the salvation of sinners even to the death of the cross. What unkindness Jesus suffered at the hands of men, even from His closest disciples sometimes, yet Jesus kindly and wholly gave Himself sinners to save. Once a person knows something of God’s kindness towards us in and through Christ, and with the Holy Spirit’s tireless, ceaseless ministry in our hearts and lives, it becomes overwhelming, heart-breaking, and heart-melting. Knowing this kindness of God towards yourself, and this the Spirit makes clear to us through conviction of sin and coming to know Jesus and trusting Him for all our salvation, then you cannot and will not live in unkindness towards anyone.

The foundation of this Spirit-worked fruit of kindness is the work of God Triune in and through Christ Jesus and being joined to Christ and living in fellowship with Him. As Philip Keller put it, *“Under the compulsion and constraint of this [lovingkindness] and love of [God] in Christ poured out into his own experience...[one] will go out gently to show kindness in a harassed and jaded [often most unkind] old world.”*

This also brings me now to our third point about the exercise of kindness. With this point my aim is to promote and encourage all of us to be diligent in showing kindness, the kindness of God, Christ-like kindness to those around us, in our homes, our churches, and our community, and world. May our lives be full of kindness and lovingkindness, and let not unkindness in any word, shape, or form be once found in your and my life and our lives together. To whom might you be kind to? Is there someone you have been unkind to before whom you should apologize and change in showing kindness and more kindness still? For motivation in kindness just remember always every single blessing in your and my life is on account of God’s undeserved lovingkindness towards us for Jesus’ sake. For the measure of kindness towards others, just reflect on God’s unending multitude of lovingkindnesses shown to you and me every day again. And for the scope of your kindness, think about the scope of God’s kindness towards us in this life, even still on this sinful, cursed world.

The exercise of kindness as fruit of the Spirit is something that is not dependent on kindness returned, but takes place even with no return at all. Mostly, however, kindness in our lives towards others rebounds in manifold measure with the kindness of others towards ourselves. Kindness is not something often regretted but mostly enjoyed. Unkindness, however, is often regretted, never profitable, and leaves the unkind person unfulfilled and those to whom he or she has been unkind miserable. Will you spread kindness or unkindness? In God’s common grace the unconverted and unsaved still sometimes, thank God, show kindness in human relations, but we should realize that is not the same as the fruit of the Spirit, kindness. Human kindness of the natural man, still in sin, is not Christ-like kindness nor kindness for God’s praise above all, while such should be the kindness of all God’s people, and it is the fruit of the Spirit, kindness. When the Holy