

The Fruit of the Spirit Series / The Fruit of Kindness
Kindness Titus 3:3-8
July 30, 2023

Main Theme: As we continue looking at the fruit of the Spirit, we see again the inseparable link between faith and practice, between root and fruit, between belief and behavior. This passage shows us the circle that God's kindness produces. God's kindness to us inevitably leads to our good works to others that are rooted in His kindness to us.

SI: Why Titus? b/c of the link with the fruit of the Spirit – this is what the Spirit does in us – bears the fruit of kindness

Intro: The fruit of the Spirit is supposed to remind us of a tree. A tree has roots and if healthy, fruit. The tree bearing good fruit. Love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**...

Why 6 points: b/c of the cycle, the circle of how the roots lead to the fruit.
The circle of the fruit of kindness... explain: The cycle, the circle. God's kindness leads to mercy and grace leads to salvation leads to hopefulness of eternal physical life leads to good works.

(Explain the words: chrestotes is here translated 'goodness' and 'loving kindness' is philanthropia. In Gal 5, kindness is chrestotes)

To simplify:
What is the cause of our kindness, and what does it look like:

1. The **root** of kindness – the root of our own kindness to others is by going deep into the dark, unseen, under the surface soil where the roots grow – our undeservedness. God plants His seed into this dark place, and a tree grows. Our Kindness is not because we deserve it (v. 5) The root of kindness to others is by remembering His mercy to us.

Mercy Team constantly talks about this. Our kindness to others can easily become paternalistic and judgmental if we forget this. We were verse 3... We have nothing but His loving kindness displayed in His mercy and grace.

2. The **surprise** of kindness – unexpected, full of grace, a too-good-to-be-trueness to it We get this at Christmas time with the wonder of God becoming human and being born as a baby – the surprise of the incarnation and Paul gives it to us again here – “appeared.” A light came on. A suddenness to it. A contrast.

And notice Paul, the author – He's in this, inside it. Wonder, awe, celebration.
See the contrast between v.3 and v. 4 – the darkness from which we came, the light that dawned on us – and Paul speaking as one who is not just arguing, and explaining, but

who stands in it. US, he says 'us!' and we! God's kindness is still surprising to him. Is God's kindness still surprising to you?

This is hope for the church, for the world – to be renewed, revived! By the surprise of kindness! Insist on these things! They are profitable and excellent for people! How?

B/c of the practical:

Kindness is going above and beyond, above and beyond even your own expectations. You know when you are displaying Spirit rooted and Spirit inspired and Spirit driven kindness when it is surprising to you and to others.

This is what Paul is marveling in – nothing but undeserved gift – that we are **justified**, made legally right, but more than that – really? **that we might become heirs** – the shock of what salvation means and offers and brings as it satisfies all our deepest longings. “All my life long, I had panted for a drink from some cool spring, that I hoped would quench the burning of the thirst I felt within. Hallelujah, He has found me, the one my soul so long has craved” This surprising grace is what propels good works of kindness.

It's surprising b/c it is so strong and so sacrificial (trans to strength)

3. The **strength** of kindness –

ILLUS of when I was a member of another Presbytery... this guy who was gentle, slow, patient, kind and I noticed. I said to my mentor “Some of these guys – I don't know – it seems like they are posturing and they are hard to approach. And then there's this guy” and my mentor said, he doesn't have to be. He's strong and full of kindness. He was a Special Forces Chaplain and before that he saw combat as a Special Forces operator. He has nothing to prove to anyone. He knows he is strong.

That's the strength of kindness – kindness is strong b/c it flows from the root of the kindness of God. Kindness from us towards others has nothing to prove. It just is. It is the fruit that the Spirit is bearing in our lives.

Be strong and courageous with the kindness God has given you. It matters not at all how people respond to your kindness. Repent of that! Repent of calculating and posturing and pondering what people will think!

See Rom 2:4 - God knows how strong kindness is – His kindness is what leads us to repentance - Rom 11:22 – continue in His kindness – (both of these are *chrestetos*) abiding in it, depending upon it, betting your life on the kindness of God so that if you don't have His kindness, you have nothing.

B/c it is so strong, it overflows, it bursts out, it is fruitful, bounteous, subduing and overcoming the works of the flesh.

4. The **sacrifice** of kindness – kindness requires sacrifice.

God our Savior – how did He save us? By showing us the way or by being the way? The sacrifice of Jesus for us to be saved. Back to the root. We then resemble Jesus when we are kind like this.

Kindness is costly. It's risky.

Kindness requires surrendering something we could keep to ourselves.

Wait a minute, I've done a lot to acquire to accumulate, to earn all that I have – yes – true! That's why kindness has to be fruit of the Spirit!

So, for example, it is kind to correct someone. Kind to bring up the idea of sin and hell. Kind to challenge people who believe in works-salvation.

ILLUS of when I did this at Black Market (w/ CN) – kindness is risky.

This is how we know the difference between kindness and niceness. Kindness is willing to risk offense so that washing can even happen. If there's nothing wrong, there's no reason for washing.

Giving of ourselves to others in no way expecting anything in return. That is (trans to evidence of kindness)...

5. The **assurance** of kindness – the proof that you are really a Christian, not just a nice person – you are doing something for the benefit of someone else from a heart that has been transformed by the kindness of God, not from a selfish heart that wants payback for the good deed of the day – this is why it is 'excellent and profitable' – how?

Kindness as a fruit of the Spirit protects you from the legalistic works-righteousness good-personness of wearing a "Be Kind" T-shirt. Our kindness to others is rooted in God's kindness to us. There is no other way to be biblically kind.

Kindness is too hard, takes too much out of you, demands too much for you to just 'be kind.' If you are being kind so that you meet a standard that you have set in your own mind – 'I'm a kind person and therefore God will accept me,' that's not Christianity. That's self-salvation which has no need for Christ. But transformed lives lead to fruit of the Spirit – fruit borne by the Spirit, not by our own flesh.

"But, when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us...

ILLUS of when I was seriously wrestling with my own assurance of salvation and—friend asked "have you ever done anything from love for another besides yourself?"

Evidence of a transformed, changed life from the outside. This propels you to more b/c you recognize it's not of you, it's of the Lord's work. It's His fruit. You are His tree. It's His fruit and if God can change me, then I want more of this. Not to earn His favor, but to display His favor. Not to earn His grace, but to put it on display. I want to do more good works. This is excellent and profitable for people – for ourselves, and for society. Hospitals. Churches. Staying with people. Not giving up on anyone.

Leads to this last point:

6. The question of kindness: Can you receive? Receiving. Surrendering to His Kindness. Opening yourself to His kindness. ILLUS When you receive someone's kindness, it gives them a gift back by simply receiving it. Paying them back could be rooted in not wanting to owe anyone anything. It could be that you can't receive, that you can't be indebted, that you have a blockage towards receiving no-strings-attached kindness.

How is that blockage broken up? By the kindness of God which then overflows into kindness towards others through good works which are good bc they reflect the kindness and goodness of God and bring glory to Him instead of glory to the person so that it bypasses the person... The last section of the circle of kindness. Close the circle by receiving God's kindness and then begin the circle by being propelled into the good works of kindness.

You can only give what you have been given. You can only give what you have. You can only give what you have received. The Christian message is that you have nothing but death to give before Christ appears to you and you receive Him (this is v. 3). This is stark. This is controversial – it certainly would have been to the Cretans! They were known for reveling in doing their own thing, their own way, overflowing out of their fleshly instincts. It's controversial today of course, still. I can't do things my own way? What's wrong with having my own moral code and being a decent person in my own eyes?

Communion: Receiving the kindness of God, the gospel in tangible form so that you physically take in the spiritual realities. To take us back to the nourishing of the root of kindness to produce **in** us the strength, the surprise, the sacrifice, and the assurance of kindness **through** us. Contingent upon receiving. Take it in. This is excellent and profitable for us. The roots always need fertilizing...

Bene: Jude 24-25

Beale: “Works are the inevitable result of one’s end-time identity and inheritance in the new cosmos.” Why? Propelled into imagining and ascertaining the deepest longing that sounds too good to be true leads you to a transformed life of doing. Believing leads to doing. Grace leads to transformation which leads to practical outworking of works. And I think especially for the Cretans b/c their culture was so rife with living for the now. Righteousness by grace leads to righteous works. Remember this is fruit of the Spirit. Fruit borne from God’s initiative and by our own wills, our transformed wills. Yes, this takes time, but it does happen. ILLUS... Chickasaw plums? Why didn’t I notice this before? The importance of community and living in community.

The kindness as a fruit of the Spirit is borne from the kindness of God initiating new soil, new seeds, new planting of the seed in our hearts. This is justification by grace. This is the whole tree with all the fruit here in these verses.

ILLUS of The Biggest Little Farm and how the soil was everything.

Kindness is one of the fruits b/c Kindness is God’s character. He saved us out of His kindness which Paul expounds to include 3 fruits in one fruit here – goodness and loving kindness.

“loving kindness” = Philanthropia which is love towards mankind

The fruit of the Spirit as God turning into truth the lie of the serpent – ‘you can be like God’ - The fruit of the Spirit is God giving us proof that we are His, that we can become like Him b/c we are made His children – and children reflect their parents – we resemble the One who saved us – we want to do these things, we want to be kind. What is kindness – sacrificial betterment of another. It costs us something. It is a fruit of pruning, of death to the lower limbs, cutting off the lower so we can reach higher...

These next 3 fruit (patience, kindness, goodness) are those directed towards others. Directed outwardly. The fruit of God’s work in us must be God’s work through us. If the fruit is not there, then the tree is either dead, diseased, or it’s a fake tree that looks real.

So what is kindness? What does it look like? How do we describe it? How do we know that this is a kindness? From the passage:

God our Savior’s kindness led Him to save us from eternal death and damnation in Hell. His Mercy

His Grace

His richly pouring out, spending Himself, washing us.

This is what kindness looks like.

How is this different from common grace human kindness? It is costly. It is rooted in what God has done for us. Especially in contrast (see v. 3)!! It is undeserved. It is divine, not human – the washing of stains impossible to wash away ourselves – (illus of Hindu and Sikh reincarnation or of any system that requires you to earn it). It is beautiful (excellent and profitable) to look at, enjoy, take in, marvel at. This is what God does. ILLUS of Chickasaw plum trees in my backyard. (Sometimes we need others to see this for us, to point it out, to fan it into flame, to help us rejoice in the kindness of God our Savior – this is the church – and this is what the fruit of the Spirit is for and then people will be careful to devote themselves to good works as they hear of this more and more, over and over, abundance of fruit overflowing...)

Kindness is both appealing and repellant... how?

How do you respond to intolerance? To hostility?

Kindness is strength.

Kindness is grace.

Illus of Keller's lectures at Princeton after they reneged on the award they had given him. See Collin Hansen's article in CT: "Tim Keller's Faithful Witness"

Kindness as essential to outreach.

The fruit of the Spirit essential to loving people.

God's kindness leads to repentance.

What we want for people is repentance and faith, the same things that we have been given. The ultimate things. A good life is a life of repentance and faith. And the way to get there is through responding to the kindness of God.

The attractiveness of kindness.

The surprise of kindness.

The fruit of kindness.

The application, result of kindness.

NASB 3:4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared

NIV 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared

If memory serves, Chrestotes has more the connotation of practical kindness and compassion shown in deeds, and philanthropia is very similar with connotations of affection and concern and loving kindness (BDAG) . Hope this helps a little! May God bless your preaching of his word, Frank

Hi Frank – I'm preaching on kindness from Titus 3:4-8 as part of our Fruit of the Spirit series.

Can you help me with the English translation of this family of words?

In Titus 3:4, philanthropia is the word translated as 'loving kindness' in ESV, and the NIV and NASB translate chrestotes as kindness, but the ESV has 'goodness'.