

The Fruit of the Spirit

Okanagan Central Year End Studies – December 25-27, 2015

1. To prepare us for the Kingdom, God must radically change us, transforming us into new people

Beginning with a heart bent to sin, He must renew our minds by changing our thinking, character & actions to match His. He is longsuffering and allows a long time for our new character to develop – an entirely different person than at the start. Our initial character is unfit for the Kingdom; the new character He develops – His character within us – will fill the Kingdom. Romans 8 & Gal 5 both describe the need for the flesh to be crucified before we can learn to “walk after the Spirit” (cp Ps 1:1-3). We are at war! There is a constant battle we wage against the flesh (*sarx*), which is hostile to God; the enmity of Gen 3:15. Paul describes “walking after the Spirit” (Gal 5) as producing fruit – this is how the transformed man/woman thinks/acts/lives. This is how flesh (5:19-21) is overcome! By developing the fruit of the Spirit (v22-23) in its place; after crucifying the flesh (v24). The 9 characteristics are rightly called “the fruit of the Spirit”; they have nothing to do with the flesh; each opposes the flesh. The fruit: i) reflect God’s righteousness & ii) lead a person to righteousness (Heb 12:11; Jms 3:18; Phil 1:11; Eph 5:9; Amos 6:12). The fruit counteracted the reprehensible behaviour (5:15) caused by Judaizers’ influence; the fruit are a far better way to live. Learning to manifest the fruit, to walk after the Spirit, will result in an entirely new relationship between brethren & ecclesias.

2. The fruit provide specificity, the specific detail of what walking after the Spirit looks like; we need such detailed counsel

The fruit is what a transformed character looks like, how it thinks, acts, plans, responds to events in life. The individual characteristics are rightly called “fruit” because they are the end result of God’s Word implanted in our mind; like a seed which takes root downward & bears fruit upward; the fruit is the product of a new mind, a new disposition. We are not born with any of the 9; each must be learned & developed, nurtured and cultivated; what we sow, we reap (6:8). The use of *God’s* definition (not *man’s*) for each fruit is critical for bearing fruit that meets His expectation & brings Him glory. Bearing fruit is not complicated, a young child can learn how; it requires no deep understanding of Scripture; it shouldn’t just happen towards the end of our discipleship, but throughout; the challenge is not in the *knowing*, but in the *doing*. Eph 5:11 also describes the two walks (light & darkness); the fruit of the Spirit is light (v9), grk = *phos*: to shine; all other times *phos* is rendered “light”; God intends for us to shine the fruit of the Spirit into the world’s darkness (v11). We need all 9! They are 9 parts of our 1 walk in the Spirit. There would be a gaping hole in our character if even 1 was missing!

Love

3. Godly love defined; it (is)...

- 1) a ‘self-sacrificing’ love, an ‘others-first, not me-first’ love, a ‘laying down our life’ love (1 Jn 3:16)
- 2) obedience to God’s commandments—“if you love me you will keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15,21,23)
- 3) done by faith, springs from (built on) faith, “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6); and deepens faith (Jn 11:5, 25-26)
- 4) done in hope of a future reward; “as you have shown love, show the same diligence...of hope” (Heb 6:10-11)
- 5) done not because a person *deserves* our love, but because he *needs* our/God’s love (Rom 5:8)
- 6) giving to the need, whatever it is, not from our surplus, but based upon a person’s need (Deut 15:8; 2 Cor 8:2)
- 7) requires our total involvement—all our heart, strength, mind (1st commandment – Matt 22:37)
- 8) does for our neighbor as we would like to have done for us (2nd comm – Matt 22:39; 7:12; 1 Jn 4:21; Rom 13:10)
- 9) done as a servant, not a master (Gal 5:13)
- 10) restrains us from wrong conduct (Gal 5:15), and compels us to right conduct (2 Cor 5:14)
- 11) provides a balance between insisting upon right doctrine/conduct (2 Jn 1:6-11) while not offending in matters of conscience, causing some to fall away, for whom Christ died (3 Jn; 1 Cor 8:3-13)
- 12) does good to all; it is careful not to show partiality (James 2:8-9)

4. Godly love must be distinguished from human love; it has a different aim and a different definition of right/wrong

It is both *phileo* & *agape*, as God had both for His Son (Jn 5:20; 3:35); as Christ had for Lazarus (Jn 11:3; 11:5); as God has for us (Jn 16:27; 14:23); as we should have for one another (1 Pet 1:22).

It should not be confused with human love or with love as defined by Christendom; latter day prophecy warns of human love prevailing in society (2 Tim 3:1-5); *Godly love will always lead a person to righteousness*.

The aim of Godly love is to save a person; the aim of human love is to make them feel good about themselves; humanism says: “love *does*”; God’s Truth says: “love *saves*”; Jesus always linked his love for others to their salvation.

Godly love & obedience are inseparable: Ex 20:6; Deut 7:9; Josh 22:5; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4.

Ecclesias will come under increasing pressure from humanism; our children must be taught to define right/wrong as God does. God’s love is the basis for ours; we are to love as He does; His love is our model & motivation (Dt 10:18-19; Lk 6:35; Eph 4:32).

5. It is the expectation of the Father and the Son that we will learn to love others as they have loved us

1 Jn 4: We are to love one another (v11); though none can see God, they ought to see His love in our love for each other (v12) Christ's love was designed to save people (not just do good deeds), and becomes the model of our love for each other The Good Shepherd (Jn 10) loved by laying down his life for the sheep (v10,15,17); it was a command received from the Father (v18), and the Father loved the love of the Son (v17)

The cross (self denial) is what must be done to the flesh; godly love is how we live the cross - serving others, putting them 1st Love is the first fruit cited (Gal 5:22-23) because the flesh must be put to death before any of the fruit can be developed (v24) Learning to love like the Son is not an option, but a requirement for salvation – 1 Jn 3:16; Jn 15:12-14

In Jesus' final hours he is not drawing attention to himself & how great his love had been for the disciples, but how great their love needed to be for each other (Jn 15:14)

- After his departure they will face great challenges, the world will hate them (v18, cp early chapters in Acts)
 - The only way to survive such challenges, with their leader absent, will be for them to learn to love one another
 - V12 is the command to follow his example; v13 is a reminder of his unlimited love; in v14 he sets the expectation that we are his friends only if we do what he commands, which is to love one another as he loved us
 - The Father's (1 Jn4:11) & Son's expectations are identical; their love for us should be our love for one another
- The disciples did go on to learn to love with the love of Christ (cp Jn 21 with sufferings cited in Acts 3-4); their zeal for Christ was not the result of possessing the Holy Spirit but because of their newfound love for Christ & his brethren
The fruit of love will change us; it will transform us into new men/women – in Peter's case, within 2 months!

6. The simplest practical description of love is found in 1 Cor 13; identifying what love does & doesn't do

suffereth long – is patient (RSV); willing to wait upon the Lord; knows spiritual matters take time

kind – Gk: useful to others

not envious – doesn't want what others have; love is content; only wants what's spiritually best for others

not vaunt itself – (parade-NKJ; boastful-RSV); doesn't look for recognition, isn't motivated by others' praise

not puffed up – Gk: to inflate; associated with pride/arrogance; there's no pride in Godly love

not behave itself unseemly – (rudely-NKJ); not act in a way that causes others to sin or be disgraced (7:36)

seeketh not her own – doesn't insist on its own way, in anything; finds spiritual pleasure in seeking good of others

not easily provoked – doesn't take offence (Ps 119:165); when we are 'offended', we have stopped loving

thinketh no evil – (resentful-RSV) Gk: take an inventory or keep score of evil done against it; instead, it forgives

rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth – hates iniquity and loves righteousness (Heb 1:9)

bears all things – Gk: to cover with a roof; fig: to protect by covering with silence; knows when to remain silent

hopes all things – love never gets discouraged; it never gives up, regardless of the circumstances

endures all things – for the sake of the elect, in order to save them (2 Tim 2:10; Heb 12:2)

bears/believes/hopes/endures all things – it's not naïve or easily fooled, but perseveres in every circumstance

There are many close parallels between Paul's description of love in 1 Cor 13 and the remaining 8 fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5)

When Godly love begins to bear fruit in our life, it becomes a power greater than Sin and will have a positive spiritual impact on marriages (Eph 5:25) and ecclesial relationships - far beyond what human love could ever produce!

Joy

7. God defines joy as the happiness arising out of the prospect of our spending eternity with Him

Man defines joy as a feeling of great pleasure/happiness; the Bible defines it as happiness linked to salvation – eg Mt 13:44

The joy over the prospect of salvation for mankind caused great rejoicing at Jesus' birth (Lk 2:10; Mt 2:10; Lk 1:47)

God intends for our joy & rejoicing to be centred on the future prospect (hope) of salvation (Rom 5:2; Mt 5:11)

The joy/happiness of salvation celebrated by: Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39), Philippian jailor (Acts 16:34), Psalmist (Ps 137:6)

God intends the prospect of salvation to be a continuous force of common delight for us, regardless of our circumstances

8. The joy of the Father

God joys in the genuine repentance of a sinner – Lk 15 is a chapter not just about repentance, but of joy in heaven v7, 10

The joy of the father over the repentant son who returned is so great that it causes resentment by the older son

A great scene is depicted in vv18-21! Create a mental picture! God wants us to remember this scene!

- 2 things are happening concurrently & it's not coincidental: as the son confesses his sins, the father expresses his joy & love!

- The father was ecstatic! He had great joy in his heart. God is portrayed as falling on the son's neck with kisses

- It's not the joy of the repentant son that is emphasized, it's the joy of the father!

- The angels rejoice over a repentant sinner (v10) because God rejoices! Their rejoicing is a reflection of His joy

We bring God joy when we repent of our sins; He rejoices because one who was lost/dead has been found/saved (v32)

God's joy over Israel's genuine repentance in Neh 8 is why Nehemiah could say, "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (v10)

9. The joy of the Son should be our joy

Jesus spoke of his joy at seeing his disciples grow in faith (Lk 11:15) and seeing them in the Kingdom (Matt 25:21,23)
Godly joy, unlike human joy, rejoices not only at the prospect of one's own salvation, but for all who are saved (cp 1 Thes 2:19)
The joy of Paul matched that of Christ and that of the Father; so should ours – to see our bro/sis in the Kingdom! We should do all we can to help save each other and avoid doing *anything* that inhibits or discourages their salvation
Paul identifies many things that brought him joy – all had to do with the spiritual edification of believers: visiting them (Rom 15:32; hearing of their obedience (16:19; John too in 3 Jn 1:4); their repentance (2 Cor 7:7-9); praying for them (Phil 1:4); enduring suffering for them (Phil 2:16-17); to hear of ecclesial unity (Phil 2:2); visiting to increase *their* joy (Phil 1:26)

10. The joy Jesus saw in (and beyond) the cross

To man's thinking it is incongruous, even bizarre that Jesus would speak of the cross with joy – Jn 15:11; 16:20,22
He speaks not only of his own joy regarding the cross, but also of the joy he wanted the disciples to have
Yes, the cross would be painful, but he could see all the good God would achieve by it; this brought him joy, not sadness
The Garden events still lay ahead; he would still pray for the cup to pass; Jesus didn't enjoy the cross, but he saw beyond it
The Church has done a great disservice to the cross and to Christ's joy by depicting a sad & forlorn Christ on all their crosses; this is not how Jesus wants us to view the cross; they focus on the very part he encouraged his disciples to see beyond!
Neither Jesus nor Paul (Heb 12) stresses the pain and sadness of the cross; they both stress the joy from the victory over Sin!
The cross is not a thing we should view with disdain or remorse; it is to be embraced with joy! Flesh is defeated, God glorified
It's not a burden to lay down our life to help save others; it should not be a cause of grief to die to sin so others can be saved
- It's a joy! A joy! A joy! That's Jesus' message to his disciples on the eve of the cross; he viewed it with joy & wanted them to embrace the cross; take up your own; don't despise it; make it your way of life, for it declares God is right & Sin is wrong

Jesus noted several troubling situations: his betrayal, his going away, Peter's pending denials, they would all deny him (Mk 14:27); these were multiple waves of disturbing news, leaving them with troubled hearts (Jn 14:1)
- He takes them beyond the cross to the joy! "in my Father's house are many rooms" (v2:RSV); don't sorrow but rejoice (v28)
True, godly joy is found not in our own personal circumstances, but in God achieving His Purpose
This is why Paul could speak of Christ's joy (Heb 12:2); it's not a mind game, pretending the suffering doesn't exist; it's a joy based upon an understanding of the eternal good being achieved by the suffering (Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 1:6; Jms 1:1)
If we base our joy on matters that favour us personally, it is human joy; when we can rejoice in seeing God's plan being accomplished, even if it means our life will be more challenging, then we are learning to rejoice with godly joy (Heb 12:9)
Faithful disciples don't let their circumstances or other people take away their joy; we'll only lose our joy if we let go of it, because no one can take it from us; neither Christ nor Paul let others take away their joy, despite harsh treatment
We should always encourage one another to keep the joy! And help restore it for a bro/sis if their joy is failing?

Peace

11. God defines peace as man being reconciled to Him, having unity with Him

Man's definition centres on the absence of war; quiet and tranquility; God's definition takes peace to a higher spiritual level
Godly peace is the blessing of being reconciled to God through Christ's sacrifice (Rom 5:1); it's rightly termed peace because of its effect – it brings us to a state of spiritual tranquility and serenity, regardless of the trials/sorrows we encounter
- Godly peace brings an end to the hostility/enmity between God and man that originated in the Garden (Gen 3)
- Being reconciled to God, we must then ① be peaceful in our character & ② be peacemakers – bring peace to relationships
- The blessings of being reconciled are that we have access to God and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2)
Godly peace has to do with salvation, not just having peace of mind; absent Christ's sacrifice, there would be no peace
Christ's reconciling work which brought peace between God and man is further identified in Eph 2:13-14, Col 1:20
This reconciliation of God with man is why the angels rejoiced in song at Jesus' birth (Lk 2:13-14)
Jesus' title, "Prince of Peace" in the Kingdom, is due primarily to man's reconciliation with God, not the end of war
Having peace with God (being reconciled) is the most blessed of conditions! Nothing should ever take away our peace!
Godly peace doesn't depend upon outward circumstances & it cannot be destroyed by them; it is not circumstantial (DGillett)

12. With a proper understanding of Godly peace, scriptural references to peace take on a fuller meaning

Sin takes away our peace (Ps 38:3) "*...neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*"
Jesus was at peace on the eve of the crucifixion, despite the trial that lay ahead - "*peace I leave with you*" (Jn 14:27)
Peace doesn't prevent a disciple from having concerns, but it does prevent him from being lost in despair; he never panics, knowing God is always close at hand and is watching out for him, under His loving care
Jesus spoke of love, joy and peace to his disciples on the eve of the cross; the fruit of the Spirit is not confined to only those times in our life when all is going well; it brings God great glory when we manifest it in the most difficult of times

Many verses solidify the definition of peace involving reconciliation and salvation: Lk 2:14; 19:38 Jn 16:33 Acts 10:36 Rom 3:17 Eph 6:15 Phil 4:7 Heb 13:20 2 Thes 3:16 2 Pet 3:14; it is also reflected in the Old Testament: Num 6:22 Isa 53:5 This is why Paul begins all 13 of his epistles describing the peace of reconciliation that comes from God and the Lord Jesus Christ; eg: *"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."* 1 Cor 1:3 When Jesus healed the sick, they were also healed/reconciled spiritually, *"thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace"* Mk 5:34

13. There is a caution related to peace; being reconciled to God does not eliminate the need for our continued obedience

Rom 2:10 *"But glory, honor and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also the Gentile"*

Rom 8:6 *"to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is (eternal) life and peace."*

Phil 4:9 *"Those things, which ye have both learned & received & heard & seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."*

14. Being reconciled to Him, God expects us to be men/women of peace (peacemakers)

Disciples should live at peace with all men (Rom 12:18; Heb 12:14)

The divine expectation is that peace should exist between brethren (Rom 14:19; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:3; 1 Thes 5:13)

It is the "peacemakers" (grk: a peace doer) who will be called the "children of God" (Mt 5:9)

Spiritual peace only results from divine wisdom – Jms 3:17-18 describes how God's wisdom should impact our character

- A relationship will only be spiritually edifying if ① it's based on God's wisdom & ② righteousness is a mutually desired outcome

- The friendship of Rahab & the 2 spies is an example of James 3:18 in practice; despite not knowing each other, their actions were sown in peace, they were committed to making peace & the outcome was the fruit of righteousness (cp Heb 11:31)

- James warns those for whom peace was missing (ch3): they were warring & tearing each other apart with envy & strife (ch4)

To be a peacemaker (a peace-doer) is to both be at peace ourselves and seek to bring peace to others

Godly peace is not pacifistic – it does not make peace with that which is opposed to God (Rom 16:20)

15. The peace of God with man will be heralded in the Kingdom!

All mankind will finally be reconciled to God (Ps 72:3-7)

The gospel of salvation will be called the gospel of peace (Isa 52:7)

Jesus will reconcile mankind to God, reign in peace as priest/king (Zech 6:13) & speak peace to the gentiles (Zech 9:10)

Jerusalem's future role will be the city of peace (Heb 7:2); it will be at peace in the Kingdom (Ps 122:6-8)

Israel to be at peace (reconciled to God) - Ps 85:8-9; Isa 32:17-18; God will make a covenant of peace with them (Ezek 37:26)

Longsuffering/Patience

16. God is longsuffering because He is forgiving and desires to save us

This fruit is especially for those of us who know we have a short fuse, are given to a quick temper or become easily infuriated

If this fruit is lacking, it leaves a gaping hole in our character, so large as to overshadow all other fruit that are developing

The NT word (*makrothumeo*) is comprised of *makro*: long/large and *thumos*: temper; meaning a long, enduring temper

- Strong's defines it as longanimity (patient endurance); Vines as the opposite of anger, a synonym is forbearance

- Practically speaking it means to take a very, very, very long time to get angry; to be patient

The OT Hebrew word consists of a two-word idiom – long & nostrils/face; one who doesn't change their facial expression

It's noted in Ex 34:6 as 1 of 5 predominant characteristics of God; collectively the 5 forgive (v7); God forgives because He is longsuffering; longsuffering is a pre-requisite for forgiveness; a person with a quick temper cannot be forgiving

- When the 5 characteristics are cited, they're linked to God's forgiveness (Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8)

His longsuffering/forbearance is designed to save, to lead sinners to repent, give time to repent (Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9,14-15)

- He could respond immediately, but the sinner would be destroyed; Peter warns don't misinterpret God's patience for inaction

His longsuffering waited a very long time (120 years) in Noah's day, giving time for repentance, even when He knew none would!

- That's what longsuffering does! It waits patiently even when the outcome won't change! That's the fruit we are to develop

- It often seems God is far more longsuffering toward us & gives us far more time than we tend to give each other

It's not impossible! Being longsuffering to save a person is commonly practiced by parents trying to raise a godly seed

- They realize the enormity of what their children must learn regarding right/wrong; of necessity they allow for many mistakes

- The wisdom of longsuffering: children can be taught by patient parents to learn from their mistakes and return to right living

- A home in which parents had little to no patience would leave an indelible impact on their children; and not for their good

- Jacob's example shows the eternal value of longsuffering; his patience (22 years!) directly contributed to his sons' conversion

17. Longsuffering is not only about forgiveness - there are other spiritual benefits that underscore its wisdom

Prov 14:29 it prevents us from acting in haste and creating folly on top of any mistakes others have already made

- Patience is needed most when things go wrong! Our natural mind typically goes right to anger; a patient spirit overcomes this
- Prov 15:18 longsuffering appeases strife – it empties the situation of strife’s destructive power, bringing quiet and peace
- Prov 16:32 being slow to anger, able to rule our spirit, is of greater value than being a mighty warrior
- Young men should seek to develop this fruit over a trim physique; young women should seek this fruit in young men they admire
- 1 Cor 13:4 love is longsuffering! Knowing God has been so toward us (Is 48:9), we should be so toward each other (Ps 18:25)
- Eph 4:2 longsuffering & forbearance are what keep an ecclesia united; they keep 2 brethren from having a falling out
- We can no longer be helpful to a brother or sister with whom we have ceased to be longsuffering
- People with short fuses can’t be helpful to those who’ve made mistakes; they are the *last* people whose help is sought

Putting the pieces together: longsuffering isn’t just about patience; its purpose is to save people, those who have erred; it is exactly what’s needed when a person/group/ecclesia/nation, called to salvation, have temporarily lost their way

- Patience, understanding and a willingness to help them see their mistakes is what they need to return to righteousness
- This is why God was so longsuffering toward Israel & is equally so toward us – He is so out of a desire to save us; He knows it can take a long time for the flesh to be overcome & transformation achieved; He’s very patient with slow growing plants
- 1 Tim 1:16 links Christ’s longsuffering to Paul’s salvation, encouraging all subsequent believers with a similar sinful past
- Longsuffering, like the other fruit of the Spirit, is not done in our own strength, but in God’s (Col 1:10-11; Eph 6:10-11,14-16)
- It’s never more needed than when a brother sins against us – it must then be at maximum strength (Col 3:12; Jms 1:19-20)
- Facing severe ecclesial trials, Paul encouraged Timothy to persevere with longsuffering; not to let up, go soft or go silent; but also not to lose the fruit of longsuffering (2 Tim 4:2-4)

Kindness (Gentleness)

18. The fruit of gentleness is not as it first appears-‘kindness’ is a better English word to identify the Scriptural meaning

The English word “gentleness” (mild/gentle, soft spoken) is *not* the meaning; this is the fruit of kindness or goodness in action

- Greek: *chrestos* (adj) & *chrestotes* (noun); 17 times in NT; collective meaning: kindness in being useful to others to help save
- The way we use ‘gentleness’ today is more akin to the Bible term meekness, which is the 8th fruit of the Spirit
- The English word ‘gentle’ in the NT is not *chrestos/chrestotes*, so these verses are outside the scope of a review of this fruit
- ‘Friendship’ is part of the meaning; this fruit is not so much about being gentle as a lamb as it is being kind as a godly friend
- Don’t think of kindness as a single act, see it as a character trait, seeking to be useful to others with the aim to help save them
- Human/social kindness involves pleasantries in conversation or single acts of kindness (cross street, mow lawn, shovel snow)
- Godly kindness, by contrast, is much deeper spiritually, more meaningful/purposeful, having salvation as its principle focus

19. God’s kindness, once identified, becomes our model

His greatest act of kindness was providing our Savior (Titus 3:4; Eph 2:7), making us heirs of salvation (3:7); His kindness is the result of His grace (Titus 3:7; Eph 2:7), showing that God’s kindness is not a thing that can be earned

Peter echoes this same definition of God’s kindness linked to salvation in Christ’s saving work (1 Pet 2:3)

- We are to lay aside sin (v1) & as babes desire the Word to grow *unto salvation* (v2-RV,RSV,Roth), being motivated to do so having tasted God’s kindness, i.e. having the hope of salvation (v3: God’s kindness occurs before vv1-2: our response)
- Vv4-5: God’s expectation of our response to His kindness: become living stones, a holy priesthood, offer spiritual sacrifices
- Peter implores us to grow spiritually: from newborn babes to living stones, *during our probation*! Confirmed in Rom 12:1
- God extends His kindness to us for a reason - so we’ll forsake sin and become replicas of His Son, the chief cornerstone
- What begins with God’s kindness should end with (lead to) us becoming holy priests offering sacrifices of faithful living

God’s kindness is not restricted to believers; He is kind to the unthankful & to the evil (Lk 6:35); kindness doesn’t discriminate *against* those who fail to show us kindness; if it does discriminate, it’s human kindness; Godly kindness is extended to all

- Lk 6:35 defines kindness as *doing* for others, being helpful/useful to them: “love...do good...lend”; it can be seen in action
- Our motivation for showing God’s kindness to others is that it is a pre-requisite for salvation, to be called His children
- God manifestation (to live like Him) is His expectation of us; we should never fail to show kindness to those He treats kindly
- Developing this fruit cannot be postponed; its absence leaves us with a gaping hole in our character & unfit for the Kingdom
- God’s kindness (Christ’s saving work), cited twice in Rom 2:4 (as ‘goodness’ both times), is extended to lead us to repentance
- “*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness (chrestotes) and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness (chrestos) of God leadeth thee to repentance?*”
- If we seek to show Godly kindness to others (not an act of human kindness) it will lead them to repentance and salvation
- Godly kindness, shown to the unkind and evil (Lk 6:35), will encourage their repentance (Rom 2:4); unkindness would not
- While God’s kindness is intended to lead us to well doing (Rom 2:7), rejecting it leads to eternal punishment (vv8-9)

20. The kindness of God and Christ is designed to encourage us unto righteousness

Rom 11:22 reveals God shows us kindness to encourage us to *continue* in His kindness; it's intended to foster righteousness
Rom 3:12 defines kindness, but in the negative; it's more than simple acts & can't be shown by those under the power of sin
- *"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good (chrestos) no, not one."*
- Context = all are under sin (v9) and fall short of God's glory (v23); none are righteous (i.e. none practice kindness naturally/by birth) (v10); it must be learned from God's Word and is a reflection of His righteous principles
Eph 4:32 distinguishes Godly kindness from human kindness; if we want to show kindness to someone, we should forgive them, regardless of their mistreatment of us, & do so "tenderheartedly"; to refuse forgiveness or to hold a grudge is un-kindness
Jesus' kindness is portrayed as a yoke called kindness ("easy" *chrestos* in Mt 11:30) *"my yoke is kindness & my burden is light"*
- He appeals to those who are weary in their struggles against sin; he offers friendship with himself & rest from their burden
- He paints a mental picture of a man walking with a heavy burden, Jesus approaches with a yoke to help carry the burden
- *"Take my yoke of kindness upon you, become my friend, learn of me, you will find I am meek and lowly & can give you rest"*
- By contrast, the religious leaders put artificially created heavy burdens (sin) upon the people, grievous to be born (Mt 23:4)
Jesus is presented as the perfect spiritual friend to have - kind, meek, lowly, willing to help carry our burden & provide rest!
Kindness, in the form of friendship, shares burdens, encourages perseverance under trial, eliminates the need to 'go it alone'
Look around the ecclesia/CYC; find those especially burdened & giving up; find a way to share their burden – that's kindness!

Goodness

21. God's goodness, when understood, becomes the model for our goodness

The English word matches the Bible's definition; *agathosune*: goodness, virtue, acting in a way to benefit others (Strong's)
Goodness applied to a person: he can distinguish between right/wrong, and then do what is right; good in character and actions, and how he impacts other people (think of the Good Samaritan)
It's closely related to kindness (fruit #5) but the focus is on doing good, doing what's right as God defines right/wrong
NT references to 'doing good' describe this fruit (Mt 12:35; Lk 6:9; Rom 12:9; 3 Jn 11; 1 Tim 6:18); when we teach our children to learn to be good boys and girls, we are introducing them to goodness; to choose right over wrong, good over evil

God's goodness relates to His work in our life to save us – *"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power"* 2 Thes 1:11
- Paul's constant prayer was that the Thessalonians would be found "worthy" of salvation; if so, the credit is all to God!
- It's God who does the work, "the good pleasure of his goodness"; we could never be worthy apart from His work in our life
- What begins with the calling of God ends with the Thessalonians' salvation, but only because of God's work among them
- Thessalonians added their "work of faith with power" – faith in the gospel which has power unto salvation (Rom 1:16)
- God's devotion to saving us also stated in Rom 12:2 as being "that good (agathos) & acceptable & perfect will of God"
- Why is God committed to our salvation? Because that's what goodness - Godly goodness - does! cp Lk 12:31; Phil 2:12; it's what His will is, & it's what He finds pleasure doing – preparing people, transforming them to be worthy of the Kingdom
What do we enjoy doing? What brings us pleasure? If it is to work with believers (of all ages) to help prepare them for the Kingdom, then we are learning to develop the fruit of goodness

22. To be filled with Godly goodness, we must first be filled with the knowledge of God

Goodness also has to do with doing good, giving good counsel, having a good influence on others – *"...am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."* Rom 15:14
- Context of ch15 begins in 14:1 & carries through to 15:13 – the ecclesia needed to live in harmony, to learn to work together
- Christ didn't please himself (15:3); be likeminded (v5); have 1 mind/mouth (v6); receive 1 another (v7); include Gentiles (v8-9)
- There can be no joy and peace in the ecclesia if it is divided, at odds with each other (v13)
Within the context of the need for ecclesial harmony, Paul appeals to them to do the right thing in v14
- They were full of goodness: a desire to do the right thing; to do good to each other, due to their knowledge of God; this means we first need to have a knowledge of spiritual things; Godly goodness does not exist apart from divine principles

The ability to reflect this fruit is directly related to our Bible knowledge; it's right to stress this education with our children
While Bible knowledge doesn't automatically lead to goodness, without the knowledge Godly goodness is not possible
Only God defines right/wrong; this doesn't change from one generation to the next, regardless of societies changing values
Goodness can be in the form of counsel ("able to admonish"); it points out error, it encourages correction when necessary
- Ecclesias don't need a Paul or the Holy Spirit to guide their affairs, just members full of goodness & knowledge of the Word
Anytime we give counsel/admonishment to others, it must be based on God's principles, not on feelings or worldly wisdom

Faith

23. Faith provides us with a confidence & conviction that the Kingdom is coming, which becomes a moral power for good

Two English words comprise this fruit: faith (greek: *pistis* [noun]) & belief (*pisteuo* [verb]) rendered belief or believe

The definition in Heb 11:1 combines *the substance* (something material, confidence, assurance) *of things hope for & the evidence* (proof, conviction, i.e. evidence used to convict a criminal) *of things unseen*

- Restated, faith is an absolute confidence, producing a conviction within, causing us to live for the unseen Kingdom

The greater our ability to see the reality of the Kingdom, the greater will be our ability to live now as if we are part of it

- This is the moral power behind faith & the moral power of the Kingdom; it's how God intends for it to impact how we live

- Having a clear vision of the Kingdom, based upon concrete evidence, will cause us to live differently than if we are unsure

It's never too early to begin to teach our children how to develop a vision of the Kingdom and to develop their faith in it

Heb 11 describes the moral power of faith! It gave men/women power to do what they otherwise would not have done; to

take a stand for righteousness & against sin; to place themselves in vulnerable situations, appearing foolish to the world

- Each had an absolute confidence and conviction that God was with them; they lived for the future Kingdom, not the present

24. Faith in Christ is to take on his name, love, life, commands, faith, mind, forgiveness – his everything

4 levels of faith; believe: 1) something is true (eg. historical fact); 2) someone is capable of a task (eg. a young sister handling ecclesial kitchen duties); 3) in someone (eg: a young man would make a good husband); 4) I should live as Christ did

Jesus spoke of gaining access to the Father through himself (Jn 14:4-6) – “*I am the way, the truth & the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*” – the way: follow my way of living; the truth: follow my teachings; the life: make my life your life

- We are to take on Jesus': name - Acts 9:14,21; 2 Tim 2:19; James 2:7; Rev 2:13; 3:8; life - Gal 2:20; love - 2 Cor 5:14;

Eph 3:19; Eph 5:25; 1 Jn 3:16; commands - Jn 14:21; faith - Heb 12:2; James 2:1; Rev 14:12; mind - Phil 2:5; forgiveness -

Acts 7:60; 2 Tim 4:16; and sufferings - 1 Pet 2:20-21; we no longer live for ourselves, but for Christ (Gal 2:20)

God reckons a person with level 4 faith as “righteous” (Rom 3:22,28; 5:1) based solely on their commitment to live like Christ

- We must remain obedient to receive salvation, but we are reckoned righteous, alongside Abraham, the day of our baptism

There is no power to transform us if our faith in Christ is at level 1, 2 or even 3; the moral power to save is unique to level 4

John identifies 5 moral power points in 1 Jn 5 to define what belief in Christ means: ① we are born of God & love God & keep

his commandments (vv1-3); ② we overcome the world (vv4-5); ③ we become a witness for Christ (John was such a witness

cp 1:2 4:14); confidence in: ④ our salvation (v13); ⑤ access to God (v14). 1 Jn 5:13 & Jn 20:30-31 are companion verses.

- The 5 points reveal the moral power to transform us if we develop level 4 faith in Christ; reread Jn 3:15-18 with level 4 faith

This is why the Scriptures teach a person with (level 4) faith in Christ will be saved! Because their life will reflect their faith!

Meekness

25. Bible meekness must be understood using God's definition; man's definition clouds the true meaning

Man defines meekness using words such as timid, submissive, compliant, tame, unresisting; Vines provides a Biblical perspective of *'prautes'*: “the opposite of self-assertiveness & self interest, it stems from trust in God's goodness & control of the situation...in English it implies weakness or lack of courage/determination, but *prautes* means nothing of the kind”

The clearest example of meekness occurred when the Lord entered Jerusalem, lowly & humble, riding on a donkey (Mt 21:5)

- Yet in the morning he was in the Temple defending his Father's house; meekness does not fail to stand up for righteousness

Meekness is what's needed to keep the flesh in check, to prevent boasting, self-confidence and acting in our own strength

- Luke 14:11 states “*whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*”

Without this fruit a gaping hole is left in our character; all the love, joy, peace, etc do not compensate for its absence

26. The meek readily see God present in their life & as their strength; people lacking meekness see it as a weakness

People lacking meekness fail to see the great need for God to work in their life because of their self-confidence

Pharaoh saw a weak and insignificant Moses he couldn't/wouldn't see God behind the actions of Moses

The meekest man in the earth stood before the most powerful man & yet showed great strength; his strength was in God!

Meekness is not a weakness; the meek see God by faith & place their absolute confidence in Him, having no confidence in self

Human meekness has nothing to do with faith; Godly meekness does not exist apart from faith! The outcome is that God can

work great things through meek men/women because they implicitly trust Him, not themselves

- The credit, responsibility and glory for what's achieved is all to God; the meek never forget they are nothing on their own

Moses' supreme meekness is highlighted by his siblings' accusation that he was the very opposite of meek, having taken too much authority upon himself, while creating a very public forum in which to accuse him of being 'un-meek' Num 12:1-3

- He responds with meekness! The very characteristic they claimed he didn't have! This shows the value of this fruit,

especially in dealing with ecclesial issues & when charges are made against us; meekness trusts God and does not lash out

- It was ludicrous for Miriam & Aaron to make such an (false) accusation of abusing power against a meek man like Moses

27. God uses the meek to accomplish great things & will fill the earth with those who empty themselves of self-confidence

God's wisdom was revealed in selecting a meek man to lead Israel out of Egypt, further revealing this fruit's value

- A man full of self-confidence & a high self-opinion would be useless to God in contending against Pharaoh & leading Israel
- The world values such leaders, but not God; meekness made Moses the perfect choice; it's compulsory for spiritual shepherds
- The difference between Moses at 40 & 80 was meekness – a lowly, humble spirit whose confidence was in God, not self
- Meekness is not a spirit of timidity or weakness; it has great strength and confidence, but they are all in God, which is why Moses could stand before Pharaoh & the Red Sea and declare his message with great power & conviction, yet in meekness
- God's wisdom was also revealed in selecting a meek man to lead mankind out of slavery to Sin
- This is why God had Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey: to stress the value of meekness & its hidden strength
- Get a hold of that picture! Within it is the wisdom of God regarding meekness! It involves supreme strength! Because that meek man will achieve the greatest victory ever achieved in defeating Sin! And do it all in God's strength, not his own
- Jesus enters the city in full confidence in his Father, and *His* strength, to deliver him from whatever evil may be in store

This is why the meek shall inherit the earth; God will fill the earth with people who have emptied themselves of any self-confidence & learned to place their full confidence in Him; *only the meek can learn how to overcome Sin* – in God's strength

Though the un-meek think they own the world, the meek will inherit it; there won't be any room in the Kingdom for people who like to tell you about what they've done in their life, but lots of room for those who like to tell you what God has done

Christ was meek (Matt 11:29); he who had the Holy Spirit without measure & could call 12 legions of angels, possessing more power than any man ever had, shows meekness does not exist in the absence of power/authority, but because of it Phil 2:7

- The more authority/rule a brother has, of whatever type (husband/father/arr bro) the more important it is that he be meek
- Paul too was meek (1 Cor 4:21), though possessing great power & authority in the 1st century community (2 Cor 10:8 13:10)
- Meekness doesn't use rule/authority to force others to obey God; instead it appeals to them, from love, to do what's right

The wisdom of meekness is also seen in appealing to those who need correction; it's a far better spirit than arrogance Gal 6:1

Meekness is needed more than ever when brethren are at their worst; that is not the time to abandon it (2 Cor 10:1)

Meekness is critical to ecclesial harmony, and to prevent members from falling out with each other (Eph 4:2)

When we read the Word, it must be with meekness or it will have no impact on us; leaving us hearers, not doers (Jms 1:21); the meek are teachable (Ps 25:9); it is needed not only in reading/receiving the Word, but also in living it (Jms 3:13)

Meekness is not showy, it doesn't broadcast itself, it doesn't seek popularity (1 Pet 3:4)

Christ & the immortal saints will retain their meekness (as they will the other fruit) despite their military victories (Ps 45:4)

Self-control (Temperance)

28. Self-control is the means by which God expects us to hold ourselves accountable to developing the fruit of the Spirit

God intends for self-control to directly challenge the flesh, knowing what the flesh is capable of doing if left unchecked

Its root word is 'strength', i.e. to have strength/power over oneself; Thayers: "one who masters his desire & passions"

- It doesn't mean we have great power in and of ourselves, because we are weak and frail and prone to sin

Its practical meaning is that we are to hold ourselves accountable, through self-restraint/discipline, to do what's right

The responsibility for self-control rests with each person; no one but myself can hold me accountable for my conduct

There is no amount of grace that will cover a person's life/sins who fails to hold himself accountable to right living

It's not coincidental this was placed as the *final* fruit; we must hold ourselves accountable for living the previous 8

Paul made self-control a major theme of his witnessing to Felix (Acts 24:25), coupling this with Felix' need to live righteously

- Immoral Felix wasn't holding himself accountable & Paul challenged him to do so; this wouldn't endear Paul to the governor
- Paul warned that if he refused, condemnation awaited him at a future judgment; Felix understood the warning & trembled

Godly self-control & righteousness are inseparable; a life will only be lived within righteous parameters if one has self-control

Self-control is designed to save us; God can't do it all; only those who learn to hold themselves accountable will be saved

Paul was devoted to saving people (1 Cor 9:19-23); using a runner metaphor to encourage the Corinthians' perseverance (v24)

- Just as athletes, who strive for mastery, practise self-control in all things, so too should disciples (in spiritual matters) (v25)
 - Paul then reveals his own personal struggle with the flesh: adding a 2nd metaphor – a boxer (v26-27) who lands his self-inflicted blows to keep his flesh in check; this is what self-control looked like in his life; it's how it was self-administered
 - The mental picture of a boxer pummeling his own body (RSV) underscores the importance of this fruit; no self-control, no salvation, because despite all his preaching to others, without self-control Paul would be a castaway (Grk: disqualified)
 - 2 Cor 10:5 reveals he was just as concerned about applying self-control to his thinking as he was to his actions
- Each disciple has a decision to make: "will I or won't I hold myself accountable for developing the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith and meekness?"
- Without self-control, we are left with only knowledge of the fruit of the Spirit but no power to develop it; with self-control, we can keep our body under subjection and hold ourselves accountable to living what we know to be true

Bro Ken Styles