

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS KINDNESS

Luke 10:30-35

Newbegun United Methodist Church

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The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We have been talking about the fruit of the Spirit for the last five Sundays. I have asked you to do two things each Sunday. First, prepare your hearts by being receptive to the message. Secondly to find ways to put into use the fruit of the Spirit that was lifted up for the entire week. So, you have had a week of love, a week of joy, a week of peace, and now you had a full week to practice patience. How have you done? Do I have any anyone with a story to share? How about any examples of the other fruit we have gone over?

Well, today we move on to the next fruit which is kindness. Now if we think of the fruit of love as a blossom on a fruit tree, then the fruit appears from the blossom. Every fruit begins with love and they grow from that. Therefore, joy is love rejoicing; peace is love resting; patience is love enduring; and kindness is love in action.

Tony Campolo, a well-known author years ago, told a story about an encounter he had walking on his way to work. The route he took to work caused him to pass by a number of homeless and transient people. From time to time they would ask for money and generally he had to ignore them. One day a bag lady, whom he had seen before, shuffled out of a donut shop with a steaming hot cup of coffee in her hands. Their eyes met and Tony gave her a smile. "Hey, Mister," she called out to him, "would you like a

sip of my coffee?” Tony started to turn and walk away, but then he paused and said, “Yes, yes I would like a sip of your coffee.” He took a sip and said, “That is good coffee. Why did you offer me your coffee?” She replied, “Because it was so good, I thought someone might like to share it with me and enjoy it too.” The fruit of the Spirit is kindness and what a better definition of kindness could there be than – God is good and I thought someone might like to share it with me and enjoy it too.

God’s kindness is throughout the Scripture. Jeremiah 31:3 reads, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” This is the God we worship: one who draws you to him with loving-kindness. And who does God reach out to in order to draw them near to him? Everybody – friends and enemies; rich and poor; believers and non-believers; the righteous and the unrighteous. In Luke 6 Jesus said, “Love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back, because God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.” Jesus went to the cross not only for his family and friends, but for all those who wanted him dead! In Ephesians 2:7 Paul writes, “God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus.” Kindness is love in action.

The best example of kindness in action is found in the Gospel lesson from Luke 10 called “The Good Samaritan.” The story of the Good Samaritan shows us four different kinds of people. We encounter these types of people every day. However, today we are not called to be FRUIT INSPECTORS but FRUIT PRODUCERS. So, ask yourself what kind of person you are. First there are the selfish and hostile. Those are the robbers who only cared about their needs and will do whatever it takes. The second

are the indifferent. The indifferent won't kick you when you are down, but they won't offer you a hand to get you up either. They ignore you and go about their business. The third on is the legalistic. The legalistic follow their own rules and values instead of God's. The legalistic blame the victim for getting in trouble. If they had done what I had to do to get ahead, they would not be in the mess they are in. Then there is the kind and compassionate. This was the Samaritan. Here is what the Samaritan did.

The Samaritan took action to do what he could to help meet the need. Kindness is love in action. Kindness is love serving. Kindness will give, will share, will provide. The kind of kindness I am talking about is the Fruit of the Spirit kindness that just has to get out! Kindness held in is not kindness; fruit of the Spirit kindness requires action. That is the first thing the Samaritan did: he went over to the beaten man to help.

Secondly the fruit of the Spirit kindness is not afraid to take a risk. Does anybody know where those robbers went to? They might have been hiding among some rocks waiting for someone to stop and help the man on the side of the road. Who knows? Did the Samaritan know for sure? I doubt it. By stopping and helping the hurting man he took a risk. What would have happened if the Samaritan had played it safe? A man could have died. What if Jesus had decided to play it safe? We all would be dead in our sin. Kindness only sees the need, not the risk, or if kindness sees the risk, it decides that saving people is worth the risk. Kindness is love in action, which is risky.

Kindness will put others first. The Samaritan had to stop what he was doing in order to help the hurting man. His schedule for the day no longer mattered. Putting others first often means being willing to give of your time. Philippians 2:3 reads, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than

yourselves.” And not only did the Samaritan give his time, he gave of his own resources. He didn’t examine the man’s wounds and calculate the cost. He poured his own wine on the wounds to sterilize the wounds. He applied his own oil on the man to comfort and sooth him. He placed him on his own animal and took him to an inn. And he paid for the man’s care at the inn. Luke 6:38 says, “Give away your life; you’ll find life given back. But not merely given back – given back with bonus and blessing. Kindness begets kindness.” Kindness is love in action, putting others first.

Kindness finishes what it starts. You are never through giving kindness. It is your action until you take your last breath. The Samaritan left the wounded man at the inn with theses instructions to the inn-keeper, “Do whatever you need to do to heal this man and when I return I will pay you in full.” Fruit of the Spirit kindness never quits.

Quaker Stephen Grellet wrote: “I expect to pass through this world but once, any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now, let me not defer to neglect it, FOR I SHALL NOT PASS THIS WAY AGAIN.” Kindness is love in action. Sometimes it takes a risk. Kindness puts others first and does not count the cost. Kindness gives the glory to God as God’s kindness works through you. God draws you near to Him with an everlasting-kindness. And our kindness, our Fruit of the Spirit kindness, is the same. How many acts of kindness will you do this week? Amen.