

11<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Real signs of the Spirit: Kindness**

**John 15:5-16**



Kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Bearing fruit is an essential characteristic of every true Christian. Love is the foundational fruit that permeates all the other fruit (key passages on love = John 14; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 4). Kindness is love in action. 1 Corinthians 13:4 says “love is patient and kind”

**1. God’s kindness.** Kindness is an intrinsic characteristic of God, one of his many attributes. His kindness flows from his love “God is love” (1 John 4:8&16). The words for kindness in the Bible are also translated as mercy, compassion, loving-kindness, steadfast love (for example Psalm 117:2 “great is his steadfast love towards us”). Note the object of God’s kindness is his created beings – us – men and women, boys and girls. The greatest act of love, God’s kindness towards us, is his gift of salvation through grace – see Titus 3:4-6 and Ephesians 2:4-7.

**2. Our kindness.** Our kindness is directed to others in obedience to God. A key passage is Colossians 3:12-13a – “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another...”, see also Zechariah 7:9 and Micah 6:8.

Jesus in John 15 describes himself as the ‘true’ vine and all true Christians as the branches. He commands us to abide/remain in the vine (“*in constant union and communion*” – *Keddie*) with the object of bearing spiritual fruit. There is a progression from bearing fruit by being grafted into the vine (v2), to more fruit by being pruned (v2), to much fruit by abiding (v5). Abiding involves constant feeding on God’s word and prayer (v7).

We are created in God’s image and bear his kind character. John 15:9&12 show that God loves (is kind to) his son Jesus who loves (is kind to) us who love (are kind to) each other. John 15:8 declares that bearing fruit brings glory to God.

**3. David’s kindness.** 2 Samuel 9 recounts king David’s kindness to Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan and hence grandson of Saul. David wanted to demonstrate God’s kindness (v3) and fulfil the covenant made with Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-17). David is described as a man after God’s own heart and wrote of God’s kindness (for example Psalms 5:7; 31:21 & 138:2). His prayer of gratitude is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:18-29. David brings Mephibosheth into his palace in Jerusalem to dine daily like one of the family at the King’s table (2 Samuel 9:10&13), restores his inheritance (v7&9) and assigns him servants (v10&12).

Mephibosheth (= ‘a shameful thing’) did not seek nor deserve David’s kindness. This event is a graphic illustration of God’s kindness to us in salvation.