Good morning, Family. We are continuing this morning in our study and application of the fruit of the Spirit, the attributes of God that are to be cultivated in the life of every believer. With them, we are to be imitators of God as beloved children (Ephesians 5:1\*). Let’s remind ourselves of the context this morning before we move on. Paul is writing to a church in conflict, one in danger of being influenced by the world around it, as witnessed by his listing of the sins of the flesh *before* his listing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23\*\*). Paul is encouraging the church to stay connected to the vine: Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

With this backdrop, today we discuss two closely related fruit of the Spirit: Kindness and Goodness. To understand these attributes and their differences, we need to take a look at the original language. Kindness in the Greek is “chrestotes.” It means “moral goodness & integrity.” It speaks to meeting real needs. Goodness in the original Greek is ”agothosune.” It speaks to the intrinsic goodness as a personal quality. Now, let me translate these words into Appalachian for us: Kindness is the characteristic of how you treat people; goodness is the characteristic of how and who you are. Both are attributes of our Heavenly Father, attributes that he displays toward all mankind. Kindness is the outflow of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit into those around us. Kindness and goodness both have their roots in humility. And both are

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\*Ephesians 5:1

1 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children

\*\*Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

motivated because they have been shown to us: The cross of Christ is kindness expressed from the Father’s Holy Goodness to us (Titus 3:4-7\*). And, Church, these are attributes that should be apparent in every believer’s life. We should be sensitive to the needs of others because our minds are set on Christ’s Kingdom and not on our own.

Kindness and goodness, as fruit of the Spirit, should stimulate us to loving action toward others. These attributes are more than words. Jesus describes their effect in Luke 10:30-37:

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

The fruit of the Spirit are meant to be nourishment for our hungry neighbors. Because the Holy Spirit is in charge of the fruit, we have the capacity to be kind in every

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\*Titus 3:4-7

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out

7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

situation. Our display of kindness and goodness to others is appropriate response to

God’s provision of kindness to us: “4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4). Remember! We operate out of His riches and out of His unique provision (\*1 John 3:16-17): Kindness in action!

Family, listen. The good deeds of Christians should reflect the Good News of Jesus. We are NOT earning salvation, but we are living out the results of the Gospel applied. The only reason any of us are saved is that God’s patience and kindness have led us to repentance and provided a means of salvation through faith in Jesus—a kindness that is sacrificial. Proverbs 3:3 tells us, “3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” Kindness begins in the mind and the heart. And since we have experienced the grace, goodness, and kindness of the Lord, we should demonstrate in big and small ways. Church! To be kind and good is always a choice, not a reaction. It’s a choice to respond in kindness. We must put on kindness and goodness:

12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3: 12-17

Yes, our acting in kindness and goodness is *INTENTIONAL!*

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\*1 John 3:16-17

6 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

But scripture confirms that before we can put on kindness and goodness, we must take other things off: Anger, bitterness, hurt, unforgiveness (\*Ephesians 4:26-32). Then, we can, dressed in His righteousness (\*\*Isaiah 61:10), exalt God as we operate with the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s fruit perfect us in our areas of weakness as we intentionally grow in God’s goodness and kindness, the riches of His Glory.

God expresses His goodness and kindness to us in many ways: Pardon, provision, protection, answered prayer, promise of His presence—His personal involvement in our lives, and, of course, the gift of eternal life. All of these gifts give evidence the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. Think of God’s kindnesses toward you—all your blessings. And perhaps, we should all recognize this fact: the fruit of the

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\*Ephesians 4:26-32

26 “In your anger do not sin”[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

\*\*Isaiah 61:10

I delight greatly in the Lord;

my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation

and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,

as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Spirit grow best in us in the soil of gratitude. We have so much for which to be grateful. And our gratitude for His blessings is shown in the way that we treat others—NOT stopping to wonder, “Do they deserve kindness?” No, we are to love our enemies as ourselves (Mark 6:35). Indeed, we respond in kindness because God has shown great kindness toward us. This is fruit of the Holy Spirit in action.

Passages in support of this sermon:

Ephesians 3:14-19

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:31-21

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.