

Galatians 5:22 Kindness

Kingsgrove 9:30 am

11 January 2026

Good morning everybody...

Great to see you all...

How great is our joy this morning...??

What is to day offering us...?

However, I have a feeling... maybe a sad feeling...

That for most of us today will not be any different from any other Sunday.

Yet...

It really ought to be impossible to find the words to express how great is our joy in this moment of being right here.

The joy of finding ourselves once more in a company such as this...

The company of those who share our faith...

The company of those who... like us... long for the fellowship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A longing where each of us can go on being motivated...

Even in the middle of experiencing discouragement...

That we can go on being motivated by just how much we know we are loved by our Lord Jesus.

(Pause)

I'm first of all thinking, this morning, of some words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount...

***Matthew 5:16. (Show Matt 5:16)

“Let your light shine before others...

“That they see your good deeds...

“And glorify your Father in heaven”.

***Or words echoed by Peter in the second chapter of his first letter. 1 Peter 2:9. (Show 1 Peter 2:9)

“You are God’s special possession...

“That you may declare the praises of him...

“Who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”.

Somehow or other we must keep that vision before us.

We are here...

Whether we are a small gathering...

Or an overflowing crowd...

(and either of those... small gathering or overflowing crowd are but a tiny portion of those who could be here).

We are here to express our devotion to the God of love.

The God who once sent his Son to face the judgement we deserve...

Here to express our devotion to the Son who has already triumphed in a glorious resurrection from the dead.

The one who put behind him for all time the judgement that was to have been ours to endure.

So that now we can take note of the equipment we have been given.

For by the grace of our God, we are not alone as we...

“We carry out good deeds”.

We are not alone as we...

“Declare the praises of the one who has called us out of darkness...

“And into his wonderful light”.

Today we are turning out attention to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the book called Galatians.

***Chapter 5 and verse 22. (Show Galatians 5:22,23a)

The apostle Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit.

He lists nine fruits of that Spirit.

And in the middle of that list of 9 fruits of the Spirit.

Number 5 is... “Kindness”.

“Kindness” is a fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us who believe.

Now part of me might want to say, surely everybody knows how to be kind.

You don’t have to be a Christian to be a kind person.

It might help us to ask ourselves...

Why is it so attractive to discover somebody is showing me kindness?

And... alternatively... what is my responsibility to display “kindness”?

Will my act of kindness cause another to glorify my Father in heaven?

In Galatians chapter 5, certain things are going on.

Paul has been somewhat upset with the churches in and around Galatia.

For they had lapsed into what we sometimes call legalism.

The Christians of Jewish background were laying down the law to the Christians of non-Jewish background...

Those the New Testamen refers to as Gentiles.

And they were telling the non-Jewish believers they first must become Jews before they could claim to be Christians.

Paul is outraged by this.

Who of us would be willing to accept the requirement that circumcision was proof that our faith was real?

Good... incidentally... to be wary ourselves at this point...

What might we building into what we require of newcomers to our faith... ?

Are we requiring of them in matters not commanded in Scripture?

***So Paul reaches verse 13 of Galatians 5
(Show Galatians 5:13)

And he addresses his “brothers”...

Those who have joined him in the faith of Christ...

He says to them...

“You were called to be free”.

Well, “freedom”...

It’s a word a little like “kindness”.

Who of us would question our entitlement to “freedom”?

We are privileged to be a part of a society where few constraints are placed on us.

And the few constraints that there are...

It would horrify us to think we would even contemplate crossing those boundaries.

For instance, we understand that we are not free to steal.

We understand the constraint that we do not have the freedom to break into our neighbour’s house...

When they are out...

And steal their possessions.

Nevertheless... Paul is saying...

Having freed themselves from the constraints imposed by the Jewish Christians...

They... we... must not use our freedom to “indulge the flesh”...

And Paul is about to introduce us to a conflict that goes on in the life of any Christian... whatever our background.

Each of us who follows Christ will know this really without having to read Galatians chapter 5.

On the one hand we are always struggling not to indulge the “flesh”.

On the other hand...

We are always committed to seeking to allow the fruit of the Spirit to surface in how we conduct ourselves.

We are seeking to allow the fruit of the Spirit to flourish in how we conduct ourselves.

So, at this point Paul puts some effort into counselling us on how not to indulge the “flesh”.

Or...

On the other hand how to let the fruit of the Spirit flourish in us.

***What comes out is this statement at the end of verse 16.
(Show Galatians 5:16)

“We are called to be free”.

Yes, we are “called to be free”.

So, we are being told...

Why not use that freedom to make the right choices?

And Paul says use that freedom to “serve one another humbly in love”.

Worth meditating on...

How do I serve others humbly and... in love?

Verse 14 Paul reminds us that this stems from Jesus' words.

“Love your neighbour as yourself”.

***Verse 15. (Show Galatians 5:15)

A warning.

Should we fail to make it our aim to serve others humbly in love...

Well, the verse talks about us biting and devouring each other.

The final result of that...

It is the tragedy of being destroyed by each other.

And what once had set out to be a fellowship of the faithful.

In the end...

It will become a place where the truth about our Lord was never known in the first place.

To “be destroyed by each other” can only mean the elimination of life itself... eternal life, that is.

***So verse 16 now sets up the reality of the conflict each of you knows as much about as I do. (Show Galatians 5:16)

“We walk by the Spirit”.

“We do not gratify the desires of the flesh”.

Yes we are called to be free...

Free to make a choice...

Between walking by the Spirit...

Or the choice of gratifying the desires of the flesh.

***Verse 17 enlarges on the conflict for us.
(Show Galatians 5:17,18)

Flesh... and Spirit... (the Holy Spirit)...

They each want what is contrary to the other.

End of verse 17.

We Christians... for all time forgiven by our Lord...

We are not to do whatever we want... maybe whatever we feel like.

Why?

Because, verse 18.

A moment ago in verse 16, we are walking by the Spirit.

We are being led by the Spirit.

And once more Paul gets back to the basic theme of Galatians.
“We are not under the law”.

That means that on the day of judgement...

We will not be judged by how well we have kept the law.

We will not be judged by how well we have done.

Instead our judgement will not fall on us at all.

For it will have already fallen on the one who bore our judgement for us.

I speak of our crucified Saviour.

***Then verses 19 and 20 Paul pauses...
(Show Galatians 5:19:20)

And he is asking us...

“Do you really get it when I say, “don’t gratify the desires of the flesh?”

You may be saying to yourself, “what on earth am I doing if I’m gratifying the desires of the flesh?”

Am I, a believer, behaving like an unbeliever without even realising it?

Verse 19.

Paul wants to say that the desires of the flesh are obvious.

But just in case they are not obvious to you... and to me...

Here is a sample list.

Sexual immorality... impurity... debauchery... idolatry... witchcraft... hatred... discord... jealousy... fits of rage... selfish ambition... dissensions... factions... envy... drunkenness... orgies... and the like.

Well we could take time to pull each of those apart.

Paul says it's obvious.

And he implies we could easily come up with obvious others.

Greed, murder, theft, bullying, presumption, condescension, disrespect, cruelty... and so the list so readily goes on.

We do live in an evil world.

And the events of recent weeks cannot fail to leave us convinced of that.

A tiny minority will see the truth of Galatians 5.

A vast majority will be at home gratifying the desires of the flesh.

Often so horrified to discover the consequences of gratifying the desires of the flesh.

***Verse 21 issues the same warning as verse 15.

***Verse 15... to indulge the flesh.
(Show Galatians 5:21 and 15 together)

The result is self destruction.

A tragedy for those who may have begun to walk by the Spirit.

And verse 21.

Those who claim to believe yet live like those who indulge the flesh...

You will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Verse 15... self destruction.

Verse 21... failure to inherit the Kingdom of God.

They are the same thing.

It means you will not find yourself in the presence of our Lord in the age to come.

But then, after all of that comes the breath of fresh air that is verse 22.

For those of us who are walking by the Spirit....

For those of us who are being led by the Spirit...

***Verse 22. (Show Galatians 5:22,23a)

The fruit of the Spirit is at work in our lives.

Note the list... 9 ways to live by the fruit of the Spirit

Compare it with 15 ways to gratify the flesh.

The fruit of the Spirit... just nine

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Sadly, the many English translations of the bible will, at times, vary the word used.

The problem we have speaking the language spoken in so many nations of the world.

So many will get busy translating the bible into yet another English version.

It is interesting to note that the bible does not exactly explain how the fruit of the Spirit gets to work in a believer.

It appears, that just as the acts of the flesh are obvious, we are told in verse 19...

So also, it appears, is the fruit of the Spirit.

These qualities of life, called the fruit of the Spirit...

All qualities that would have become known to us in our growing years.

We would, more than likely, have known about them long before the Holy Spirit got to work in us.

But now, as we place our lives under the authority of the Word...

The Holy Spirit convicts us of their pre eminence.

And, as we are now led by the Spirit...

As we now walk by the Spirit...

And we put aside gratifying the desires of the flesh...

We allow the fruit of the Spirit to take over in us.

You could say that we actively cooperate with Holy Spirit.

And we exercise determination in making sure these nine qualities of life called the fruit of the Spirit...

We want them to become what we are known for.

After all...

Living in the midst of a world determined not to know the Lord...

***We want that world to discover what it means to "glorify our Father in heaven"... that was in Matthew 5.

(Show Matthew 5:16)

We long that they too would be in a position to declare the praises of the one who has "called them out of darkness". That was in 1 Peter 2:9.

(Show 1 Peter 2:9)

Will the fruit of the Spirit revealed in us... in kindness shown them... motivate them... to display the glory of our Father in heaven?

So tragically, there are many situations where many long for it... kindness that is.

Kindness... the fifth of the fruits of the Spirit.

These days we are now being constantly reminded of those living with domestic violence... cruelty.

How women in such circumstances must long to be treated with kindness.

Especially from the one now so frustrated by the one who he demands to satisfy him.

(pause).

In transacting everyday business...

Something we just have to negotiate...

We encounter the one who knows inside out, what we are struggling to untangle... to understand.

And that person is giving us nothing but abruptness.

How we might have longed for kindness.

Again, that may be the complexities of our own health issues.

How we long for someone to explain it all in a kindly manner.

At other times, when there is a need to seek support... even the requirement to purchase what is needed in the moment.

Yes, we can manage the process.

Yet, it is so refreshing, if instead of indifference, if instead of offhandness... we are met with kindness.

As well, there are those times of being overwhelmed by grief and sadness...

Yes, pity is just acceptable.

Even sympathy attracts the courtesy of gratitude.

Yet to be met with acts of kindness...

A kindness which has the wisdom of knowing how to meet a need...

A kindness generated by the fruit of the Spirit...

It will show what our Lord can do in this world.

When kindness comes to us, in place of indifference...

When kindness comes to us, in the place of lack of interest...

How refreshing it is,

What kindness can we do?

What can I do... ...?

What can I do to set free kindness in the harshness of the world around us.

We can know the pleasure found in being kind when we can offer it to others.

The Holy Spirit is empowering us who have the Spirit to offer it.

***Romans 2:4 highlights how our God has been kind to us.
(Show Romans 2:4)

God's kindness is seen ultimately in the revelation of his mercy shown in the gift of our God's Son.

The kindness of our God designed to lead us to repentance.

Repentance... turning from our sin... the stepping stone to our faith in Jesus.

***When I read Romans 11 and verse 22.
(Show Romans 11:22)

It has very much the sense of Galatians 5 when it talks about God's kindness along with his sternness.

Staying true to the Lord... all the way to the end... it is so important.

For the kindness of our Lord will never leave us.

But to return to indulging the flesh....

We will discover our Lord's sternness.

We, as Christians, live now as those who have been shown kindness.

***It is Ephesians 2:7 that gives us the ultimate explanation of the kindness of our God. (Show Ephesians 2:7)

The kindness of our God which we now seek to demonstrate in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For in the great day yet to come...

We will be a demonstration of the kindness of God.

For, now as then, we are raised with Christ.

We are now seated with him in the heavenly realms.

All of that, because our God is kind,

And we have responded to that kindness.

We live with fruit of the Spirit in us.

Every act of kindness we can display...

Every act of kindness, the power of the Holy Spirit can empower us to display.

Our troubled world desperately needs kindness.

Every such act bears testimony to the kindness of the Lord our God.

May others learn to glorify him.

May others learn to declare his good deeds..