

00:00:00 [Music] you came to [Music] take all [Music] we you to [Music] a reading from Galatians 5:22-23 but the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace forbearance kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control against such things there is no law an additional reading from Titus 3:4-7 but when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared 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 the renewal by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us

00:01:19 generously through Jesus Christ Our Savior so that having been justified by his grace we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life the word of the Lord all right good morning everyone good to be with you uh for those of you who don't know my name is Paul I'm one of the pastors here on staff um and before we get going with today's message on kindness um I just want to take a moment and update you about something going on in our church um we're told in scripture uh that God hears the prayers of his

00:01:56 people in fact in Exodus God hears the prayers of his people were crying out to him um in the midst of of a difficult situation uh and for those of you who attend on Saturday nights regularly I want you to know that God has heard your prayers um we have heard you crying out and we are about to move the Saturday night service back into the activity center in a couple of weeks so um if you attend Saturday night you know we tried it out in here for a little bit as that service was growing but we are actually

00:02:24 moving it back into the activity center um it's a great space uh Saturday night for those of you who don't know it's kind of a our casual alternative to Sunday morning uh for a service it's a warm environment it's a place that's small enough for you to feel known um and that room just works a little bit better for that service so we'll be moving it back in there we've got a couple weeks uh where we're going to be updating some of the things in that room to make it a little more sustainable in that space uh but we would appreciate

00:02:48 your patience and I know some of you are really excited about that shift um back into that room so that'll be happening on August uh 10th um and we're really excited to to move that service back in there um all right so kindness in a culture of indifference that's where we're headed today um I don't know if you felt this at different points in your life but I I feel like we live in a culture that's fairly indifferent to the things that are often going on in our world um and I've felt that at different times I don't know if

00:03:18 you felt it but but there can be times where it seems like there is so much suffering in the world so many things that are going wrong in the world that as we come into contact with them as we see them we can just kind of grow numb and different um in fact I I think some of us we get to this space where we just feel over traumatized and and over burdened by the things going on in our world

and we get to a place where it's just really hard to care and we just grow a little indifferent to the suffering we see in the world around us

00:03:47        and I was confronted by by the reality of indifference a couple weeks ago when I was scrolling through Instagram as I do occasionally and um I came across a post that was pictures um of children from Gaza in Israel who had been wounded or killed um and as I saw those pictures I just kept scrolling didn't pause didn't take a moment to think about what I just seen I just kept going um and I think I probably paused on some like silly video after that and then I stopped and I just thought to myself

00:04:23        whoa whoa whoa like like what did I just do I just looked at at pictures of of children halfway around the world who who have been killed or wounded um and I didn't even pause to like let that H and I feel like that's such a common experience for so many of us our world is so big and so broken it can be hard at times to to pause and to actually see the things going on in our world to recognize them and allow them to affect us and so in that moment I I just paused and actually scrolled back up and

00:05:01        I looked through the photos and I read about what was going on and I just realized it had been weeks since I had read anything about what was going on in that part of the world I I had just completely tuned out now here's the reality um you may be like me and you may feel overwhelmed by some of the things going on in the world and and what I want you to hear is that's actually I think fairly um normal in our current culture in fact sociologists they're studying that that the amount of information and as particularly about

00:05:32        suffering that is coming to us on a daily basis is more than we can actually Bear we weren't intended or created to be able to experience all of the things that we see in the world every day and so what I want you to hear is that it is okay to be overwhelmed it is okay to to not be able to care about everything but if you are a follower of Jesus it is not okay for us to become indifferent to everything either as followers of Jesus we are called to kindness in a world that is often indifferent to the cruelty and

00:06:10        suffering around us and and today as we kind of examine this fruit of the spirit kindness in an indifferent culture one of the things that I I want us to realize is that the ability to care um and to not be indifferent about the things going on around us that is actually incredibly unique to what it means to be a human in fact think about like a pet or an animal a dog perhaps probably not a cat CU they don't care if you get sick but if you get sick and sorry for the cat people I make too many cat jokes I really got to watch that I'm

00:06:41        sorry but if you uh if you have a dog and you get sick the dog can actually feel sadness toward like your situation like we know this but a dog has no ability at all to care about something going on across the street or across the world that ability is innately human it's something that God has created us with the capacity to do that that he has called us to care about our world and the people who are experiencing hardship or suffering or pain and to show kindness to them and and as we examine this fruit of the spirit kindness in a

00:07:15        culture of indifference I think one of the things we'll see and I think actually the main idea is that we are called to kindness because God has shown immense kindness to us and so as we walk through this this morning I I think there's maybe a part of us that thinks is is kindness really the the antithesis of indifference I mean what what what's the relationship there and I think what we will see is the more we are kind to others the more we become kind people it it kind of protects us from growing numb

00:07:47        to the things around us in the world so followers of Jesus are called to be kind because God has shown great kindness to us that's what we're called to do if we are followers of Jesus and I think this is truly all over scripture this calling to kindness in Luke 6:35 through 36 Jesus has this teaching he says but love your enemies and do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back then your reward will be great and you will be Children of the most high and then listen to this

00:08:23        because he is kind to The Ungrateful and the wicked be merciful then just as your heavenly father is merciful now notice in this teaching that Jesus says we we are to love our enemies we are to do good to them and we are to lend to them now I I would think that's a hard enough teaching in and of itself just being kind or loving someone that you would classify as an enemy is a really really hard teaching but Jesus actually goes a little bit further because I would say it's actually you know possible maybe to

00:08:53        love your enemy if you think there's something you could get back in return for them like we can all love someone if we feel like okay if I love them then I'll get this or if I am kind to them then maybe they they'll be kind to me and that can sometimes motivate us to to love people who are maybe outside of the sphere of our our normal kindness and love but Jesus says actually one step further you are to love people even if you don't get anything back from them you are to be good to them even if they

00:09:22        are not good to you you are supposed to lend to them even if they will not return back to you what you have lent to them that that feels like a much higher standard and something that's much harder for us to do it's easy to love someone if we think a if I'm kind to them then maybe they'll just be kind back to me and it'll change the relationship but Jesus calls us to something further than that

he says expect nothing back and in fact he grounds this teaching and this this idea in God's kindness to us now I want you

00:09:59 to think for a moment who is someone in your life that you might classify as an enemy and I know some of you may be thinking ah Paul that's really strong language I don't know that I would actually have an enemy and I just want you to think for a moment about someone in your life who's maybe mistreated you someone who is taken advantage of you someone who has maybe caused harm to someone you love I want you to think of that person and then I want you to to feel love towards them it's hard right it doesn't come easy or natural to

00:10:36 us it's not something that that is just innate within us when someone has wronged us or hurt us or caused harm to those we love feeling love towards them is not something that we do easily see see kindness It's one of these commands Jesus gives that we are to be kind to our enemies because of what God has done for us he says that God is kind to The Ungrateful and the wicked and I want you to think about that for a moment God is kind to The Ungrateful and the wicked that means god is kind to the people who

00:11:14 do not recognize the kindness he has given them that that God is kind to The Ungrateful the people who who may not even see the ways that God has been kind to their life who who show no gratitude or expression of thankfulness for what he has done for them God is still kind to them Jesus says God is even kind to the wicked to the people who are in open Rebellion against him who who want nothing to do with him who have rejected him God is kind to them and then Jesus says Be Kind in that same way to your

00:11:56 enemies when you think of that person that that you may not classify as an enemy that you may just think yeah they've maybe hurt me in this way or that way but some of you I know you're like no Paul I got some enemies I got a lot of people and like this teaching is not what I want to do it it seems like Jesus is saying that if God is kind to The Ungrateful and the wicked then as followers of Jesus we should be kind too now here's the problem with kindness I think is that I've made the case throughout this series that that the

00:12:28 fruit of the spirit have almost this Universal appeal to us right like we all want more love in our life nobody looks at this list and says you know what I just want more depression um than peace or I just want more anxiety than Joy no one looks at the list and says that we all want love and joy and peace and patience but I'm not sure about kindness because what Jesus says about kindness is that kindness costs us that there's something about being kind to others that will cost you to be kind to them

00:13:00 and I'm not sure that that has Universal appeal in a culture of indifference I'm not sure that that's something that that we naturally want and I I think that's one of the reasons why that the fruit of the spirit is kindness and and that it's tied to the fruit of the spirit is because it's not natural to us we think of kindness as weakness I mean nice people finish last we know this and so we don't want to finish last we want to win we want to get even with those who have taken advantage of us or mistreated us we

00:13:32 don't want to be kind to them but Jesus calls us to kindness followers of Jesus are called to kindness even when it costs there was a a story I came across this past week as I was reading up on kindness and it's of a a golfer and um I'm not a golfer and so this is probably the only story you will ever hear me tell that says a nice thing about a golfer so I just need you to know that up front if you're a golfer not trying to judge you at all um maybe a little bit no I'm just kidding not at all um

00:14:03 but this is a good story about a golfer who does a good thing he uh won a PGA tournament and after he won he received a check for his winnings of thousands of dollars and as this golfer leaves the tournament he goes out to his car and he's approached by a woman who comes up to him and says hey congratulations on your winning I just wanted to tell you about the situation in my life I have a baby who's in the hospital um Who doctors are telling me is possibly going to die that I don't think I can pay for

00:14:32 the the treatment that the baby needs to keep it alive now how many of you when I tell you the beginning of that story you just have some red flags go up right away anyone okay yeah that's why kindness is hard right it's like how does she know he won why is she approaching like we have this cynicism around kindness when people sometimes approach us and ask for things well this golfer he had a little bit of a different approach and what he actually did was he endorsed his winning chest handed her the entire amount and

00:15:01 said I hope you can make good days for your baby later the next week he was having lunch at a country club and while he was having lunch an official from the PGA tournament came and approached him and said hey uh there's something weird about the check you received last week it was cashed by a person not by you did this woman approach you and and did you give her the check and he said yeah I gave it to her and he said the official said I'm so sorry um she actually she lied to you she tricked you

00:15:30 um there was no baby who was sick uh she's a con artist she does this to people from time to time she just stole your winnings and and got away with it and the the golfer kind of taking all of the in he just he asked like so you mean there's no no dying baby and the official says no not at all she she made it all up um no one's dying she just took your winnings and do you know what the golfer said he said that's the best news I've heard all week now that's kindness that is also not my posture of

00:16:04 my heart that's not my natural response to someone who has taken advantage of me or mistreated me or swindled me out of whatever I have in this life but there's something about that story that I think reveals to us that the heart of kindness and what Jesus has called us to in demonstrating love and kindness even to those who do not deserve it see and I think this is important for us to make a little caveat at this point because well I do think Jesus is calling us to kindness and and to be kind to people who who may not

00:16:44 even deserve it who maybe have taken advantage of us and maybe have mistreated us I do not think that means that Jesus is calling us to stay in situations of abuse or where people continually take advantage of us I don't think if that woman came back to the golf for Jesus would be like hey you just need to write her another check okay like I don't think that's actually the moral of the story and I don't think that's what Jesus heart is in this teaching it's not that we are supposed to stay and remain in situations where

00:17:13 we receive abuse or where things happen but but what does it mean to be kind even in those situations this is an important Nuance I think for us in understanding kindness and and I hope it's really clear this language According To Jesus the fact that there is potential for people to take advantage of you or be dishonest with you must not prevent you from doing acts of kindness you see sometimes what happens in our our cynicism and in our indifference is we see things take place in the world we hear stories like this

00:17:55 golfer and we think well yep that's why I don't do that and that's completely understandable but I do not think that's the Heart of Jesus in this teaching what what he is saying is just because there's potential for you to be taken advantage of does not mean that you do not still strive to show kindness to other people the question is how in the world do we do that where do we find the strength to be kind in a culture of indifference to to to go to kindness to people who have mistreated us or or who have taken

00:18:31 advantage of us how do we express kindness to them how do we cultivate the fruit of the spirit of kindness in our lives well Jesus In this passage in Luke he Roots kindness in the kindness of God he he says that God's loving kindness and and we're going to take a moment to examine what it means that God is kind he one of the things that we'll see is that that kindness is not rooted in our willpower but it's rooted in God's character and that the more we understand God's character the the more it enables us to be kind to others you

00:19:05 see in the throughout the Old Testament one of the things God is praised for most is his kindness and we often have this idea of God from the Old Testament of him being wrathful or

judgmental or angry but but one of the things he's prayed for continuously is kindness It's all through the Psalms it's in the law it's in the prophets again and again and again God is praised for his kindness in fact one of the first things that God reveals about himself is found in Exodus where he says this to Moses he says and

00:19:33        God passed in front of Moses proclaiming the Lord the Lord the compassionate and gracious God slow to anger abounding in love and faithfulness maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness rebellion and sin yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished and he punishes the children and their children for the sin of their parents to the third and fourth generation now you may read that passage and you think Paul I don't actually see the word kindness there and you're right there is no English word

00:20:02        kindness but there is a Hebrew word called hessed and where it says that God is abounding in love and faithfulness it's the word hessed which is a very rich and deep ancient Hebrew word that that talks about God's loving kindness here's a definition of hessed hessed combines the ideas of Love generosity and enduring commitment even to those who potentially may not deserve hessit see when God comes to Moses and he he uses this word of his loving kindness what he is doing is he is communicating a word so rich in

00:20:40        meaning that it often often gets translated many different ways sometimes it's translated as loyalty sometimes it's translated as faithful Love sometimes it's translated as Mercy for those of you that are are more familiar with a King James version of the Bible this word is translated as God's loving kindness the idea behind it is that when God acts in kindness and his hessit it means that God is being faithful to his Covenant people and to his promises paying careful attention to their needs and

00:21:11        acting in generous and merciful love it's this beautiful word in fact one of the connotations about it is the the word actually describes the ability to be kind to people who are taxing your patience if you think of the stories of the Old Testament how many times the people of God tax his patience again and again and again and yet he remains kind to them that's this idea of hessed and kindness in the Old Testament but we don't only find it in the Old Testament we also find it in the New Testament

00:21:43        particularly in the person of Jesus in Titus 3:4-7 it says this but when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared now what Paul is essentially saying here is that the kindness of God appear appeared to us in a person that Jesus our savior is the embodiment of God's loving kindness to us he is the embodiment of this idea of hessit and then it says he saved us not because of righteous things we had done but because of his Mercy notice again that theme it's not because we deserved it it's not

00:22:21 because of anything that we did his Mercy is the pure reason for his kindness to us it's not so that he can get anything back from us it is a gift he has given to us despite we not deserving it it's pure generosity and so this kindness it says he he saved us through the washing of rebirth and the renew by the Holy Spirit and it amazes me how many times if you go to the New Testament and you see the different fruit of the spirit out of context from Galatians the number of times that the the renewal of the spirit

00:22:57 is attached to these different ideas about God's character and how he embodies the fruit of the spirit it's almost as if the authors of the New Testament say one of the ways you obtain the fruit of the spirit and you experience the fruit of the spirit is by experiencing God's character that that when you experience God's kindness it produces renewal in your life and you become a more kind person you see what this goes on to say is that then this kindness it was poured out on us generously through Jesus

00:23:31 Christ Our Savior so that having been justified by his grace we might become hes having the hope of eternal life you see what what Paul is saying In this passage and what I think the the different authors of the New Testament say when this idea of kindness comes up is that Jesus is the full embodiment and full revelation of go of God's loving kindness if kindness were a person it would be Jesus Christ see when he lived among the world when he came into contact with people who were sick he was never too busy to stop

00:24:07 and to provide healing for them when he encountered people who he was busy and he had some place to be and he needed to get to this next appointment or wherever he was going if people stopped him to ask questions about who he was and they were curious about that he was never too busy to stop and Converse with them when the disciples grew annoyed of the the kids and the children children who were too loud and obnoxious and they didn't want them around anymore Jesus welcomed them in kindness see consistently the theme we

00:24:37 see throughout the gospels is that when Jesus encounters the sick the poor the destitute the harassed and the hassled he continually shows them kindness in fact it tells us again and again and again when he sees people who are hurting he is moved with compassion towards them a term that's deeply related to kindness Jesus was kind everywhere he went and he well he was never detached or indifferent to the pain he saw in people's lives and I think one of the misconceptions we sometimes have about Jesus is oh that's just because he was a

00:25:12 a nice guy he he was just a nice person who who just naturally had this ability to be nicer to other people but but that's an absolute falsity it's a it's a mistake kindness and niceness are not



the same thing at all I I come from the south and and if you you have lived and spent any time in the South you know there's a difference between niceness and kindness and what I mean by that is in the South everyone is nice everyone is polite everyone is nice to you but they will smile at you while someone

00:25:42        else is stabbing you in the back like literally like oh yeah it's a great day I'm so glad to see you today and you're like bleeding out in front of them and they're nice to you but that's not kindness niess has no cost kindness costs something and Jesus did not merely go around being a nice person in fact there were times where he was not nice at all but he was always kind you see even when Jesus said harsh words and spoke truth to people in his world and said things that they didn't want to hear it was not nice but it was still

00:26:17        kind because sometimes the kind thing to do for a person is to tell them the truth and to tell them something they don't want to hear and sometimes the kind thing to do is to speak Comfort to them and Jesus was able to do both somehow flawlessly because he was the son of God empowered by the spirit to live out these characteristics of God see he was not just a nice person and and in our life kindness does not come naturally to us so we need the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to be nice and that

00:26:54        comes from Understanding God's kindness to us I want you to pause for a moment I want you to think about the story of your life where have you experience God's kindness To You Paul says in in Titus that that part of the kindness God has expressed towards you is is the Salvation he has given you that you did not deserve but his kindness is his Mercy is so rich it goes far beyond that what parts of your story do you remember where God is just Express his kindness to you giving you something maybe you didn't

00:27:32        deserve helping you in a way that you never thought imaginable some of you today you may not even be Believers you may not even believe in Jesus and yet I am sure if you looked at your story you would find places where you feel like man there there's just some reason that I was given this thing or experienced this thing and I don't even have a name for it what if that is the kindness and mercy towards Jesus towards you even even though you didn't know how to express gratitude for that see that is

00:28:04        God's kindness and it is when we understand believe and have experienced God's kindness that we're able to be kind to those around us but what does that look like practically I mean when it really gets down to it how do we express kindness even to people who may be classified as our enemies who take advantage of us who don't deserve our kindness how do we express the kind kindness of God to those around us well I I want to take a moment as we wrap up to to cover two areas where I think kindness is often hindered in our lives

00:28:37 and then cover two areas where I think we can maybe cultivate kindness in our lives and express that around us and one of the first areas I think that we are often hindered in our kindness is our busyness when I think of my life and I think of the the different things I have going on and my packed schedule and all of the different things I feel like I have to do it's in my busiest Seasons that I am most unkind it's in my busiest moments that that I I fail to pause and be kind to someone or it's the the times

00:29:08 that I I find myself often leaving the most kindness undone busyness can be a hindrance to kindness a few years ago there was a study done at Princeton Theological Seminary where where people were studying to be pastors and theologians and to serve the church and to serve God and in this study as they they um they what they did is they approached students of the Seminary and they told them that they were assigned a lecture on the story of the Good Samaritan now if you don't know the story of the Good

00:29:40 Samaritan it's a story Jesus told where he said there was a man who was beaten and left for dead and religious people stepped over him because they had things that they need to get to and they did not pause to help this person in need and then the last person in any of that Community would ever expect to help that person stopped to help the the the person who had been beaten in left for dead on the side of the road and so these students were told you're going to give a lecture on the Good Samaritan and

00:30:05 some of these students were were told literally that you have until this class ends right now and the time it takes you to walk over to the next class to prepare a lecture for the Good Samaritan so some of them were literally given minutes to come up with this lecture others were told that they had maybe 30 to 40 minutes to prepare a lecture and then what the the team did is as these students were walking from one building to the other they placed a person who was shabbily dressed who who was coughing and groaning on the side of

00:30:35 the path and these students literally some of them walked over and stepped over this person trying to get to the next class where they were supposed to give a lecture on how religious people should stop and help people who were hurting you know what's fascinating about it is that it actually didn't matter the the content of the lecture they were assigned What mattered was the time they were given you see some of the students the ones who who had maybe 3 or 4 minutes to prepare a lecture that they

00:31:09 were the least likely to stop to help this person but the people who were given more time were more likely and increasingly likely to stop to help this person who was hurting see I have a friend who often says that that in our culture so many Christians our schedules they're they're sinfully

scheduled like we create so much busyness in our lives and I am speaking this as much to myself as to anyone we can fill our schedules to the max trying to get the most out of each day we have places to go and things to do and people to be

00:31:51 with but man if our busyness gets in the way of Christ's call to kindness if we find ourselves stepping over or around or avoiding those who may be in need I think the call of this teaching and to cultivate the fruit of the spirit we need to repent of our schedules that are sinfully scheduled we need to ask Christ to come into that space and to repent for making ourselves so busy that we can express kindness to those in Our Lives who need it most that's hard that is not easy I think one of the other areas and

00:32:40 hindrance to kindness that we sometimes experience is bitterness in our lives and I know that the people I sometimes have the most trouble being kind to are those who have harmed me or taken advantage of me or who have hurt those that I love I mean those are the people that they're the last people I want to be kind to because when I think of them I just have bitterness in my heart against who they are and what they've done I don't know how this renewal Series has been Landing for you but it

00:33:16 has been messing my life up the last couple of weeks and uh as I've been preparing messages on the fruit of the spirit um kind of towards the beginning of this series and as I was studying for the series even before it started I started to feel this conviction as I was looking at the fruit of the spirit that there was a relationship in my life someone who I had felt hurt by um a relationship that had completely tethered and Fallen apart over the last few years um and that as I had been in relationship with this person person I

00:33:48 loved dearly was very close to me um we had kind of gone our separate ways and and have really no contact with one another and I had begun to feel that as I Was preparing these mess is that the Holy Spirit was saying you need to express love and kindness to this person and part of the story of how that relationship fell apart was that person wrote me a letter um letting me know some of the things that were wrong in our relationship I felt like I responded in a way that was kind and generous and

00:34:15 apologized where I could and and also shared some of my frustration at hurt and the person basically said sorry like done can't deal with this anymore and so as I felt this conviction I felt like the spirit was saying like you need to write them a letter asking for forgiveness forgiving them and showing them love and kindness and so what I did is I opened up my laptop and I went to those previous letters we had written to one another and I just took a moment to kind of read through them get my bearings about what

00:34:44 had happened in our relationship over the last few years and as I did that um I got so angry I got so mad I like slammed the laptop shut and I just thought this person doesn't deserve this like they did this this this and this like they didn't even listen to this this and this like they do the last thing they deserve is my love and kindness and then I uh I paused for a moment and I checked to make sure my computer wasn't broken and then I opened it back up after praying and I I wrote a letter and

00:35:20 I tried to to say all of the things that I felt like the spirit was telling me to say and I sent a letter it's been about a month and I have not heard back from that person um and that's okay I'm not expecting to get something back from them I I think what Jesus was calling me in this season to is being faithful and to show kindness to this person who who I felt like maybe didn't deserve it see one of the ways that I think that we show kindness to others is through forgiveness in fact if you look at almost every passage in the

00:35:56 New Testament where this fruit of the spirit is listed we saw it in the passage in Luke there's a passage in Ephesians it's going to come up in a second in Colossians when kindness comes up one of the ways that it is always tied to is forgive others as you have been forgiven that as Christ has forgiven you you are called to forgive others that again does not mean that you necessarily have to go back to an abusive or or harmful situation but it does mean that Christ calls us to forgive and it's a it's almost always kindness

00:36:31 is almost always linked to this idea of forgiveness what would our world look like if just this room of people and those joining online if we learn to be a people who could forgive those who have hurt us how might our world change I mean our our world has no category for forgiveness anymore there are no stories of redemption if you mess up you are cancelled what if the church was a place where canceled people could come and with open arms we could say you are forgiven here what if the the people who have

00:37:12 wounded us in our lives the people who have harmed those that we love what if we could offer them the kindness of forgiveness how might our culture of indifference change if we offered people that Grace see so busyness and bitterness I I think are two hindrances I often see in my life towards kindness one of the ways we can show kindnesses through the act of forgiveness but there's a second one I want to call your attention to and it comes from from Colossians 3:12-13 and it says this put on then as God's chosen

00:37:47 ones holy and beloved compassionate Hearts kindness humility meekness and patience bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you see forgiveness comes back again so you must also forgive now this is where I think we

we have felt the tension in this series around the fruit of the spirit and in the tension we often feel that we've tried to come back to again and again and again is it the spirit that cultivates the fruit in US is it is it

00:38:20 the spirit that gives us the fruit or do we have to do something to kind of not earn the fruit but help cultivate it in our lives what does that partnership look like and and our contention has been that yes if you are a Believer and have the Holy Spirit within you then the Holy Spirit naturally is bringing what is unnatural to your flesh so it is making it possible for you to be a person who is characterized by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness but in so many different passages where these fruit of the spirit

00:38:51 pop up it also seems to say that that like in Hebrews when it talks about peace it says make every effort towards peace so there's something we do here in Colossians it says that we put on kindness that that something we do is we put it on as if we were dressing ourselves in the morning and putting on clothes that is what we are supposed to do towards kindness It's a fruit of the spirit that we put on daily you in our culture we love to talk about random acts of kindness and we lift up stories of random acts of kindness and that's

00:39:25 all well and good but the fruit of the spirit is not supposed to be some random act kindness is supposed to be an intentional and deliberate decision that that we make because we are connected to the spirit and so we can express kindness to those around us so so here's an application for you this week that might feel a little weird we all get dressed in the morning right like hopefully like hopefully you're not leaving the house not getting dressed all of us put on close and most of us try to do that somewhat deliberately

00:39:55 like if you're going to a business meeting you'll wear one thing and if you're going to the gym you might wear another thing we all do so with intentionality right what would it look like this week if every morning when you got dressed this is very practical is with every morning when you got dressed you simply said a simple prayer Spirit where can I be kind to someone today where are you leading me to show kindness to others Spirit help me put kindness on this morning I mean who might be brought to your

00:40:30 mind who might be someone that you need to express kindness to you know as you're getting dressed honestly it may be that the person who most needs kindness in that moment is yourself that that maybe as you are getting ready for the day that that you just have a a harsh harsh inner dialogue about who you are maybe as you're getting dressed it's because of of what you look like and you need the kindness of the spirit to just envelop that space to hear that you are a son or a daughter of the king who has created You

00:41:10 In His Image maybe the the kindness you need to express to yourself is simply around the shame and guilt you feel the ways that you cannot forgive yourself for what you've done or maybe even what has happened to you what would it look like if as you're getting dressed to put on kindness towards yourself and ask the spirit to cultivate kindness in your heart towards yourself you know maybe it would be for those of you who are married a spouse would come to mind if you have been married for five minutes you know that

00:41:46 your spouse at times goes through seasons of difficulty seasons of depression self-doubt self-hatred worry about the future spouses can have all sorts of hard hardship that they feel what if this could be a week where as you dress in the morning you think of your spouse and you pray over them asking for opportunities to show God's kindness to them I talk to so many people whose marriages are falling apart and I often think and I often say to them you know if if both people could just focus daily on kindness towards

00:42:22 each other I wonder how many marriages would be saved and what if this week that could be the start of your journey with your spouse maybe for those of you who have children young or old your children may be feeling insecure or scared they may be doing poorly in school they have e may have even made really dumb decisions children do that sometimes right what would it look like for you to to not grow distant in those spaces when your kids make mistakes but to pursue them with kindness for forgiving them as you have

00:42:59 been forgiven you know it could be your parents it could be your roommate it could be a friend a boyfriend a girlfriend a coworker you see people all around us are desperate for the kindness of God and I think one of the reasons Jesus has called us to kindness is because we are his hands and feet people experience his kindness through us because we have experienced Christ's kindness when we experience the kindness and grace and mercy of Jesus then we can turn that out to those around us what would it look like for us to

00:43:42 express that kindness to those around us this week and and here's why I went a little more direct and personal with that is I think it's actually really really easy for us to be kind to strangers random acts of kindness and kindness to strangers are actually not that difficult it it's fairly easy to be kind to the Barista who messes up your order it is really difficult to be kind to the child who disobeys you it is really easy to be kind to the person you don't know and really challenging to be

00:44:12 kind to the person you know most see I I think there are people all around us in direct proximity to us who are desperate to experience God's kindness and what would it look like for us as a community to cultivate that fruit of the spirit within us and express that towards others see followers of

Jesus are called to kindness because we have been shown the kindness of God the beautiful thing about the God we worship is he has never grown indifferent to our suffering or the things that are wrong with our world

00:44:45        there has never been one moment of any day not a second where God has grown indifferent or not cared about the pain and suffering of this world World God never just keeps scrolling God never just shrugs his shoulders and says whatever there's nothing I can do we believe in a God who demonstrated his love and kindness towards us with his pierced feet and hands and do you remember even on the cross what Jesus posture was it was concern and kindness for his widowed mother in front of him and then in one

00:45:28        of his final words he says father forgive them see there it is again kindness and forgiveness see we believe in a God who is always always kind and always cares who never grows Indi Anita erotic uh she wrote a book called A revolution of kindness and she says the end result of kindness is that it draws people to you and I think I absolutely believe that people are desperate for kindness and when they see kindness it will draw you to them but I think we can say with even more conviction that that not only does

00:46:07        kindness draw people to you or to me but kindness draws people to Christ that is ultimately what followers of Jesus are called to do so how might you put on kindness this week in a world of indifference how might you love your enemies forgiving them as you have been forgiven so that they might be drawn to the love and kindness of Christ let's pray Heavenly Father God we take a a moment just to express our gratitude for how deeply kind you are to us God that when we were far from you when we were overwhelmed by guilt or

00:46:56        shame God when when we felt the the overwhelming weight of suffering and Brokenness in our world God you were there and you cared and you were a God who is deeply deeply kind you are a God who forgives God I pray for people in this room right now who may feel like they are Beyond forgiveness who may feel like there have been too many things they have done too many things that that they have left undone for your grace and mercy God may they hear may may your spirit speak to their hearts now in this

00:47:38        moment that that your kindness is not dependent on anything they have done with you it is never about earning it was always about your grace and mercy and kindness towards us God for those of us who are struggling with busyness or bitterness in our lives right now God the the places within us where where we are finding it hard to fi to express kindness to to the marriages that are broken the the children who are far off the the the co-workers who have have mistreated us God I pray that that by the power of

00:48:15        your spirit not by our willpower but the power of your spirit and our experience of your kindness we would know this week what it means to put on kindness towards them God God soften our hearts don't let us be indifferent to a hurting World desperate for kindness God may we be your hands and feet and show your kindness to the world around us it's in Christ's name that we pray amen