

Fruit of the Spirit

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- [0 : 00] Alright, Colossians chapter 3, verse 12 through 14. Colossians 3, 12 through 14. Here's the word of the Lord.
- Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another.
- And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- Father, thank you for your word. I pray that you would use it as the two-edged sword to show us our thoughts and intentions, dividing both joint and marrow.
- And we pray, Father, that we would find in it that which equips us, that we might live a godly life. We pray this in Christ's name.
- [1 : 04] Amen. Alright, so I want you to imagine for just a second driving instructions. Did anybody ever teach one of your kids to drive?
- Have you taught your kids to drive? You know, that kind of scenario is interesting because there's a lot of negatives you've got to tell them.
- You've got to tell them, don't drive over the speed limit. Don't brake so hard. Don't follow so close. Don't straddle the line. Stay in your lane.
- You know, lots of things you've got to tell them. But, you know, driving and instructions like that, in almost anything that we have, there are those negative instructions, but there are some positive things that have to be said.
- You know, you've got to tell them, look, just relax. Just relax, right? You don't want them all tensed up holding that wheel. You want them to learn, and here's the hardest thing, right? That whole three-dimensional physics of holding a wheel, sitting on this side of a car, trying to make these two wheels stay in this lane.
- [2 : 13] All the physics, and what is it like to make a turn? Those things don't come about just by telling them something negative. You've got to show them. You've got to help them.
- You've got to give positives about those things. The Christian life is no different, and we've gone through a lot of negatives, a lot of things that we need to not do, things that need to not be in our lives, and today we're going to be a little more positive.
- These are things that we ought to have. These are things that ought to be in your life. These are ways that you and I ought to act, things that are glorious and beautiful, and there's three ways we want to look at this, right?
- What we want to do is we want to understand these three things because it's going to help us to live a better Christian life. The first is we've got to know how we should be.
- We need to know how we should be. Look at verse 12. Verse 12 starts with this command that says, Put on. It says, Put on. Now that word, put on, is exactly what you would think.
- [3 : 20] It's a Greek word that means to put on clothes, right? It's something you're supposed to wear. These qualities, they are the clothing that you should wear.

It's something that should mark you. It should be so ingrained in your life, a behavior that's so visible on the outside that your interactions with other people, they notice it, they see it, they understand it, right?

And the second thing about these traits, and let's just look at them. There's five of them total. You see compassionate hearts.

Compassionate hearts. The core of a compassionate heart is mercy. It's a feeling of mercy towards someone. You see them in a difficult situation and you sort of sense and feel a merciful attitude towards them.

Kindness. Kindness is being beneficial to others. As a matter of fact, it's a list of the fruit of the Spirit. It's there in Galatians. It's a way of acting towards somebody that's upright and good and helpful to them.

[4 : 29] So you can see, if you've got a compassionate heart, you feel merciful towards someone, you see somebody in trouble, then being kind to them is doing something that helps them.

It's not just feeling merciful, but kindness is then acting on that and doing something about it, right? Humility. Now this humility is a type of modesty.

It's a type of modesty. It's the idea of bearing with one another in the sense that I want to count you as more important than me. I'm going to do what I can to meet your needs before I meet my needs.

A good illustration of that is almost any mother, right, that provides for their children food to eat before she eats herself. Meekness. Meekness is this idea also from the fruit of the Spirit.

In the fruit of the Spirit, this is the same word as gentleness. Gentleness. Now meekness and gentleness are different from one another, so just hold that in mind. But gentleness is a tenderness in dealing with people when you have to confront them.

[5 : 39] Paul uses this word when he confronts people who say he's got to restore someone who's caught in sin, but do so in a spirit of gentleness. Or he's going to visit the Corinthians and he doesn't want to come with a rod, but he wants to come with gentleness.

Or Titus tells us that as we who are Christians ought to treat those who are not Christians with courtesy. It's a gentleness that is there. And then the last one is the word patience.

The word patience. Again, the fruit of the Spirit is here. This is the idea of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome.

Kind of like a while ago, did I have patience while I was waiting on the microphone to be turned down? And I was tranquil while I was awaiting for a result.

I'm not so sure that I was, but you get the idea. This is the bearing up. Even under provocation, somebody's doing something to you and causing something to happen to you.

[6 : 44] Patience is being tranquil in the face of that. Now, I know I've just blown through those five real fast, but let me give you an illustration from the New Testament that pulls all these things together.

You'll remember that on the night that Jesus was arrested, that he went to the Garden of Gethsemane, right? And in the Garden of Gethsemane, he's praying with his disciples. He prays three times.

And Judas is gone. Judas has gone off to go get the leaders, and he's betraying Jesus that night. And when Judas comes into the Garden, he comes up to Jesus.

He kisses Jesus on the cheek, which was a sign of respect from a disciple to a master. And so he betrays Jesus with this sign of respect. And in that moment, what does Peter do?

Peter pulls out his sword, and he chops off the ear of the high priest's servant, Malachis. He just chops it off. Right?

[7 : 42] And then Jesus, seeing this scene, reaches over and touches the man on the side of the head and heals his ear.

Puts it right back. Then he looks at Peter and says, those who live by the sword die by the sword. Now, all those qualities that we just talked about are right there in that story.

Do you see it? You see Jesus with the compassion for this man who's just lost his ear. He's got a mercy for him. And then he shows kindness to this man by actually doing something good for him, something beneficial for him, and healing his ear.

And in humility, think about this, Jesus is being betrayed. Jesus is about to be arrested. And rather than worrying about what he's going through, he worries about what this man is going through.

He puts this man first over himself. And then, when he comes to Peter, in gentleness, he confronts Peter. Because how would you confront Peter if you had been Jesus?

[8 : 50] You idiot. Or, you're always such a hothead. What am I going to do with you? But how does Jesus confront Peter?

He says, those who live by the sword will die by the sword. And in all of this, Jesus is just waiting. See, I'm a little impatient. If you haven't guessed that, I'm a little impatient.

Because here's what happens. I hear that somebody's got a problem with me. I hear that something's going on. I have a tendency to immediately go find that person and immediately say, you've got an issue with me?

Let's get this talked about. Now, I'm a little bit too forward sometimes. Jesus knows that he's about to be arrested. He knows there's false accusations coming against him.

And what does he do? He just patiently waits for them to cuff him and take him away. Tranquil in that moment. Do you understand what I'm saying? This is a description of how the Christian ought to be.

[9 : 51] These qualities ought to ooze out of your life. This ought to be the aroma of your life. If the aroma of our life is something other than this, then we're not living the way he's called us to live.

This ought to be the aroma of our life. When we were in, I think it was in Lufkin, I was pastor of a church there, and we had a parsonage that was over 100 years old.

Parsonage that was over 100 years old. And I was across the road from the parsonage at the church, and I would walk across the road. It was Highway 7. It was 70 miles an hour. You have to walk, you know, watch what you're doing.

You cross this road, go up the hill, and the first part of the house is the carport. And as I would get right into the carport, whatever is lunch is pouring out of the house.

And I would say that I could have the same experience here, but this house is so well insulated and tight that I don't smell anything until I open the door. But at this house, it's 100 years old.

[10 : 59] It was just oozing, you know what I'm saying? And whatever was inside came out. And as you got close to the house, you could smell cookies, you could smell roast, you could smell whatever is cooking.

Because the aroma of that pervaded and oozed out of the house. This is how we have to be. As Christians, we're supposed to be gentle and patient and kind and merciful to people.

And that should be the aroma of our lives. We should ooze this out because Christ is in us. So how do we get there? How do we put these things on?

Let me give you five things just real quickly. And then we're going to go to the other points. The first is this. You've got to be convinced of this. You have to be convinced. You've got to be convinced that you ought to be a person of patience and humility and gentleness and mercy.

If you're not convinced that that's the way you ought to live, then you will never grow this way. If you're the kind of person that thinks you've always got to defend yourself, if you're the kind of person that thinks you've always got to make sure to look out for number one, you're never going to grow in these things.

[12 : 10] To grow in these things, you must be convinced of it. Secondly, you must be submitted. You must be submitted. These qualities are not produced except by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You might be able to look patient without the Holy Spirit, but that's a counterfeit to what this is.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Just because you feel tranquil in a moment doesn't mean this is the work of God because you need to be tranquil in a moment for the glory of God.

That's the difference. Do you understand what I'm saying? See, I just don't think we understand because you know people who are lost. You know people who are atheists. You know people who have no desire to follow Christ whatsoever, yet they seem like they're the most patient people in the world or the kindest people in the world.

We've got people in our lives that I'm not sure that they're Christians, yet they do kind things all the time. That's not a work of the Holy Spirit, but that is a way that they live in which they try to do things apart from God.

[13 : 23] And though from our vantage point it looks good and it does good for society, it's not commendable to God. You must be submitted to the Holy Spirit.

You must be submitted to God in order for these qualities to be worked out in your life. Second, third thing, you need to be knowledgeable.

You need to be knowledgeable. Part of the way that the Holy Spirit works in your life is that the more you learn about God, the more He increases these qualities in your life. The more you learn about God, the more He increases these qualities in your life.

Look at 2 Peter 1, verse 3. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Life? Life, the things we've got to do, the interactions we have, Godliness.

All of these qualities and characteristics. He's granted to us all things that pertain to godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence.

[14 : 27] In other words, if you are not growing in your knowledge of God, then you will not grow in these qualities. If you are growing in your knowledge of God, then you will grow in these qualities.

There's no alternative. The Holy Spirit uses the knowledge of God in you the more you come to know Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He produces in you these qualities.

Fourth, you've got to be ready. You've got to be ready because part of what God does is you learn more about who God is as He takes you through difficulties and trials. You know, they always say, don't pray for patience because God's going to put you through trials.

He doesn't always put you through trials, but He does prune. And if you refuse to pray for patience because you don't want to go through trouble, I think there's a problem there. Right?

Because we're supposed to have patience. So we need to be praying for patience, and if God brings trouble, hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Because we need those troubles to be sharpened and refined for Him.

[15 : 35] And the fifth and final thing is you've got to be prayerful. Pray. Pray for yourself. Pray for yourself to lose your harshness. Pray for yourself to lose your self-centeredness.

Pray for yourself to lose your pride, to lose your impatience, and to be someone who's gentle, patient, merciful, and kind. So you've got to know how you have to be.

The second thing we've got to know is we've got to know who we are. We have to know who we are. Verse 12, when he says, put on these qualities, he also says, put on as.

In other words, he gives you a description of who you are so that you'll understand what you've got to do. He gives you a description of who you are so that you can know what you've got to do.

We've talked about this before. There's the indicative and the imperative. There's the describing of who we are and the demand of what we've got to do. Because if we just do without understanding who we are and from who we are, then it's all in our strength and not in his.

[16 : 49] So he tells us in verse 12 that we're to put on as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. That word chosen ones is elect.

As God's elect, holy and beloved. Now let me just break this down for us. He says, as, he's saying, because of something positive about you, do all of these positive things.

You are this, therefore do this. What does he say? They are. He says that they are chosen, holy and beloved.

They are holy and beloved. Holy is this idea that we have the righteousness of God. Beloved is that he loves us, so he chose us. So then, what does it mean to be God's elect?

What does it mean to be God's chosen? Where does this idea come from? Well, it's all over the Old Testament. It's all over the New Testament. But I want to take you to one passage where it will give us a good definition of what it is to be chosen of God.

[17 : 56] Let me just tell you this. There's this idea and this concept that the only chosen people of God are the Jews. The New Testament does not teach that. They are chosen, and were chosen, but Paul in Colossians, and the passage we're going to read, is talking to a bunch of Gentiles.

And he's telling these Gentiles that they are God's chosen. Now, how is that? Because they're in Christ. They're in Christ.

So, let me take you to Romans 8, verse 31-35. We don't have the screen, do we? We're working on it. Okay, that's fine. So, if you want to look in your Bible for this verse, that's fine.

Romans 8, verse 31-35. Here's what it says. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Verse 32. He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[19 : 03] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Verse 34. Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? You see, here's the point. There's two things about that passage that you've got to know before I tell you what I need to tell you.

One is that every single one of those verses, except one, has something to do with somebody being against God's people. They're against you. Who's going to condemn you?

Who's going to say anything against you? Who's going to separate you? Right? There's all of these things about being against you. The other thing is that God's elect is verse 34 right in the middle, or verse 33 right in the middle of this.

[20 : 09] And all of these passages are talking about them. Who can bring a charge against God's elect? Who can separate God's elect? Who can do all these things for them? So here's what we have. What are we saying when we talk about God's elect?

Who are the elect of God? And let me just give you five things about them from that passage, and then we're going to move on. I just want you to get the glimpse of the glory of this.

Okay? From verse 31, God's chosen are those whom God is for, and no one can be against. God's chosen are those whom God is for, and no one can be against.

Verse 32, God's chosen are those for whom God gave up His own Son, and therefore will give them all things. Verse 33, God's chosen are those whom God has justified.

Verse 34, God's chosen are those whom Christ has died for, raised for, and intercedes for. Verse 35, God's chosen are those who cannot be separated from the love of Christ.

[21 : 19] Now whatever else all of this means, here's the point. These are glorious realities. These are glorious realities. If you are in Christ, if you've trusted Christ, then God is for you no matter what's going on in the world.

If you are in Christ and He has given His Son for you, and He will give all things for you, no matter what else is going on in this world, if you are in Christ, then the Lord has given to you this eternity in which Christ is interceding for you all the time, and you will never, ever, ever be separated from the love of Christ.

Now, if that's who you are, then how can you fail to have the fruit of the Spirit flowing out through you? If the Father is willing to have you as His elect, and the Son is willing to give His life for you, and the Spirit is willing to work in you, then you have the triune God working in harmony for your good and for His glory.

And so patience, patience growing in us is not pulling ourselves up by our bootstrap and trying harder, but patience is the outworking of the triune God in you.

Somebody needs to say, Amen. Amen. Because when I look at things like mercy and kindness and humility and meekness and patience, and I think to myself, I don't want to act that way in my natural self, in my sinful self.

[22 : 53] No, I want to look out for me, number one. And I want you to do what I want you to do. And I don't want to meet your needs first. I want my needs to meet me first. How can I overcome such a selfish, self-centered, prideful way of life?

Only by the work of the triune God. Christians, you need to believe who you are in Christ. You are God's chosen people.

And if you are truly a Christian, you are His elect. One day, when this came home to me, I was in Florida at a pastor's conference. It was at First Baptist Church Jacksonville.

A group of pastors that I had gone with, we had gone back to the hotel room and we were spending time in prayer together. Reading Scripture out loud, praying together, this kind of a thing.

And there were several passages being read. One of those passages talked about being God's chosen. That God chose you. And I sat there listening to that passage, just reading it over and over.

[24 : 09] And I was so overcome by what it was telling me because because I would never, ever, in a million years, choose me.

If I had been God, I mean, like I needed to have conference with God and say, God, you got the wrong guy. I mean, you need glory. You need praise.

You need worship. And I'm a nasty, old, terrible person. Why in the world waste this choice on me? And I wept and I wept and I wept.

And then I realized God never chooses the brave and the bold. God never chooses the strong and the powerful. God chooses the weak so that He might get all of the glory.

Can you imagine what it would be like growing up in a time where you had nothing? You lived in poverty. You lived in some sort of squalor. You tried to get by in life just hand to mouth just as best you could.

[25 : 22] And then all of a sudden somebody showed up on your doorstep. Yes? We're here to tell you that you actually are the heir of the kingdom.

kingdom. You're actually a prince or princess and your father is calling for you to come home. You had no idea. Can you imagine walking into a place after living in the poverty that you lived in walking into a palace looking at the riches looking at the opulence looking at all the radiance of all the splendor of all the wealth that they've got and you think to yourself I'm never going to need anything again.

I'm never going to have to scrounge for another scrap of bread but it's not just that. Being that child of that king doesn't just give you the ability to have food on the table and clothes on your back but now you have to act like a royal child.

You don't have to act like a prince. You don't have to act like a princess and in all of that he gives you all the resources for you to even be royal. Not just meet needs.

That's the best way I know to describe what we have in Christ because the Father has chosen us because we belong to him. We have all the resources that we need to live the way he's called us to live.

[26 : 43] He has chosen us. He has died for us. He has sealed us. We are his by his choice. And if you're not a Christian today then you need to understand that your identity is that you're under the wrath of God.

And you need to turn. And you need to trust in Christ. The final thing is this. We need to know what we should do then. So how we should live kind of gives us that outward clothing.

This is what we're dressed in. This is the aroma of our life. Knowing who we are. We're chosen by God so we belong to him. So what are the things to do? There's three things to do in this passage.

The first, I'm going to go jump down to verse 14 and talk about love because he tells us in verse 13 to bear one another. Verse 13 forgive each other. And verse 14 love.

Put on love. This word love you'll notice in most translations in verse 14 it says put on love. The words put on are not there in the Greek.

[27 : 41] They're brought down from verse 12 to make sense of it because you're supposed to put on love. But love's a little different from the rest of these qualities. While it is a quality it's also an action. But the other thing about this love that's different is that this love is higher than the other qualities.

It's a little bit like an umbrella and all these other qualities live underneath it. In other words you can't really be merciful to someone without being loving. You can't be kind. You can't be patient without being loving.

So he wants this love to be there. But also he says this love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. We're to have this love because it's the glue that brings all these other qualities together so that we can live in harmony with one another.

See that's the goal for the Christian is so that we as the church body can live in perfect harmony together. That we can live in unity together. How does that happen? You've got to love each other.

You've got to love each other. You've got to love each other. The second thing that we're supposed to do is to bear with one another.

[28 : 54] Bear with one another. The word bear means to put up with a complaint. One way we can think about this is to return back to the illustration of Jesus with the high priest's ear and that is that he was bearing with Peter.

Peter was being immature. Peter was being impetuous. Peter sometimes can be unhinged. And Jesus was bearing with him.

Jesus does give him a chastising but he then chastises and then waits. And sometimes what happens is that we as Christians will come across another Christian who maybe is a little immature in their faith.

Maybe there's a little bit of selfishness still in there. and sometimes what we have a tendency to do is pull out the cannons and volley everything at them that we can rather than taking a moment to confront and then patiently wait for God to work in them.

Because you see God's working and he's just not working on our timetable. Sometimes you're going to have to practice this bearing even with your pastor. Because sometimes I'm going to do things and say things that you're going to be really offended by or it's going to drive you crazy or it's going to make you nuts or it's going to make you go like every time I'm preaching today I'm hitting this little low note when I hit that and it bounces this maybe that just irritates you and you're just like oh man I just can't stand that you're going to have to bear with me.

[30 : 28] Sometimes you're going to have to bear with your husband and sometimes he's going to have to bear with you. Sometimes you're going to have to bear with your children.

Sometimes you're going to have to bear with your grandchildren. Sometimes they're going to have to bear with you. That bearing with them is as 1 Peter talks about that love covers a multitude of sins.

I mean there are things and ways in which we act sometimes that do not need defense that do not need confrontation. We know this person is a Christian and God is going to get a hold of them.

Just patiently wait. Bear with them. You don't have to attack and confront every little thing. Bear patiently with one another.

And the last thing is the forgiveness. We're to have forgiveness with one another. Let me tell you a couple things about forgiveness. Let me tell you this first thing that you're not going to like and it's this.

[31 : 34] Forgiveness is not a feeling. Forgiveness is a legal spiritual transaction that happens in the spirit realm as you forgive another person.

You are commanded to forgive. forgive. It's not an option. It's not a thing that says well when I feel like forgiving then I'll forgive.

Or when all the bad feelings and the hurt goes away then I'll forgive. No. Even while you are hurt you must forgive. Think about this. We have all violated God's law.

We've broken God's law. we have defamed His character and His name. Does God wait to feel better about that before He forgives us? No.

He sent His Son to pay the price for that forgiveness. forgiveness. What is the cost of forgiveness? The cost of forgiveness is the blood of Christ.

[32 : 39] That's the cost of forgiveness. That's why husbands can forgive wives and wives can forgive husbands and parents can forgive children and children can forgive parents and siblings can forgive one another and people sitting on the riverside and townside can forgive one another.

Why? Because Christ has paid the price for all the sin. The second thing He tells us is that we're to forgive in the way the Lord has forgiven us.

How many times have you sinned against the Lord? How many times have you gone in prayer to the Lord and asked Him to forgive you for the same thing?

How many times has your loved one sinned against you in a particular way? How many times have you been forgiving of that? The promise of the new covenant Christ says is that I will remember their sins no more.

When you forgive you're making a promise. When you forgive someone you're making a promise. You're making a promise not to hold that thing against them anymore. you're making a promise not to bring it back up to yourself and think about it and dwell on it.

[34 : 02] You're making a promise not to talk about it to somebody else. You're making a promise not to even bring it up to them again. You get in a situation almost exactly like it and then you say well you know 20 years ago you did this or last week you did this.

Now if you've forgiven you don't get to bring that up anymore. Because when you go to the Lord and you ask him to forgive you for what you have done that you've done again and again and again he doesn't look at you and say you know you just did this yesterday.

Get your act together come back and then I'll forgive you. He doesn't do that to us. That's exactly how we treat one another. This is this is Christianity where the rubber meets the road.

You know what I'm saying? Like there's a lot of pie in the sky things that people talk about with Christianity and there's a lot of things that I've preached theologically sometimes are pretty lofty but there's nothing more practical in life than the things that we're talking about here today.

I mean you've got to go home with that person sitting next to you or when you get home and you're by yourself you're going to have to engage with somebody who's going to come by or somebody tomorrow that you're going to engage with and in that moment there's going to be the opportunity for sin.

[35 : 21] One of the writers that I love he wrote a book for those who are going to get married. Right? It's like a pre-marriage counseling book. You know what the title of that book is?

When Sinners Say I Do. And he's not talking about lost people. I mean just think about this right now.

Where you're seated if you've got somebody to your left, you've got somebody to your right, you've got somebody in front of you, you've got somebody behind you, every one of them is a sinner.

Some of them you've got to live with. If Christianity can't help you learn how to live with sinners, sinners, then what use is it?

You have to practice love. You have to bear patiently with one another. You have to forgive, be merciful, helpful, humble.

[36 : 30] so how are you going to live when you leave this place and you go home and get back to doing the things that you normally do.

If this doesn't impact or at least put a little pebble in your shoes so that you're annoyed by it and thinking about it, what use is it? Our challenge to you is to put on as God's chosen people, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience.

We can't be this with one another apart from the work of God. You're going to bear with one another, you're going to love one another, you're going to forgive one another.

If you've got someone in your life today that maybe you're at odds with them, it's another Christian, that's what I just want, just focus on Christians. We can talk about non-Christians later, right? But today, just think about another Christian.

Maybe there's a Christian in your life. Maybe it's somebody who's a member of this church, maybe they're a member of another church, maybe they now, but it's a Christian. You know the two of you are not in sync together.

[37 : 58] You've been offended by them, you've been hurt by them. Before the sun sets today, call them and make it right.

Call them and make it right. May God get all the praise. Let's pray.