

Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness

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- [0 : 0 0] We see the four aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. We'll be considering this evening joy, peace, patience, kindness, and the points that we're going to follow and pray.
- The joy of the Lord, peace in the Lord, patience with the Lord, and kindness from the Lord. Joy, peace, patience, kindness.
- And of course, at this time of year, we're going to hear of joy in the coming of the Lord Jesus. In these coming weeks of Advent, we hear the word joy so often.
- Joy to the world is going to be heard, and heard very much in our carols at Christmas. We're going to hear of peace, peace in the Christmas song even.
- Let there be peace on earth. We hear of patience at the moment. We're called to be patient through these difficult days of lockdown. And of course, we'll hear of kindness, kindness at this time, particularly in the necessity to look out for others, to help others, to be kind one to another, even those who are suffering particularly through these difficult days of restriction and lockdown.
- [1 : 1 6] Joy, peace, patience, kindness. What are these graces in relation to the Spirit-filled church, to the Spirit-filled believer, the one who walks in the Spirit, the one who shows forth the fruit of the Spirit, who does so in that love that comes from loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves, and that love that's the evidence of saving faith?
- What do these graces reveal then in the Spirit-filled believer? I mean, is joy simply a good feeling? Is peace simply some kind of calm amidst the storms of life?
- Is there more to that peace than the Bible speaks of? What about patience? What's that grace that characterises the person who's filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What's that grace? Kindness. I mean, is kindness simply a friendly gesture that's given once a year, and at this time of year, towards a person in need?
- I mean, these qualities that Paul's speaking of here, these qualities of grace, they reveal the true faith of a believer. They indicate that a life has been transformed and transformed by grace.
- [2 : 4 2] It's that self-giving love that responds to the one who first loved me and gave himself for me. So what then of these aspects of grace in the believer's armoury that are seen and witnessed and to be given thanks for, as we seek and as you seek, to be salt and light in the world.
- Well, of course, we're going to look at these graces, these four graces this evening, as we can continue our thoughts on the fruit of the Spirit. Because remember, Paul's writing as to, so what's in contrast to the ugliness of the works of the flesh, the works of the sinful nature, these works, these aspects of life, that in fact have no place in the life of the person who testifies to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus.
- So we're going to focus on these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. And we're going to do so, I pray, so that we worship God. We give him praise for these gifts.

So we're going to consider these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit so that we become more like the Lord Jesus, more like him who was full of joy and peace and patience and kindness.

Let's begin then with joy, joy of the Lord. Joy, that quality, we might say, that expression of rejoicing in the Lord, that joy that comes from knowing the love of God in your life, the joy that comes from knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells within you, that you've been brought and bought from darkness into light and done so by the initiative of God's saving grace.

[4 : 37] And it's that joy that comes from a heart that truly knows that before you were loved, before you loved God, he loved you.

It's that joy knowing that God has loved you from all eternity, so joy, first and foremost then, joy is that knowledge of the love of God for you, that joy in knowing that God has loved you, God loved you, an undeserving sinner.

That's joy. That's the root, if you like, of joy, the knowledge of God's love for you. And you can see that from Scripture. The evidence is there even in Scripture, that connection between joy and love.

Psalms 31 verse 7, for example, says, I will rejoice and be glad in your saving love. The psalmist expressing that joy in knowing the steadfast love of God towards him.

Or in 1 Peter 1 verse 8, where Peter writes to the church saying, though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy.

[5 : 50] Joy that's inexpressible and filled with glory. You haven't seen the Savior, yet you love him. And that brings joy in your heart.

Of course, it's that joy that the Christian has in his and her walk with the Spirit, in the Spirit, that walk that you have with the Lord Jesus.

Jesus himself, who was and is full of joy in his work of salvation. Because, you know, you can only know that true joy in your life as you're gifted that joy, as you're gifted that joy of the Lord, just that joy that Jesus revealed in his ministry on earth.

Jesus demonstrated his own Spirit-filled life through joy. And particularly that joy in knowing, knowing of his work of redemption, that work that would make it possible for sinners to come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Go to Luke's Gospel, for example, Luke chapter 10. And you read these words, that in the same hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. And listen to the prayer of Jesus when he's rejoicing in the Holy Spirit.

[7 : 10] I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Jesus' joy, his joy in the Spirit, directed towards his Father because of the knowledge that Jesus has of his Father's perfect will, perfect plan of redemption, that plan that involved Jesus and his perfect obedience to God's law and God's will.

It was that joy that was in Jesus' heart before Jesus went to the cross, went to the cross of Calvary, when Jesus faced the cross for us. Listen to the words of the writer to the Hebrews expressing that joy of Jesus.

That writer to the Hebrews, in Hebrews 12, verse 2, when he states our need to look to Jesus, he says, Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

So we're seeing, yes, Jesus' joy, even in the midst of suffering. There's Jesus' joy, even amidst the prospect of his bearing sin, sin, even though he knew no sin in himself.

[8 : 34] Jesus had joy in his heart to that knowledge that he'd come to pay the price to set the prisoners free, to set you free, to set me free, to set us free from the slavery of sin.

It's that joy of the Lord that enables you to rise, yes, rise even above suffering and to see God's perfect love perfected in love for you.

That's the joy of the Lord, yes, that this time, even this time of year, brings to us when we remember the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven to earth, when he came in human form, when he came as the Christ child, when he came, when he was sent for us, so that you might know that joy of the Lord and joy in the Lord, so that you might know that saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, saving knowledge of salvation, salvation made possible by the love of God for you, for sinner you and sinner me.

And if you can truly testify to that saving knowledge, then rejoice. Rejoice this evening. Rejoice that you're found in Christ. Rejoice through the love of the Father by the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice. Rejoice again in that joy that's yours as you reveal the fruit of the Spirit even in your life.

[10 : 09] Joy of the Lord, even joy in the Lord. Secondly, peace. Peace in the Lord. So what about peace then? In many ways, this word we're going to see used more than probably any other particular word at this time of year.

The Christmas cards, well, there are going to be Christmas cards that invariably there are going to be messages of peace on these cards. Peace on earth or Christmas peace or the peace of Christmas.

What of that peace? What's so crucial about peace that it's included within the fruit of the Spirit? Well, think first of all of the word that's used here.

It's the word that's used here, the word for peace that's used here. It speaks of an absence of division. It speaks of a reconciliation between former enemies.

A peaceableness, if you like, a peaceableness that comes from a true rest in the Lord. Who is this Lord that we're speaking of? It's the God of peace.

[11 : 21] So peace then impacts the relationships that we have with others. Peace then impacts the way that you show forth the love of the Lord Jesus towards others.

And it's that peace that edifies, that builds up, that, well, that reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. So peace then, it's a gift of grace.

It's a gift from the God of peace. God who's healed, that division between God and man through the gift of the Lord Jesus. He said, the Prince of Peace.

And we can say this then, that nobody can show true peace towards another. True peace that removes division, that true peace that brings true reconciliation, that peace that brings true forgiveness for a wrong.

No one can show that true peace unless that person first knows the love of God in his heart and shows that love towards another. So peace in the Lord results in peace that defines our relationships one with another.

[12 : 33] And it's that gifted grace, that gifted grace of peace that you exercise, that you show to present the Lord Jesus to others, to show that you have that saving relationship with the Lord Jesus.

It's that grace, the grace of peace that enables you to live in harmony with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. What Paul expressed in that ideal of Christian unity when he encouraged the church there in Ephesus to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4 verse 3. It's that gift of peace that we desire to see in the life of any congregation, not least our own congregation. It's that gift of the grace of peace that we desire to see in it and not just in a denomination but all God-fearing denominations in the life of a church, even in these difficult times, even the times that we're living through at the moment.

Yes, there are differences of opinion even in a whole host of matters within congregations, within denominations. There are many differences of opinion even now as to how we regard our governments of the day and how they're handling this particular crisis.

Difference of opinion as to how best to manage the matter of the virus. But we pray that even these differences won't separate the love that brothers and sisters in Christ have one for another in what truly matters and that there's that unity in the spirit that's maintained at all times with malice none towards.

[14 : 21] Before we move on to patience, let's just say this as we've been thinking so far. We've looked at joy and we've looked at peace remember both influenced by love the love of God the joy of the Lord that's grounded in God's love and that peace that's only possible through the love of the Lord Jesus the Prince of Peace he who's made it possible for you to be reconciled to God did that reconciliation on the cross.

So when we come to this next aspect of the fruit of the spirit when we come to look at patience again we have to see patience that's rooted in the love of God for sinners through his patience with us.

Let's look at patience then like patience with the Lord because of course we live in a world that's anything but patient. We demand instant results.

If our computers are slow then we get irritated. If we don't get what we want immediately we're angry. We want instant everything and we can't wait.

Even for Christians there's that temptation not to wait in the Lord not to be patient with God and not even to be patient with our fellow humanity.

[15 : 47] So patience then has to be one of the aspects of the Spirit's fruit. In and of ourselves we can't exercise patience to God's glory in and of ourselves by our own sinful nature.

But with the enabling of the Holy Spirit you can't owe patience in your lives. Patience with God and patience one with another. We have to look first of all to God.

Think of God and his patience with us. And when we see God and his patience with us then we see that the root of this grace of patience the source of that grace is God himself.

God is patient. God is long suffering. Remember when God appeared to Moses when the Ten Commandments were renewed God said of himself the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger.

There's that aspect of God's patience slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. God's a God who's not quick to punish.

[17 : 02] God gives time for repentance. God has his own perfect time and God's not going to rush into any act of judgment. But God's patience, God's patience has limits.

God's patience isn't the same as God's forgiveness. God's patience is that quality in God that allows time for repentance. God's patience allows time for the sinner to come to his senses and to return to God.

For those who absolutely won't turn to God, who absolutely won't look to him for salvation, then God will not be eternally patient.

There is that eternal punishment. God who's been patient with sinners on earth, but if sinners refuse to acknowledge God's patience, then God will punish eternally.

Even when we think again of Paul who wrote this letter to the Galatians, Paul who spoke of himself as the chief of sinners, Paul who destroyed churches before he was converted, Paul who hated Christians, but God was patient with Paul.

[18 : 15] In the fullness of time, Paul was converted. Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road. And later Paul would write this, 1 Timothy 1.16, but for that very reason I was shown mercy, so that in me the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

If you're a believer, if you're in Christ, a Christian who knows the Lord Jesus as Savior, you're to exercise that grace of patience. Yes, you would love to see the immediate conversion of a loved one, but be patient.

Wait, wait on the Lord, wait patiently. Yes, even in your patience you might be hurled abuse because of your patience, because of your desire for a loved one to know the Lord Jesus as Savior.

be patient. Be patient even in these times of affliction. Be patient. Be patient, yes, with that loved one whom you're crying out for day and night, for his, for her conversion.

You know, there are other occasions when a Christian has to be patient, when a Christian has to exercise that grace of long suffering. even in your own life.

[19 : 41] God has a path for you to follow. In fact, there's a path for each one of us to follow. That race that each one of his own is to run, and there'll be times when we become impatient with that path that God has set us on.

We'll want immediate answers, and when these answers aren't forthcoming, we can be tempted to be impatient with God. exercise that grace of patience with God.

Trust him in all aspects of your life, even the very life changing events of your life, even when doors are closed that you want it open, give thanks, and in patience, trust him for every door that he will open in your life, for your good, and for his glory.

And if we're to be patient with God, then we're to be patient with one another. And with the brother, brother in Christ who doesn't always understand many of the doctrines of the one true faith, well, be patient with him.

Be patient with the sister in Christ who's so slow to grasp the freedoms that we have in Christ. Be patient with her. The friend who doesn't always share your passion for the fundamental doctrines such as the sanctity of the Lord's day.

[21 : 08] Be patient, patient in prayer, patient in love, patient in that waiting little by little as you seek to show your friends what God says that is truly important in relation to the matters of faith and practice.

patience. Then, finally, kindness. Kindness. Kindness from the Lord. That selfless action that desires the good of others.

Again, we have to see that grace that's sourced in God. God is the God of kindness. God's kindness is seen in his attitude of love towards you.

It's that love that's made evident in the many acts of kindness that we're asked to show. It's, again, evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus. The late Derek Crime has spoken of kindness as love with its working clothes on.

And in the New Testament we see Jesus as the epitome of kindness. You see that in his life, the life that surely is evidence of the grace of kindness.

[22 : 26] give it the healings of many times that he healed others. Actions that stem from love, his love. And his compassion, his compassion from the crowds.

He saw them as sheep without shepherd and in his kindness he taught them the way of salvation. And in your acts of kindness, you're a Christian, as a believer, reflect the loving kindness of the Saviour.

kindness don't need to be some magnificent gesture of generosity. Most acts of kindness are small in scale, but massive in impact and effect.

Even at this time when there's so much fear, so much tension in relation to the pandemic, when there's so much that's fragile in life, the loneliness that so many are suffering, separated from families, restrictions and movement, what better opportunity than to show the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to those in need?

Of course, there are acts of kindness that are done, that might appear even to contradict the grace of kindness, but in fact are true to the spirit of love that it's working clothes on.

[23 : 50] there are the acts of kindness that are reflected in Psalm 141, for example, the words that are given, let a righteous man strike me, it is a kindness, let him rebuke me, it's oil for my head, let my head not refuse, so in Proverbs 27, verse 6, we will read these words, faithful are the wounds of a friend, the kindness, in maybe pointing out an error, pointing out a particular weakness in one's faith, one's theology, one's understanding of grace, for example, and in a congregation, of course, in a church context, there's often these particular acts of kindness, the faithful wounds of a friend that happen for correction, for discipline, but rebuke in love and for love's sake.

It's not always easy to do and to say and to give. But we have to show forth and reflect the kindness of God. God will discipline me, God discipline you in his love and for our good.

And God prunes you to be more fruitful. And so even from time to time, even in the context of our church fellowship, there are those times when acts of kindness are given, even in that striking as it were in the head, the rebuke, the rebuke of kindness, joy, peace, patience, kindness.

You might be asking, well, aren't these just impossible graces to maintain and practice? Well, yes, yes, they are if we're reliant in our sinful natures to exercise these graces.

know if you're strengthened by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of power. So let's seek then to live by the Spirit, to do as Paul commands even at the end of this chapter, to crucify the flesh, to put to death our sinful natures and live by the Spirit.

[26 : 00] and in so doing, seeing the transformation that grace gives, it's possible through the blessing of God by His Spirit.

So let's practice, then seek to practice the joy of the Lord, peace in the Lord, patience with the Lord, and kindness from the Lord, and do so for the glory of God and the good of those who are His.

Amen. Our Lord, our God, our Saviour, we pray that truly we will know the love that you give to us, the love that gives to us that joy, that peace, that patience, that kindness that we seek to show and to live in our lives.

Help us then when we lack joy, when we lack peace, when we lack patience, and we're bereft of exercise and kindness.

Lord, strengthen us so to live as you would have us live, for your praise and for your glory. Continue then with us, Lord, as we sing from our second psalm for this evening.

[27 : 18] Be with us as we continue in fellowship one with another. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.