

Growing in God Pt. 4

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, March 3, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time.

SETTING THE STAGE

NOTE 1 – We are in the midst of an extended series on the following selection. Please lend me your once again:

Galatians 5:16b–17, 19–25 (NIV)

16 . . . walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

NOTE 2 – Last week we begin to consider the nine-fold manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (i.e., opening two):

Q. What is love?

A. An unconditional and sacrificial sense of love; the type of love God demonstrates time and again in Scripture.

Q. What is joy?

A. The term herein (i.e., “chara”) is defined as a “DEEP and ABIDING inner rejoicing” belonging to those in Christ.

NOTE 3 – This week let us move along in our study and explore the virtues of peace, forbearance and kindness:

PEACE

Q. What is peace?

A. Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but the presence of harmony, accord and rest amidst life and living.

KEY – We are called to walk in and/or experience peace in a three-fold manner. Please take note of the following:

1) We are Called to Be at Peace with God

NOTE 1 – Only those who know peace with God can know the peace of God in their earthly associations or trials!

Q. How can we be at peace in this world if we are at odds with the One who made it?

Q. How can we find peace with God?

A. Through faith in the work of Christ alone:

Romans 5:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 . . . since we have been **justified through faith**, we have **peace with God through** our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Emphasis Mine)

21 God made [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in him** we might **become the righteousness of God**.

2) We are Called to Be at Peace with One Another

NOTE 2 – Those who are at peace with the Lord are called to know and/or pursue peace with their fellow man:

Matthew 5:9 (Emphasis Mine)

9 Blessed are the **peacemakers**,
for they will be called children of God.

Hebrews 12:14 (Emphasis Mine)

14 **Make every effort to live in peace with everyone** and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

2 Corinthians 13:11b, d (Emphasis Mine)

11 . . . brothers and sisters . . . **strive for full restoration**, encourage one another, be of one mind, **live in peace**.
And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Romans 12:17–20a, 21

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. . ."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

3) We are Called to Be at Peace Amidst Adversity (i.e., Inner Harmony, Rest and Accord – THE PEACE OF GOD)

John 14:27 (Promise of Christ)

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

NOTE 3 – Similar to joy, genuine peace is in no way dependent upon external situation or event, but only Christ. Once again, the only way to find lasting peace is to connect with that which is by nature immutable: Christ Jesus.

Q. How can we appropriate such peace amidst difficulty? Practicalities:

Philippians 4:1–13

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! 2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

A1. Those who would know the peace of God shall be peacemakers (cf. Matt. 5).

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

A2. Those who would know peace must be people of worship, prayer and gratitude.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

A3. Those who would know peace must consider what they entertain or “focus” upon.

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

A4 Those who would walk in the peace of God must learn “contentment” in Christ alone!

FORBEARANCE

Q. What is forbearance?

A. This term (i.e., also translated as patience or longsuffering) connects to the ability to “bear with and endure” in the realm of human associations. Therefore, forbearance speaks to our capacity in Christ to make allowance for one another in love.

Q. Do you know that you are called to make allowance for one another in love?

Colossians 3:12b–14 (Emphasis Mine)

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

NOTE 1 – Let us be honest for a moment. Wherever there are people, both inside and outside of the church, there is potential for tension, conflict and interpersonal friction. How do we respond to such a reality? Consider:

NOTE 2 – Some may yield to the reality of the drama, reciprocating in kind (i.e., playing poorly with one another).

NOTE 3 – Others may bow out from all human connection entirely, seeking to live as a recluse amidst the world.

NOTE 4 – Yet the Bible calls for Christians to walk in a spirit of forbearance, patience and longsuffering in Christ!

NOTE 5 – When I think of this call from the apostle Paul, I find myself thinking of these words of Mother Theresa:

“People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
 If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
 If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway.
 What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight. Build anyway.
 If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
 The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.
 Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.

Q. What is this but a call to forbearance?

NOTE 6 – When I think of this call from the apostle Paul, I also find myself thinking of the example of Jesus Christ:

A. Consider the patience He demonstrated among His own disciples (i.e., apostolic band). What a motley crew Christ had assembled! He had fisherman, tax collectors, revolutionaries and more, who consistently demonstrated appalling immaturity! These were men who spoke at the wrong times (Transfiguration), panicked at the wrong times (storm seas), fell asleep at the wrong times (Gethsemane), argued about truly petty matters (“who would be the greatest?”), mistook the heart of Christ (sons of thunder), and proved genuinely dense. Yet, consider that the Lord was willing to demonstrate tremendous patience and continued to cultivate in kind!

Q. If this is how He treated His spiritual friends and family, how can we not practice the same with each other?

NOTE 7 – Of course, the call to forbearance extends even unto those who are earthly enemies and adversaries:

Q. How are we to treat our enemies (i.e., per the words of Christ)?

Matthew 5:43–48

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor [Lev. 19:18] and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Q. Did not Christ demonstrate patience with His earthly adversaries?

NOTE 8 – Note the patience He afforded His enemies (e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees and religious leaders). Consider how these figures consistently rejected Christ and His message at every turn, sought to defame Him, slander Him, misrepresent Him, conspire to test Him that He might misspeak, and resisted every call to come! Yet Christ continued to extend the olive branch and offer of pardon, warn against resisting, and even practiced incredible patience as those who put Him on the Cross (i.e., via Rome) mocked Him as He died at their hand(s):

Matthew 27:38–42; Luke 23:34a (Emphasis Mine)

38 Two rebels were crucified with him [Jesus], one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” 41 In the same way the **chief priests**, the **teachers of the law** and the **elders** mocked him. 42 “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

34 Jesus said, “Father, **forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Q. In light of such elements, how can we not make allowance for others?

ILL – According to a traditional Hebrew story, Abraham was sitting outside his tent one evening when he saw an old man, weary from age and journey, coming toward him. Abraham rushed out, greeted him, and then invited him into his tent. There he washed the old man's feet and gave him food and drink.

The old man immediately began eating without saying any prayer or blessing. So Abraham asked him, "Don't you worship God?"

The old traveler replied, "I worship fire only and reverence no other god."

When he heard this, Abraham became incensed, grabbed the old man by the shoulders, and threw him out his tent into the cold night air.

When the old man had departed, God called to his friend Abraham and asked where the stranger was. Abraham replied, "I forced him out because he did not worship you."

God answered, "I have suffered him these eighty years although he dishonors me. Could you not endure him one night?"

KINDNESS

Q. What is kindness?

A. The underlying Greek term is an interesting term to say the least (i.e., sometimes translated as “gentleness”). It speaks to that which is “useable” or “well-fit for use for what is really needed; a kindness that is serviceable.” One scholar notes that “xrēstótēs” refers to the “meeting of real needs, in God’s way, in His timing (fashion).” it is a Spirit produced sense of “benignity, tender concern and uprightness which meets real human needs while avoiding “harshness or cruelty.” One author notes that no one term “quite carries this notion of kind and good.”

QUOTE – “When we exhibit the kindness of God, we are tender, benevolent, and useful to others. Every action, every word will have the flavor of grace in it. To maintain this attitude toward those we love is hard enough. To express kindness toward those who are against us requires the work of God (2 Corinthians 6:4-6). That is why kindness is a fruit of the Spirit.”

Q. What is kindness (S & S)?

A. It is an attitude of tenderness, charity and compassion that renders us useful to God in meeting human need.

NOTE 1 – Kindness, much like love and patience, is something exhibited by Christ J. time and again in Scripture:

Matthew 9:35–36 (Emphasis Mine)

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had **compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 15:29–38 (Emphasis Mine)

29 Jesus . . . went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. 30 Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. 31 The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have **compassion** for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

33 His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?”

34 “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

35 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. 36 Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. 37 They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 38 The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children.

Matthew 20:29–34 (Emphasis Mine)

29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

31 The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

32 Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

33 “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

34 Jesus had **compassion** on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Luke 7:11b–16 (Emphasis Mine)

11 . . . Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, **his heart went out to her** and he said, “Don’t cry.”

14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. 16 They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.”

NOTE 2 – In every way Christ was tender, charitable and compassionate; a man useful to God in meeting need, and He has called us to be the same! He desires in us hearts that are tender, charitable and given to compassion, that we might be of divine utilization in the meeting of human need. After all, our world yet abounds with need!

NOTE 3 – Note this parable yet again, as it speaks to the fruit of kindness so beautifully. Please give me your ear:

Luke 10:30b–37

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

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

37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

KEY – Christian, “go and do likewise” as you walk the highways and the byways of this life (i.e., being “useful”).

SUMMATION

When the Holy Spirit of God is both yielded to and relied upon, His power produces these elements in His own: **a)** love; **b)** joy; **c)** peace; **d)** forbearance; **e)** kindness; **f)** goodness; **g)** faithfulness; **h)** gentleness; and **i)** self-control. Next week we will continue with the virtues of goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org.

NOTE 2 – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

NOTE 3 – Men’s Ministry Breakfast this coming Saturday morning at 9am. We hope to see you then!

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.