

Eph 4:32 Be Kind, Forgive

Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Be kind to one another, compassionate,

To end this chapter, Paul says that instead of all the bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and slander toward one another that should be being removed from us as we grow in Christ, we should treat each other with compassion, forgiveness, and kindness. Knowing that we are a work in progress, Paul tells to “become kind to one another, compassionate”. We are to begin or continue to be kind to one another. This doesn’t just mean smiling and being nice. The word *chrestos* has the idea of “good, honest, worthy, pleasant, agreeable, good.” It refers to the goodness of God in many passages. When verses talk about human goodness, it’s in relation to us doing right, according to God, and the benefits of a good, Godly, righteous life. Proverbs 2:20-21 **20 So you will walk in the way of good people, And keep to the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright will live in the land, And the blameless will remain in it.**

When God told Pharaoh through Moses, “Let my people Go”, and Pharaoh hardened his hear against God, then, we read in Exodus 8:22-23 **22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land. 23 I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.”** So Israel didn’t have to deal with flies, the death of their livestock, the plague of boils, the great destructive hail that fell on Egypt, or the locusts or darkness. And, because they obeyed the Lord in initiating Passover, they didn’t suffer the death of their firstborn, as the Egyptians did. God makes distinction in judgement between those who are His, and those who are not.

We see this again in Jer:24:3 and following. **3 Then the Lord said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “Figs: the good figs are very good, and the bad ones, very bad, which cannot be eaten due to rottenness.”** Remember, that even the Bad Figs would have called themselves Jewish by nationality, but they weren’t serving God. Similarly, Jesus says in Matthew 7:21-23 **21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’** So, “good” in God’s eyes is what matters here, and He will make a distinction, and judge rightly. Luke 6:35-36 **35 But love your enemies and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil people. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.** Acting like our Heavenly Father does is what counts. As we read the Word, and get to know the kindness and goodness of God, then we understand that as His Children, He wants us to have a family resemblance to Him, and act like He does. We grow in the goodness and kindness of God by emulating the example of Christ that we see in the Word of God. 1 Pet 2:2-3 **2 and like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.** This kindness that we are to practice toward one another isn’t just natural kindness from us, usually toward someone who we think can or will show this kindness back toward us, and isn’t self-produced. According to Gal 5:22 it is the fruit of the Spirit **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;** This kindness comes from God, through the Holy Spirit, and is poured out through us to brothers and sisters in Christ around us, because He loves them, and so we love our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and everyone else as well.

Second, Paul uses the Greek word *eusplanchnoi*, which means to be "tenderhearted," or "compassionate. It has the idea of showing sympathy. Believers are not to be known for a harsh attitude, but rather for compassion. When a lawyer as Jesus who he could limit his compassion to, and still be considered righteous, Jesus related the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. The

point that Jesus is trying to make is that it's the one who shows compassion to anyone who is in need that God puts in front of us to be compassionate toward who is really doing the will of the Father. In other words, remember that God has had compassion on us; Lam 3:22-23 **Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**" And so, we follow the example of Jesus who, Matt 9:36 **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."** We point them to Jesus, which is the most compassionate thing that we can do for them. We let the tender mercy and compassion that God has for people, flow through us. 1 Pet 3:8-9 **8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble; 9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you would inherit a blessing** Be good to one another, tender-hearted, compassionate. **being gracious to one another.**

Paul commands readers us to be gracious and forgive one another. This instruction comes with an explanation, referring to the forgiveness believers have received from Christ [Matthew 18:21-35](#). 21 **Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?"** Peter thought that he had achieved incredible spiritual growth in that he could conceive of forgiving someone 7 times for the same thing. 22 **Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times.** We do not want to be like the wicked slave: 32 **Then summoning him, his master *said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 And his master, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed him. 35 My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."** God's plan to forgive mankind of their sins is the major theme of the Bible. So, when wondering why we should forgive those who sin against us, we need look no further than the example God gave us. Christians must forgive others because God has forgiven us. Forgiveness is mandatory for all those who have experienced the forgiveness of God. We must forgive. We forgive as an act of gratitude for all we have been forgiven. **just as also God in Christ was gracious to us.**

Paul reminds us that we have already been forgiving so much more than we can ever forgive of others, that there's no comparison. Eph 2:4-5 **4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),...** The debt that we owed was greater. Other's sin against us as a fellow sinner, but we've sinned against a holy God who has only loved us. It was God's rich mercy expressed in love toward us who had been dead in transgressions that made us alive. All this gracious love and redemption was done in Christ, for us. So the cross serves as a reminder, and example and an illustration of how to live our lives, how we should treat each other, and how to become "become imitators of God." When we practice forgiveness then people see Jesus in us most clearly. Forgiveness is often a window through which the world glimpses the mercy of God. When he was being killed as the first martyr, Stephen in Acts 7:60 **60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.** And of course, our ultimate example: From the cross, Jesus prayed for His murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We reflect Jesus when we forgive the ones who wronged us, and for believers being like Jesus is the ultimate goal.

Graciousness is the antithesis of bitterness, anger, wrath, shouting and abusive speech, which Paul warned us about earlier. And these gracious, forgiving actions should be practiced "one to another", in other words with reciprocity, each forgiving the other when he or she is wronged. These gracious actions leave no room for bitterness, anger and harsh words, but instead keep the Peace of Jesus in the Church, as it should be.