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Export date: Fri Oct 30 11:09:51 2026 / +0000 GMT

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday June 14th, 2015

We gathered to praise the Lord in awe and wonder on this peaceful morning. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, ?Dear Father God, we humbly come before you grateful for your grace and mercy, help us share that grace with those around us in love and compassion, in Jesus name Amen.?

Most of us can conclude that we have all changed over the years, from infancy, to childhood, adolescence and adulthood we have all made adjustments to our ever changing lives. We have grown and have learned many things along the way. None of us knew everything all at once, we all needed to learn to drive or be trained for a new job and some of us have had to adapt to married life and raising children. All these life changes took time; our spiritual lives aren't any different. God truly desires to change our hearts so our lives will reflect His Son so inevitably there will be many changes and adjustments so that others may see Jesus in us, ?Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God?truly righteous and holy, (Ephesians 4:21-24).

We can all agree we didn't automatically become like Jesus the moment we received Him in our hearts, but if we trust Him He will change us from the inside out. The changes are gradual and we become more tender-hearted, merciful, kind, humble, gentle, patient and forgiving towards one another, (Colossians 3:12-13). For these virtues to become part of who we are we need the Holy Spirit's power, wisdom and guidance, we cannot develop the fruit of the Spirit without the Spirit of God in us, (Galatians 5:16, 22-23). Jesus said that we recognize a tree by its fruit, so what attitudes will promote good fruit? Here are 3, #1) a compassionate heart, #2) a Peaceful Heart, #3) a grateful heart. These attitudes can only develop in our hearts by the Spirit of God. When we choose to let the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts He will inspire and compel us think and act like Jesus. This is what Jesus meant by the term being born again, we are born of the Spirit. Before ascending back to heaven, Jesus promised his disciples that the Father would send the comforter, the one who would remind and teach them all things, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come and fill them, (Ephesians 1:4, Luke 24:49).

When we have a compassionate heart it is genuinely sensitive and sympathetic towards others, we are concerned and compelled to help people in need or suffering. Jesus felt compassion for those who had not recognized him as Messiah and had not received Him, (Luke 19:41). With compassion comes kindness, it is being graceful towards others as God is with us, it is what moves us to meet the needs of others in love. When we do we prove we belong to God, (2 Corinthians 6:6). With Kindness it is important to be humble, a most difficult virtue to possess, it is the opposite of pride. We can all be tempted by pride; when we do something good, it feels good to be acknowledged, a pat on the back so to speak, but left unchecked it can lead to sin and arrogance. A kind heart does not expect recognition; it is content in knowing that it has pleased God with acts of kindness towards others. Humility is a right understanding of who we are in God's eyes and it will help us treat others as God would treat them, (Luke 6:35,36, Romans 12:3). Gentleness proceeds out of a kind and graceful heart, it is power under control, and it doesn't seek to glorify itself but rather brings glory to God. Jesus is the perfect example, (Matthew 11:29). When Christ dwells in our hearts he will cause our patience to grow, it will help us be self-controlled. We all know how life has a way of trying our patience, all the more reason to trust the Spirit in us to give us grace. Afterall Jesus has displayed his patience with us, how long before we actually turned to Him, how long before we made a commitment to Him, how long before we turned from our own ways? Yet when we came to him He did not turn us away or rebuke us, He was patiently waiting with open arms. Why? So that others will see His great love and also turn to Him. This in turn gives birth to forgiveness within us, we will be able to patiently love and forgive others as they too go through changes to become more like Jesus,(Colossians 3:13).

Beloved as we continue our journey with Christ Jesus and cultivate His many virtues, we will increasingly grow thankful for everything he does for us and in us. The more grateful we become the more we love one another, and we can grow in unity and peace. Jesus tells us that above all these virtues we need love, love from God and love for others, (1 Corinthians 13:13, Colossians 3:14,15). When we allow God's love to reign in each of us, working together in unity despite our differences will be a joy and will glorify Him. Keeping a thankful heart keeps our prayers humble and our worship genuine because His love will guard our hearts and minds, we will be at peace. So this week when we face trying situations with others, let us not give in to anger or unforgiveness, ?Instead, let us be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has each one of us, Asherey Shalom.