

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 10 am

The fruit of the Spirit is Self-control

As of the week before 23\_08\_13 at Slade (NKJV), See 04\_06\_06.doc the fruit of the Spirit is self-control, 18\_02\_22.doc for SC Paul to Felix

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Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 237 Holy Holy Holy (Mayhew)

Scripture Psalm 100, 101 (page )

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk

Chorus MP 220 He is Lord, He is Lord  
MP790 You are the king of Glory

Notices

Prayer and share time

Reading Titus 2:1-15 (page 1198)

Galatians 5:16-26 (page 1172)

Hymn CH 688 Jesus keep me near the cross (video)

Sermon Living a life of *self control*

Hymn MP 501 O Jesus I have promised

Closing Prayer

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## Prayer and Exordium

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.** Gal 5:22,23 (slide 2)

This is what one is to expect from every true believer. Do you have them? x2.

This morning we will be considering the virtue of **self-control**, x2

A few weeks ago in our Bible study about turning the other cheek I jested about bopping Ina on the nose so we could see it in action.

With our subject this morning I really could think of no better way to illustrate self-control than to go over to someone, say Chris, (he's bigger than me) or Tim and 'bop' him on the nose. Then immediately, before your eyes, you would observe self-control, gentleness, patience, love etc., in action for all to see. This picture would speak a 1000 words. You would never forget it.

You will have to use your imagination as to what might have been!

Let's look at the fruit of self-control. Let me also remind you that there are not 'nine fruits' plural, but one fruit – singular. Nor many fruits like a basket full of different ones, but one fruit, a multi-faceted fruit.

Note also it is the fruit of the Spirit. There is one fruit for there is one Spirit.

**Self-control** is one of the ways this fruit is shown. So anyone who displays Christ-like character, will have **self-control**.

There are, however, three discernible groups of three in Gal 5:22,23

1. **love, joy, peace** — Here is the essential inward state of someone with the Spirit of Jesus in them. This is what we experience, this is what we enjoy, here are the wonderful blessings of knowing Christ, ... and it is here we like to stay. But the Lord gives us them that they can be displayed to all around and that Christ may have all the Glory.
2. **Patience, kindness, goodness** — Here is character expressed outwardly towards others; Notice we see that **patience** is not to grin and bear it, no because the resulting action is one of **kindness**. Where does this kindness come from? A good heart, - "Lord give me a good heart!"
3. The last three **faithfulness, gentleness, Self-control** are who we now are, these are characteristics from God – and expressed towards God.

✚ Notice love leads – and holding up the rear is self-control. self-control enables the rest to happen without this you will have none of the rest.

■ Without the belt all falls to the ground, without a firm grip on the rudder we head for the rocks. Take your hands off the wheel...crash

**The fruit of the Spirit is... self-control** x2. I need to **self-control**, - and so do you!, we won't have **gentleness** without **self-control**, you won't have **patience**, or **kindness** or anything else, without **self-control**.

✚ If you want these, but don't have them – then the problem is **self-control**  
**So what is self-control?**

It sounds pretty self-evident doesn't it?

The word is <sup>1466</sup> *egkráteia* which combines *eg* or *en* <sup>1722</sup> "in, and <sup>2904</sup> *krátos*, "dominion, mastery" – so properly, *dominion within*, i.e. control proceeding from *within* oneself.

Only with 'true mastery from within' does a man or woman overrule his or her desires and passions, especially one's sensual appetites.

Another way of translating this would be: self-restraint, or continence, we say 'incontinence' for someone not in control of themselves.

An unbeliever will by God's common grace have a measure of self-control. But only someone with the Spirit of Christ – will live like Jesus Christ.

✚ In other words, **self-control produced by the Spirit is really Spirit-control**".

It can only be accomplished *by the power of the Lord*. That is why it is explicitly called a *fruit of the Holy Spirit* Gal 5:23.

The natural man, without the Spirit of Christ is controlled by another force – the flesh - and this force is hostile to, opposed to, God. Religious as that person may be they are – at heart – God haters. *That's the truth of it*. Refusing to submit to the law of God written on your heart - is to shake your fist at the good lawgiver. Jesus saw into the pharisees' heart: **but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.**" John 5:42

**Self-control is the mark of the Christian life.**

Hear what Paul says when before governor Felix who **heard him** speak of **faith in Christ**. Paul **discoursed on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come**, x2 Ac 24:24-25

These three things summarise, and represent, the whole Christian life.

✚ How we enter it, how we live it and how we end.

First **righteousness**. No one has it. - **by the trespass of the one man** Adam, **righteousness** was lost. Oh how we are in desperate need of **righteousness**.

Where can it be found? It is found in the one man; Jesus Christ the last Adam, through whom we can receive **God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness** Ro 5:17

**Righteousness** is a gift – received from Jesus Christ who has it - and will give it to all who are contrite of heart and seek it – he can give it because of the CROSS. There the suffering servant bore away every sin of the repentant sinner. Have you come to Him for it? Is there someone here still to do so?

✚ How **miserable** to remain in your sin and cut off from a Holy God. forever!

But Jesus says **happy** are those who see their spiritual poverty, who mourn over it, and who hunger and thirst for **righteousness** Did Felix see his need? Do you see you need? Here is the way **into** the kingdom of God. Here is the way to peace with God. Here is the way to be right with God, forever.

Now if you are made **righteous**, then to live for him in this world you need:

**Self-control**

Self-control is essential in the battle fought against our three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil.

We **resist** the devil and **stand firm** against his schemes, and we are to **stand firm** against the ways and thinking of the world. This all requires a controlled mind and will. It's the mind that directs the body, never let the body direct the mind!

If you are to live a Holy life you need self-control.

Rev George Bennett wrote a leaflet '**Let go let God!**' how far wrong he is Without self-control there is no Godly life.

Living to please God is hard work, it relies on the moment by moment Grace of Christ that we can resist evil – and feed on that which is good - the **means of Grace** - ... Time in prayer, time in the word, time in fellowship, time in service. They are **all** so important! Are you doing that?

**You wake in the morning is it the phone you look at first? or the Bible?**

The Christian life is hard work - Paul told Timothy to **train himself to be godly**. We have to perseverance, keep at it, keep going with God.

**WD 40 - Anthony good illustration: try and try again until we succeed!**

As we persevere, gradually, bit by bit, there is victory in our daily battles, and unknown to us we make progress. It's His power at work within: **"For the grace of God that brings salvation .. teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age** Titus 2:11,12

As someone has said "Because I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, therefore I train myself."

Paul speaking of righteousness and self-control aimed straight for Felix's heart to convince him of his unrighteousness and intemperance, of which he had been notoriously guilty. Would Felix see the odiousness of his sin and turn to Christ before it is too late? Would he? Paul concludes with:

### *The Judgment to come*

There is a judgment to come. There is a day when sentence will be passed and the everlasting state of every man, woman and child will be finally and irreversibly determined. Men have their day now, Felix had his; but God's Day is coming, when everyone shall give account of himself to God, the Judge of all.

Paul reasoned with Felix that he might see his urgent need to turn to Christ while he still could. The shot reached its mark, it was getting to him - the word of God had entered Felix' heart - the result: **Felix was afraid**. We would do well to be afraid, for assuredly, that day is coming.

- Like the forecast of a coming storm - there are some who take no heed to it - that is until it is too late to be saved.

**Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now!" x2**

His conscience has been stirred - but now his hands go up (show hand)

I wonder, is there someone here like that? You sit still, decorum requires it, but inside your hands are up. "No more, not for me".

Felix & Drusilla hardened in their sin put up the stop sign 'That's enough'. Felix was once a slave and had risen to be King. He knew what it was to be a slave yet he would not submit to the one who was King and became a slave - a slave who give up his life as a ransom for people like him.

This humble slave is now exalted to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Yet this governor Felix, a small lord, a sinful man would have none of it, he would not have Christ rule over him.

It's good to fear, to tremble:

4. Paul before Christ on the Damascus Road fell trembling Ac 9:6, it led to his conversion.
5. The Jailer at Philippi feel down trembling Ac 16:29, this led to his conversion. But for Felix it did not.

Many are startled by the word of God - but not effectually changed by it.

Many are in fear of the consequences of sin, and yet continue to live in it.

Felix trembled and that was all, in his heart there was no willingness to change. "That's enough for now!"

Felix has nothing to say against it - so just says: **You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."**

For Felix it all had a sad ending - The Jews accused him to the emperor, and some historians say he was sent bound to Rome by his successor Festus. He had made light of his day of hope held out to him by Paul. Is there someone here listening but not hearing? Felix's chains became even heavier, what a sad end.

**When I find it convenient, I will send for you."** - It never happened. x2

### *Application*

Let us live in fear of the Lord. Let us live in a way that honours Him. If you are seeking to do that then **self-control** is your best friend.

The next verse v24 explains how: **those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

Everyone who belongs to Christ, who **are Christ's**, are to crucify, kill off their flesh. It will be painful!

Every Christian is in the murder business. Here then is the sign of a true believer - one who has *crucified the flesh with its desires and lusts*.

Have you been baptised? Yes? There publicly you showed that you are dead to your old life. I died to self, that Christ might have full reign.

As Paul said: "**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**". Ga 2:20

And yet we continue to mortify, kill off our fleshly desires, for none of us this side of heaven has yet obtained a complete victory over it.

✚ **What is the sign of a true believer? An inner battle. And the sign of a mature believer? Progress, there's little of you - and much of Christ.**

Is that you? - It is easy to see. A man or woman who has killed off their sinful flesh can be provoked and there is no response. Why? Because they are dead. A dead man does not move, is not stirred, is not 'offended'.

- Go to the cemetery and shout abuse at someone, and there will not be a stir or sound or response.

So it was with Jesus, **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."** Isa 53:7

**When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats.** 1 Pe 2:23

The Lord Jesus walked in the will of the father – as we should - He only did and said what He wanted him to say.

**Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit..** Ga 5:25

Self-control comes up again and again as Paul instructs Titus what to say to the different groups in the church in Crete. Turn to Titus 2

**2 older men** [are] **to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.** Are there certain sins for older men? What would you say? To be too much at ease? To like your food? Always looking forward to your next meal? Do you find it hard to say no to the second helping? - Does your body say “I don’t want to make an effort to get up and go out. The world says that is what life / retirement is for to relax and enjoy yourself. A Christian needs self-discipline!. It is easy to idle your time away.

■ My grandfather lived long, why? In part we believe because this ex-Army officer had himself in check and was self-disciplined.

How much more a Christian. And how much more a mature Christian who is concerned to be an example to others. Others watch you. Your standard becomes their standard. Titus says: church Elders must be **hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.**” Tit 1:8

**3 the older women** likewise [are to] **reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good**

A controlled tongue, no more ungodly chitter chattle. Active in helping others, not lounging around at home, but like Dorcas being useful and making things for others. Your behaviour, your life must back-up your teaching. How many older women take seriously their responsibility to take younger women under their arm and teach them?

Yes **4 Then they can train the young women to love their husbands and ‘to love their’** [in org] **children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their ‘own’ husbands, so that no-one will malign the word of God.**

Notice that to love their husbands comes before loving their children. And **subject to their own husbands. They are to be ‘busy at home’.** What a different mindset from many of today’s career driven, independently minded women of the world.

**6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.** Paul tells Titus who is a young man to model this for them, **7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.**

Young men of integrity, young men of reverence, not the macho man who is really weak, and weak when to comes to respecting the other sex. Paul says to those in Corinth. **But if they do not have self-control, let them marry;** 1 Cor 7:9

The best summary of all of this is the well known proverb **Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.**” Prov 25:28 No walls up, anything thing can come in, unhindered.

Nehemiah spoke of the **great trouble and disgrace** of Jerusalem’s walls being broken down. Yes for the people of God, for the Christian it’s shameful. We should be building walls to protect, to guard our heart, to guard our tongue, to be careful with our eyes, and to guard every avenue against temptation.

Peter says we should **make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;**” 2Pe 1:5,6

You are in charge of your body, Paul said **I beat it to make it my slave...** that he **will not be disqualified for the prize** 1Co 9:27 Let us do likewise.

■ Queen Elizabeth I was famous for the two virtues **Meekness, and temperance.** King Edward VI called her by no other name than his sweet sister Temperance. Moderate in her choice of food, she rose ever hungry, and lived about 70 years. Next to the Holy Scripture she preferred Seneca’s book of Clemency. (Sir W. Vaughan, Mr Heyrick’s Three Sermons.)

■ Our late Queen Elizabeth II showed remarkable Christ led self-control in her manner, her conduct and her tongue. No-one could recall a wrong word said in her 70 year reign.

Britain has known God’s favour in revivals. One of the great marks of these revivals was moral uprightness, the elevation of the family and sexual purity.

Author Ted Williams said “these evangelicals introduced to Britain a ‘new moral economy of sobriety, self-control, sexual restraint and respectability, which challenged the hedonism of the day.

We live again in an age of hedonism, moral laxity and carelessness. It has affected, infected the church and the way many Christians now live.

Let us today – you and I - live self-controlled, holy, **Godly lives as we look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.** \_\_\_\_\_END