

- Scripture has a **high view of Christians** – kingdom of priests, warriors, filled with the Spirit, the temple of God, etc.
- In this way a **new community** of a **new humanity** who live and love differently than the world
- This is to be a **kingdom of peace** – this is one of the ways to bring joy to those who labor for your joy (1Thess5:13)
- A **primary responsibilities** to equip you for the work of the ministry - Eph 4:11-12 – this is what Paul does here
- Last week we saw Paul's call to **live at peace** – moves from leaders to all the people
- Rom14:17 – the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit

Two Things Necessary to See the Increase of the Kingdom of Peace

Service to the Body in Discerning Ministry - v.14

- 1.) **Warn the unruly** - those who are lazy, idle, or unruly; like soldiers who won't obey orders, servants who know their master's will and refuse to do it – to instruct or teach - to even do this in gentleness (Gal6:1)
 - 2.) **Comfort the fainthearted** – those who are discouraged, feeling resources too small, or have diminished motivation; to console, encourage, or rousing up hope; coming up close and speaking in a friendly manner
 - 3.) **Uphold the weak** - those who are sick, delicate, helpless - to be loyal to, hold firmly to strengthen
- All of this is to be done **with patience**, regardless of condition
 - There are **in the NT church** all these kinds of people
 - **Conversion doesn't cure** everyone instantly - **work in progress**, everyone is struggling and fighting
 - This is a call to **all Christians** - no way pastors can do this alone
 - This necessitates more than **casual relationship**; not **shallow**, but **sanctifying** (otherwise don't know)
 - A culture that doesn't encourage this relationships – not entertainment or events
 - This calls for discernment of **different conditions**– not merely "hit them with the hard truth" – medicine/children
 - This calls for your own knowledge of **Scripture**
 - This calls for **deep sympathy** when words aren't the primary need of the moment
 - This will enable you to grow and love - more aware of **selfishness**
 - It is **easy to judge**, it is more difficult to discern and help (learn more than you knew)
 - One thing that will happen is as you do this, you yourself will **learn and grow**
 - Application in regards **to evangelism** and our dealing with the lost (as Christ did)
 - **Applying the Gospel** to the unruly, fainthearted, and weak – not a canned presentation
 - This means our **getting to know** those without Christ in our lives, what their conditions are, their struggles

Pursuit of Good to All, Even when Recipient of Evil - v.15

- Evil **will be done** to Christians (as to all) – the difference isn't that we escape it, but what **our response** it to be
- We know our hearts well enough that our quick response is to do to others as they do to us
- Here the church is called to make sure that we are **not allowing one another** to do that to others
- There is **no distinction** - this includes those within the church, but also to anyone; this includes unbelievers
- No one "deserves" good, but a sinful response is never appropriate
- In contrast, it is **pursuing** what is good, responding to evil with what is good – Rom12:17ff
- This is not sometimes, but **always**; this is not just for self, but for all
- This includes two things: the good of their body, their **physical well being**
- This also includes their ultimate good – **spiritual well being**
- **Are we pursuing** the ultimate good of others through their salvation?
- Have we lost that initial passion when we were really convinced that people were going to hell?

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- **Being at Peace** does not mean disengagement, but loving relationships where mistakes and sin can happen.
 - This is where **the Gospel** is necessary and is displayed.

What does this have to do with the Gospel?

- **This IS the Gospel - what Christ has done for you.**
- He did not return evil for evil, but pursued to His own death what was good for us – and ultimately for Him
- Our good and His glory are not at contradictory purposes in the Gospel
- What we need is to know more of Christ – to see and adore Him in Scripture to have resources to care for others
- **This is the ongoing work of Christ to His people** – 2Cor7:6
- As we minister to the body, we are actually ministering to Christ – Mt25
- This is the ongoing work of the **compassion of Christ to the lost**
- As His body, we display both His **prophetic and priestly** ministry of sympathy

- I would want to do so for those of you outside of Christ this morning