

Closing the Gap 5.14.18

Monday, May 14, 2018

<http://www.rivercc.org/2018/05/14/closing-the-gap-5-14-18/>

Week 19: "Be kind and forgive one another"

Day 1

Pray:

Ask God to reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

Read:

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Reflect:

If we can grieve the Holy Spirit, then it stands to reason we can bring him joy as well. When we express kindness, compassion and forgiveness to each other, it brings him joy. These choices reflect the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives. Did you notice the word "choices"? It is important that you do, because there is a tendency to think of kindness, compassion and forgiveness as feelings. The fruit of the Spirit is not primarily feelings; it is actions. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). You might wonder about "joy and peace." Aren't those feelings? Joy and peace certainly can involve feelings, but peace is a reality that exists between the Christian and God, regardless of feelings. Peace is also a state of affairs that exists between two people who are not at odds. To have peace means you have done the things, or taken the actions, that lead to peace. Joy is often a choice, a decision to experience what God is offering to us in the midst of circumstances that are not in themselves joyful. Do not wait to feel kind or compassionate or forgiving or gentle, but, instead, do these things to one another. As you choose to move into these actions, then they will move more deeply into you. In other words, as you do what you are called to do, you will become who you are called to be. As a follower of Christ, you have the Holy Spirit resident within you. This is mysterious and beyond our ability to fully comprehend, but is it not beyond our ability to experience. His presence and power in your life are available for you to live in a way that brings him joy. You can rest assured that if it brings him joy, it will do the same for you. You must see acting with kindness, compassion and forgiveness as decisions empowered by the Spirit, not mere human feelings. If you wait for or pursue feelings of love, joy, and peace (and the other fruits of the Spirit) before choosing

them, you are moving in the wrong direction. Say "yes" to God in the choices you have, then act on that "yes" in the way you treat others. As you live out this "yes" in your actions, you will live in the realm of the Holy Spirit's fruit. He is in you. Say "yes" to him and his fruit will come out from you.

Pray:

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today.
