

# CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 based on the sermons of Jonathan Edwards

## Sermon 4 (second half)

**“Love is long-suffering and kind...”**

### **1 Corinthians 13:4a**

#### Introduction

He now proceeds, as his subject naturally led him, to show the excellent nature of charity by describing the several amiable (lovely) exercises and fruits of it in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7...the first, suffering long, has respect to ill received from others; and the other, viz. being \_\_\_\_\_, respects good to be done to others.” (93)

Doctrine—“A Christian spirit disposes persons meekly to bear ill that is received from others, and cheerfully and freely to do \_\_\_\_\_ to others.”

Continuing in the sermon Edwards lists six truths that are necessary to consider for the increase of long-suffering in the Christians life. *First*, “Consider the example which \_\_\_\_\_ hath set. He was a meek spirit and of a meek, long-suffering behavior.” (105)

*Secondly*, consider that “if we are not disposed meekly to bear injury, we are not fitted to live in such a world as this, for we can expect no other than to meet with many injuries in this world. We do not live in heaven, or a world of purity, innocence and love. We dwell in a fallen, corrupt, miserable, wicked world; a world that is very much under the reign and dominion of sin. The principles of divine love, which was at first in the heart of man, is extinguished, and revived in but few, and in them but in a very \_\_\_\_\_ degree.” (106)

“Men who have their spirits heated and enraged, and rising in bitter resentment when they are injured, or unreasonably dealt with, act as if they thought some strange thing had happened to them. Whereas they are very foolish in taking it so, it is no strange thing at all; it is no other than what is to be \_\_\_\_\_ in such a world. Men therefore do not act wisely who have their spirits ruffled by injuries with which they meet. A wise man does not expect any other and is prepared for it, and composes his spirit to bear it.” (107)

*Third*, we must consider that we are to have a mindset that is not of this world. “A man who has so much the exercise of a Christian spirit as to be able meekly to bear all injuries does as it were dwell on high, where his enemies can see him, and show their spite to him, but cannot \_\_\_\_\_ him to disturb him.” (107)

*Fourth*, consider that it is the long-suffering person who has a true “greatness of soul.” “This spirit of Christian long-suffering and meekly to bear injuries is a true greatness of soul... as Solomon says, ‘He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a great city’ (Proverbs 16:32)...on the contrary those who are apt highly to resent injuries, and to be greatly vexed by them, are spoken of in Scripture as of a little, \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.” (108-109)

*Fifth*, consider the example of the \_\_\_\_\_ in holy Scripture. Think of David with evil Saul. Consider Joseph and his evil brothers. Consider Stephen’s prayer for his murderers.

*Sixth*, consider the \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven for those who are long-suffering. “We are often informed in Scripture that we are like to be dealt with of God hereafter according to our own way of dealing with others.” (111)

Next, Edwards turns his attention toward love being \_\_\_\_\_ or as he puts it “doing good to others.” He breaks doing good into three parts (the doing of good, to whom should we do good, how to do good)

Part 1-Two ways of doing good to others- First Edwards mentions, “Persons may do good to others’ \_\_\_\_\_, which is the most excellent way of doing good.” (114) This kind of goodness can be done by counseling, instruction, warning, or stirring others up. Edwards also says that being a good example for others is doing good

to them. He writes, “by setting good examples, which is a thing the most needful of all and commonly the most effectual of any for promoting the good of others’ souls.” (115)

The second way to do good to others involves physical and external \_\_\_\_\_ of kindness. “People may do good to others by furthering their outward estate or substance, or with regard to their good name, or their esteem and acceptance among men, or otherwise may greatly contribute to the comfortableness of other’s circumstances in the world.” (115)

Part 2-to whom should we do good- Here Edwards recounts the parable of the good Samaritan and says, “We should do good to both good and bad. This we should do as we would imitate God, our Heavenly Father...The world is full of various kinds of persons; some are good, and some are evil. We should especially do good to those that are of the household of \_\_\_\_\_...But though we should more abound in beneficence to them, yet our doing good should not be confined to them; but we should do good to all men.” (117)

“We should do good both to friends and enemies. We are obliged to do good to our friends...But we are not only obliged to do good to them, but also to our enemies...We should do good to those that do ill to us. This should be the Christian’s way of retaliating, not returning evil for evil but \_\_\_\_\_ for evil.” (117-118)

“We should do good to the thankful and the unthankful...Many make that an objection against doing good to others, giving anything to others which they need, ‘If I do, they will never thank me for it; they will not accept it thankfully. If I go on with kindness, they will still go on with their abuses and injuries.’ And this men are ready to think excuses them from showing any more kindness. But such persons have not sufficiently \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, and show their unacquaintance with the nature and spirit of Christianity.” (118)

Part 3-how are we to do good-“Whatever good is done, it is no proper kindness in the doer of it unless it be done \_\_\_\_\_...we do not do it as being hired to do it, that we do not do it for the sake of any reward received or expected from the person to whom we do it.” (118)

Not only must we do it freely but also \_\_\_\_\_. “What is done heartily is done from love, is done with delight, and not grudgingly, and with backwardness and loathness.” (119)

We should do good freely, cheerfully, and \_\_\_\_\_. “We should not be scant or sparing in our gifts, but open-hearted and open-handed.” (119)

The Christian spirit of love “is benevolence or good will to others.” The Christian spirit does not simply \_\_\_\_\_ goodwill for another. “The proper evidence of wishing good to another is doing good to another.” (120)

Application-This doctrine can be applied in two ways: reproof and exhortation.

*Reproof-*“If a Christian spirit disposes persons freely to do good to others, all those who are of a contrary spirit and practice may hence be reproved. A malignant, \_\_\_\_\_ spirit is directly contrary to this; for that is a spirit which disposes men to do evil to others, and not good.” (121)

*Exhortation-*“Seeing this is a Christian duty, and a virtue becoming the gospel, and what a Christian spirit disposes to, let us all who call ourselves Christians \_\_\_\_\_ with it; let us all as we have opportunity do good to others’ souls and bodies.” (121) Edwards then lists four ways this doctrine can exhort us:

First, consider the honor it is to be used by God to do good in the world. Second, consider that we should treat others as we want to be treated. Third, consider how God in Christ has been good to us. “How much outward kindness have we received, and what great good things hath God bestowed for our spiritual and eternal good! God hath given more than if He had bestowed on us all the kingdoms of the world; He hath given His own Son. God hath not been shorthanded, but exceedingly \_\_\_\_\_...And all this have God and Christ done for us when we were not good, but evil; not friends, but enemies, and though very unthankful.” (122) Fourth, consider the rewards that “are promised to those who freely do good to other.” (123) Here Edwards focuses not just on heavenly rewards but also earthly blessing. He writes, “This (being good to others) is the best way of laying up for yourself both for time and eternity, both for yourself and your posterity.” (124)