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*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22,23)*

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## The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Last Sunday, we talked about patience. Patience is a tough word. Today, I am going to talk about kindness. Kindness is a tender word. Kindness is thoughtful and helpful, tender, and generous. A kind person cares for and serves others. Kindness is the heart attitude behind all caring and serving. It is an eagerness to enhance the life of another. In fact, I believe it is right to say that the essence of kindness is what Jesus had in mind when He gave us the golden rule—"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12). A kind person habitually blesses and benefits the life of another.

But you really don't need a working definition of kindness; you already know what kindness is. We know what kindness sounds like, and we know what it looks like. We know when a person is being kind and not harsh. Perhaps then there is a better question we might ask. Who in my sphere of influence do I need to be kind to?

Consider this story from 2 Samuel 9. David is the new King of Israel. Saul was the first king, and Saul hated David with a vicious passion. He pursued him to take his life. King Saul had a son named Jonathan. Jonathan loved David. Jonathan's response to David was the complete opposite of his father, King Saul. Jonathan and David were the closest of friends, fulfilling the proverb that says, "A friend is closer than a brother." These two held a covenant relationship of friendship and love.

But now, in chapter 9, King Saul is dead. Jonathan is dead And David is king. And he asks, "Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" (2 Samuel 9:3). And the report came back, "There is

one, His name is Mephibosheth.” but Mephibosheth is crippled. He cannot provide for or protect himself. He is hopeless in this world. Mephibosheth is sent for and comes before King David. He’s nervous and afraid. When he comes into David's presence, he collapses to the ground. But David urges him not to be afraid. David tells Mephibosheth, “I am going to show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan” (2 Samuel 9).

And David provides for Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel 9 ends with, “Mephibosheth always ate at the King’s table.” David asked a question, “Is there anyone I can show God's kindness to?” And when he meets Mephibosheth he says, “I am going to show kindness to you for the sake of my friend Jonathan.”

## Our God is Kind

If kindness is part of the Fruit of the Spirit, then we need to be asking, “Is there anyone I can show kindness to for the sake of Jesus?” We are called to be kind because our God is kind.

Listen to Romans 2:4, “Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” Every day you live to see another day is an act of kindness from God to you. If you are not a Christian, God is giving you sufficient time to repent of your sins and embrace Jesus Christ your Lord.

Titus 3:4-7, “But when the *kindness* and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

This passage is so rich and so weighty that I want someday to preach a sermon on it. But here are four points I want to sketch out:

*The kindness of God is a saving kindness.* “But when the kindness and love of God, our Savior appeared, he *saved* us.” It's a word we like to use, “Have you been saved? Are you saved?” He *saved* us. What is so remarkable about the words Savior and saved is that while God had every right to judge and condemn us, instead, he sent a Savior to save us—to redeem us. And this is what it means to be saved, it is to have your sins forgiven so that they are no longer held against you. It is to experience the removal of your legal guilt before a Holy God. It is your ultimate rescue, from the judgment that you deserve.

You have a Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And if you trusted him, his kindness means he's your Savior.

*God's kindness is a merciful kindness.* “He saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his *mercy*.” We can never gain the approval of God by doing righteous things. All of our goodness and righteousness, added together, compiled, and pressed together are no more than “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). It is of no value. The only way we escape eternal justice is that God is merciful to us; he has pity on us, who deserve the opposite. Mercy is a twin brother to the word *grace*—God's unmerited, undeserved favor and kindness.

*The kindness of God is a generous kindness.* “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us *generously* for Jesus Christ, our Savior.” Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” He meant you must be born from above. You must be washed with new birth by the Holy Spirit, whom God has given through Jesus Christ generously. When we become believers, One of God’s great, great gifts to us is the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

*The kindness of God is an eternal kindness.* “So that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs, having the hope of eternal life.” He's given us a righteous standing in his presence. We are justified by his grace, and ours is the possession of the hope of eternal life. This hope is our future certainty. It is the confident expectation that all of his promises to us will be fulfilled.

God’s, saving mercy and generous kindness are yours forever. Have you received the kindness of God? There is no question more urgent and more necessary for you than that question.

If we have received the kindness of God, it is our calling to emulate His kindness. If God is holy, we are to be holy. If God is loving, we are to be loving. If God is compassionate, we are to be compassionate. And if God is kind and tender-hearted in his dealings with us, then we also must be kind. This is what the Holy Spirit wants to work in your life.

## Kindness is what believers deserve from us.

The Holy Spirit is the giver of kindness. We cannot have kindness without the enabling power and grace of the Holy Spirit. So, we ask Him for it to make sense of those moments of unkindness and to help us to be kind. We must embrace this truth and choose to be kind. Resolve to speak and act in ways that are godlike.

Every believer is commanded to be kind. Ephesians 4:32 reads, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” There’s the command. Be kind, tenderhearted, compassionate, and willing to forgive others. just as God in Jesus Christ has forgiven you.

The verses preceding this are noteworthy, verse 30, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice” (verses 30, 31). And the next verse reads, “be kind.” In other words, do you want to know what unkindness is? It is being bitter and angry. It is being malicious and lashing out at others. And it grieves the Holy Spirit.

In Colossians 3:12 we read, “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Clothe yourselves. The metaphors of the Bible are intentional. Just as you choose your daily dress, this cluster of virtues is your spiritual clothing. It's a resolve; a choice that we make.

If we are not kind, there is no such thing as authentic love. The great love chapter, (I Corinthians 13) says “love keeps no record of wrong, love always protects, always trust, always hope. Love always perseveres. Love is not easily angered.” Listen to what love is, “Love is patient, Love is kind.”

The authentic mark of love must include kindness in the character and behavior of a believing person. Unkindness grieves the Holy Spirit.

## Kindness is what our enemies deserve from us.

I want to read a paragraph from the teaching of Jesus:

*“But to you who are listening, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.*

*And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you listen to those from*

*whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without expecting anything back then. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”*

*(Luke 6:27-36).*

## Kindness is what the poor deserve from us.

I simply want to let the following Proverbs speak for themselves:

- *Proverbs 14:21* “It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.”
- *Proverbs 14:31* “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their maker. But whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” Whoever is kind to the poor.
- *Proverbs 19:17* “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

## Kindness is what the unsaved deserve from us.

God, out of His infinite kindness, has saved us. We can save no one, but we can speak the saving gospel of Jesus Christ into the life of another person. If you know the saving kindness of God, talk about God's saving kindness to others. Philip Rankin puts it this way, “The greatest kindness we can ever show to anyone is to share the gospel.”

Amy Carmichael once wrote in her journal, “If I can write an unkind letter, speak an unkind word, think an unkind thought, without grief and shame, then I know nothing of Calvary's love.”

But if you look at the cross and you see the horror of it and see the blessedness of what God accomplished through that horror, then you see the kindness of

God. And that's the kind of sacrificial kindness that ought to emulate. Ask God to give us opportunities to be kind every single day.

## Closing Prayer

*Father, you have brought us by your kindness to repentance. And we love you. Thank you that we are saved and have eternal hope.*

*May others know the presence of the Holy Spirit in us because we love each other. Holy Spirit, work mightily in us. Give us wisdom to help the needy, love for Jesus turn the other cheek, and to pray for and treat well our enemies so that they will see in us something of the kindness of God. Give us opportunity to speak the saving gospel of Jesus. Give us the compassion and courage to bear witness. Help us to commit this supreme act of kindness.*

*All glory be to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, O Holy Spirit. This day, fill us with yourself and ripen your sweet fruit in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen*

Mitchell Gregory

*edited by ckg*