

Sermon: Kindness

Text: Ephesians 2:6-8 (ESV)

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Text: Ephesians 2:6-8 (ESV) ⁶ and (God) raised us up with him (Jesus) and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

Introduction: Kindness is more than sharing a feeling. Kindness in me meets needs in you. It is not just a thought, but an action. It is practical.

Illus. Back in 1991, Glamor Magazine had an editorial about a woman who drove up to the toll booth of the Bay Bridge in San Francisco and said, “I’m paying for myself and for the 6 cars behind me.” One after another the next six drivers came up to the booth with dollars in hand only to be told, “Some lady up ahead already paid your fare. Have a nice day.”

This random act of kindness was inspired by an index card the woman saw on a friend’s refrigerator. It said, “Practice random acts of kindness and senseless beauty.” The friend saw the saying spray painted on a warehouse wall. Her husband liked it so much he put it on the blackboard of his 7th grade class. One of the students was the daughter of a columnist. She took it home to him, and he put it in his column in the paper.

Soon, random acts of kindness were being done by people all over the country. Bumper stickers were made, and people were putting the idea on letters and business cards. Articles came out in Reader’s Digest, Ladies Home Journal, Red Book, and People’s Weekly. The idea was so simple: anything you think there should be more of in this world - do it randomly.

It is a great idea that was a fad for the world, but it needs to be a way of life for us as Christians. It is not merely a motto, for kindness is supposed to be a basic ingredient of who we are (DNA), and not just a temporary program.

The fruit of the Spirit is not so much to make this world better, but to attract people to our Lord and Savior when they see the quality of our hearts and lives.

I. Some Examples of Kindness

A. Old Testament period

The Bible is full of examples of kindness (can you think of any?):

Abraham to Lot

Boaz to Ruth

Jonathan to David

Examples of kindness are found throughout the O.T. These are meant to encourage others to acts of kindness. God has been gracious to us so that we might be gracious to others through doing good works - kind deeds. That is how we should be seen by the world.

The prophet Jeremiah, speaking for God says: **Jeremiah 9:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love (*kindness*, NIV), justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

B. New Testament times (“last days”)

The Apostle Paul describes every non-Christian as someone who is DEAD in his/her sins. We have never really deserved anything good from God, but He has graciously showed His kindness toward us. He has saved us. Not so much from hell although that’s true - BUT for His glory NOW! So what does God want from us?

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Most people know about the idea of kindness through Jesus’ words. It is called the *Golden Rule*. **Matthew 7:12 (ESV)** ¹² “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

One of the great examples of the Golden Rule ethic was Abraham Lincoln, who frequently spoke with kindness toward the Southern states even during the worst part of the Civil War. On one such occasion, an elderly woman accosted him in the reception room of the White House. “How can you speak kindly of your enemies,” she asked him, “when you should rather destroy them?” President Lincoln said, “but, madam, do I not destroy them when I make them my friends?”

II. How to Nurture Kindness

A. In Yourself

Illus. The question that must be asked of every organization and also on a personal level is: “Are you committed to getting better or are you simply a little curious about the process.” A lot of people are interested in improving - their knowledge, their waistline, their marriage, their golf game - BUT how many are committed. How many are interested enough to pay the price by putting ideas into action - to make the sacrifices?

A person interested in an exercise program who wakes up to a rainy morning or aching joints may very well decide to wait for better weather, but a person who is committed to exercise waking up to rain may very well workout inside that day. Let me give you a prescription: Associate with positive and encouraging people. Get into a Bible study. Pray. Ask God to help you be more loving, patient, kind...

Nurture kindness.....

B. In Others

“Kind words are the music of the world. They have a power which seems to be beyond natural causes, as if they were some angel’s song which had lost its way and come on earth. It seems as if they could almost do what in reality God alone can do - soften the hard and angry hearts of men. No one was ever corrected by a sarcasm - crushed, perhaps, if the sarcasm were clever enough, but drawn nearer to God, never.”
- Frederick William Faber

Let me suggest that every act of kindness is the beginning of the transformation of the world. In a world full of hostility, hatred, violence, indiscriminate evil, we sometimes wonder what difference any of us can make.

Perhaps these thinkers will help us see differently:

“I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.” (Helen Keller)

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single minute before starting to improve the world.” (Anne Frank)

“We must be the change we wish to see in the world.” (Gandhi)

We can make a difference. It can begin today. It can begin with you and me. Today is the day that our kindness can begin to help produce kindness in others.

Kindness is more than sharing a feeling. Kindness in me meets needs in you. It is active. Practical. We see kindness. It shows itself in practical ways. It smiles. It offers encouragement out loud. It is seen in the help offered to a struggling student, to an elderly person who no longer can do some of the work around their homes. It compliments. It shares with a brother or sister. And the Bible insists that when we show kindness to others that we are doing it for and in reality to Jesus Himself.

Expressions of kindness shown to others will come back to us in the form of better friendships, because we will be well-practiced in giving, which is the heart of friendship.

If you are short of friends, try expressing kindness toward others. Kindness is love expressing itself. Kindness is what gives love definition - shape and form. I know what love looks like because I see your kindness. We can say we care, etc., but kindness helps to prove and illustrate love.

You see kindness is for the sake of the gospel. [II Corinthians 6:3-13 \(ESV\)](#) ³ We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷ by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. ¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³ In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

III. We Have Been Saved by Grace (Kindness)

A. So we ought to help see others get saved.

The great thing about kindness is that anybody can do it. You can be young or old. It doesn't take formal training or a degree. You don't have to be wealthy. You could be poor - poor just like the apostles John and Peter in [Acts 3-4](#), who on their way to the temple one day are verbally accosted by this beggar. The apostles look him in the eye and give him what he needs, not what he wants.

[Acts 3:6 \(ESV\)](#) 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

They got in trouble with the ruling Jews for this act of kindness. You see whenever kindness is done in the name of Jesus - it affects people differently.

Some will accept kindness - others will question your motives. Have you ever noticed? "Why are you doing this for me?" they might ask.

At one level grace and kindness from God or another person is foreign to our understanding. Once we understand how God and His people most certainly feel about us, it can change us forever if we accept the responsibility that comes with grace.

B. We must share grace.

You and I do not have the Apostle's gift of healing, but we aren't without our own God-given resources. The gift may be money, or labor, or simply our caring presence, but we are always able to offer some "act of kindness."

Illus. Henrietta Mears who influenced many young men into the ministry while the dynamic Minister of Christian Education at Hollywood Presbyterian Church had a secret to her success. She said, "I visualize a sign across their chest which says, 'My name is _____' Please help me feel important."

Everybody wants to feel important.

Who doesn't need to be encouraged? It is a simple gesture of kindness to grant their request, isn't it? It isn't hard, either, especially when you make up your mind that kindness is going to be a way of life for you - and courtesy your everyday habit.

Conclusion: “Kindness is not something you buy at a store and wrap in silver paper. It is, more than anything else, a portion of yourself offered in love.”

-Leroy Lawson

Just being there for people is worth more than anything you can buy.

Illus. “Kindness is a language the dumb can speak, the deaf can hear, and the blind can see” (Mark Twain). You don’t have to say it, people know when it is real.

Like grace, kindness is more than just loving people. It is loving people more than they deserve. Kindness is ‘going the extra mile’ - it is grace in action.

Chapter 8 in Phillip Yancey’s book “Vanishing Grace” begins like this...

A monologue has been floating around in cyberspace, sometimes credited to George Carlin, sometimes to a Columbine High School student, and sometimes to the Dalai Lama. ‘The Paradox of Our Time,’ it turns out, actually originated with Dr. Bob Moorehead, a retired pastor near Seattle.

We have taller buildings but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower viewpoints; we spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy it less; we have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, yet less time; we have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgment; more experts, yet more problems; we have more gadgets but less satisfaction; more medicine, yet less wellness; we take more vitamins but see fewer results. We drink too much; smoke too much; spend too recklessly; laugh too little; drive too fast, get too angry quickly; stay up too late; get up too tired; read too seldom; watch TV too much and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values; we fly in faster planes to arrive there quicker, to do less and return sooner; we sign more contracts only to realize fewer profits; we talk too much; love too seldom, and lie too often. We’ve learned how to make a living, but not a life; we’ve added years to life, not life to years.

One of the things that has been sacrificed to the altar of busyness and our current lifestyles is “kindness.”

The Bible tells us it is: “By his (God’s) grace you have been saved.”

In a discussion between Ken Blanchard, author of “The One-Minute Manager” and Peter Drucker who was Blanchard’s guru and held to be one of the great thinkers - Blanchard asked him why he was a Christian.

Drucker said: “There is no better deal.”

Blanchard said: “What do you mean?”

Drucker said, “Who else has grace.”

How are you showing your appreciation for the kindness given to you?

I hope we can be like our logo and live that out everyday while giving God all the credit.

It may be love that proves we have faith, but it is kindness that proves we have love.

[Ephesians 4:32 \(ESV\)](#) ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.