

Every Good Tree

KINDNESS

Matthew 7:16-20

August 15, 2020

It's amazing how cruel and unkind people can be..... Here is one example from this week's headlines:

- Missouri woman pepper-sprays workers who ask her to wear a face mask

Despite the headlines, most of us live out our days fulfilling the obligations of life while trying to do the right thing: be a good employee, a good student, a good spouse, a good parent, a good citizen..... these things we do because we are expected to do them. Kindness moves us beyond the expected to the unexpected and extraordinary.

- In **Hebrew**, the word for God's **covenant kindness** is "**Chesed**". It is an attribute of grace, benevolence, mercy or compassion and literally refers to the voluntary compulsion to give and to love without limit those who have no merit.
- The **Greek** word for **kindness** "**Chrastos**". It is an attribute of goodness, graciousness or kindness and is action toward someone to furnish what is needed.

Kindness comes in all shapes and sizes, but regardless of how big or small, Christian **kindness** finds its source in **God's Kindness toward us**:

- **Psalm 145:17** - The LORD is righteous in all His ways and **kind** in all His deeds.
- **Jeremiah 9:24** - But let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises **kindness**, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.
- **Jeremiah 31:3** - The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with **loving-kindness**.
- **Luke 6:35** - 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 sons of the Most High, because he is **kind** to the ungrateful and wicked.
- **Romans 2:4** - Or do you think lightly of the riches of His **kindness** and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the **kindness** of God leads you to repentance?
- **Titus 3:4-5** - But when the **kindness** and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

God's **love** and **kindness** have been freely poured out on those who have rebelled against Him. He is **kind** to the wicked. He is **kind** to the ungrateful. His **kindness** does not discriminate. His **kindness** is without limit. **Kindness** is an attribute of God, therefore, as His people **kindness** should also be an attribute found in us:

- **Proverbs 3:3** - Do not let **kindness** and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.
- **Hosea 6:6** - For I desire **mercy** and not sacrifice....
- **Micah 6:8** - He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love **mercy**, and to walk humbly with your God?
- **Zechariah 7:9-10** - Thus has the LORD of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice, and practice **kindness** and compassion each to his brother; ¹⁰ and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.
- **Ephesians 4:32** - Be **kind** and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
- **Colossians 3:12** - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, **kindness**, humility, gentleness and patience.
- **2 Peter 1:5-8** - Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge; ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly **kindness**, and in *your* brotherly **kindness**, love. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Story – The Good Samaritan {Luke 10:27-37}

A lawyer came to Jesus for the purpose of testing him: "**Teacher**" he said, "**what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**"

Jesus: "**What does the law say?**"

The lawyer: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."*

Jesus: *"Correct. Do this and you will live."*

But wishing to justify himself, the lawyer replied, *"Who is my neighbor?"*

Jesus told a story: *"A man was taking a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers, stripped naked and left for dead by the side of the road. Some time passed and a priest came upon the man. Instead of helping him, the priest went to the other side of the road and kept walking. Later, a Levite also came upon the wounded man, and he too, kept right on walking. Then a Samaritan (whom the Jews hate) came along. When he saw the man lying there, he took pity on him. He bandaged the man's wounds, then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he paid the innkeeper 2 silver coins and told him, 'Look after the man. If there are any extra expenses for his care, I will reimburse you when I return.'"*

At the conclusion of the story Jesus asked the lawyer a question, *"Which of the 3 proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell victim to the robbers?"*

The lawyer: *"The one who showed mercy."*

Jesus: *"Correct. Go and do the same."*

Here are some lessons we can learn from the Samaritan:

1. Kindness requires action.

The Samaritan did not pass by or ignore the one in need. He took action to do what he could to help. **Kindness** is not a mood or an attitude. **Kindness** is an action – it is **LOVE** in action.

However, **Kindness** is more than just helping an old lady cross the street or rescuing a cat from a tree. **Kindness** isn't something you put on your *"to do"* list, or something you do when you *"feel like it"*. This kind of **kindness** really doesn't get in your way. It doesn't require that you change your schedule or your lifestyle --- sometimes **kindness** is costly and inconvenient.

2. Kindness does not consider the cost.

The Samaritan did not stop to calculate the personal cost of helping the man in the ditch. He didn't consider the injured man's nationality, his own personal safety or the financial losses he would sustain. He got off his donkey, treated the man, dipped into his own resources and paid for the man's extended care – and he did all of those things not knowing if the man would recover or if he would ever be thanked or reimbursed. Not only did the Samaritan give of his resources, but he also gave of his time – it was no doubt inconvenient to stop and help, but he put the needs of another above his own.

- **Isaiah 53:3-5** - He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

3. Kindness does not seek recognition.

What was the Good Samaritan's name? Jesus does not tell us. The Samaritan is content to remain unknown. Godly **kindness** is not motivated by the recognition of others. It does not draw attention to or seek glory for itself. It does not keep a record of its good deeds. **Kindness** is a silent witness to the glory of God.

- **Matthew 6:1-4** - Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

What about us? What are we known for? Are we so wrapped up in "doing the right thing" doctrinally, that we would go to war – leaving the bloody and dead alongside the road - to prove our beliefs correct rather than extend *"Chesed"*?

Beliefs matter but they are subordinate to love and kindness and mercy, etc..

- **Matthew 7:20** - So then, you will know them by their fruits.
- **John 13:35** - By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
- **James 3:17-18** - But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

KINDNESS is meant to be a hallmark of the Christian life – it is not an optional extra. However, Godly **KINDNESS** does not come naturally to us --- we have no ability to manufacture it through human effort..... So how do we become **KIND** people?

Allowing the Holy Spirit into our lives to guide and transform them. The Holy Spirit will not automatically operate in the life of a Christian. A transformed life only happens as we surrender to and cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Choosing the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity for Victorious Christian living. Why? Because the power of a fruitful life does not lie with the believer, but with the Spirit. Just as an apple tree doesn't think about producing apples – it produces apples because it's an apple tree and because it's connected with the source of life, so it is with a believer. A believer doesn't **TRY** to produce righteous fruit. He produces fruit **BECAUSE** he is a believer and **BECAUSE** he is connected to his source of life --- the Holy Spirit.

- **John 15:4-5** – Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.... **By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.**

KINDNESS is produced by God's work in us --- it's a gift.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** - The **FRUIT** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, KINDNESS, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

KINDNESS is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives – transforming us into the image of Jesus.

Every Good Tree Produces ---- KINDNESS