

Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Text: Romans 2:4, Proverbs 14:21, Colossians 3:23-25

Speaker: Brandon Sanford

August 14 & 15, 2021

Introduction & Prayer

When I was a young boy, one of the shows my brothers and I loved watching was a game show called, "Legends of the Hidden Temple." Young kids in teams participated; they ran obstacle courses, did trivia, and the winning team would get the opportunity to run an elaborate maze of rooms to win a grand prize! Inside that maze was a room with a puzzle where you had to put together a foam monkey that was spray-painted silver. The monkey consisted of three parts: bottom, middle, and top. Simple right? Well, we watched show after show and these kids could not figure this monkey out. Often, the time would run out and they would miss out on the grand prize; all because they could not piece the monkey together. Today, we are going to try to piece together kindness, and hopefully we do get the pieces together.

Last week, we talked about goodness. We talked about how God is good and how through the Holy Spirit within us, we can do good. The fruits of the Spirit are interconnected, and today we will be looking at kindness. If you notice some similarities between goodness and kindness and even related passages of Scripture, you're right. We are called to do good because God is good. Is kindness a part of doing good? Of course! Also, is being kind good? Yes, absolutely it is.

The things about kindness that Scripture tells us are that while it is practical and simple, it is also deep theologically. Therefore, today we are going to piece together what biblical kindness is in its (1) purpose, (2) prize, and (3) practice.

1. Purpose
2. Prize
3. Practice

Again, we are going to look at Scripture and see how it all fits together so that we don't miss out on the grand prize that God has for us. As we leave, I pray that we might be equipped to incorporate, by our Holy-Spirit-sourced godly character, actions flavored with kindness into our fruit of the Spirit.

I. Purpose

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul lays out his theological position to the Romans. He does so because Paul had never visited Rome, and since he could not make the journey just

yet, he wanted to pass along the message to them about the whole of his teaching. Many of the other letters that Paul wrote were in response to practices within the Church that needed to be addressed, and that is why Romans is unique. We gain a wealth of our theological understanding of Jesus, the nature of sin, and the theological realities of God's saving word from Romans.

After Paul gives his greetings and personal note to the Romans, he moves into a section talking about how God's wrath is upon the unrighteous. He talks about the nature of sin, and what sin will ultimately do to humanity. What he shares is that sin will disrupt, distort, and destroy one's relationship with God and with others. In turn, God's wrath and condemnation are upon humanity, not only those in Rome and the ancient world, but on you and me. If sin is left to its devices in our life, it will destroy, distort, and disrupt our relationship with God and with others. Paul says that God knows that it must be dealt with. That's chapter 1. Then Paul moves into the second chapter and this is where we find our passage.

In chapter 2, Paul shifts his focus away from those who are slanderers, haters of God, boastful, and inventors of evil marked by strife, envy, and sexual immorality, to God's chosen people. Then, Paul not only stirs the pot, but shakes it up. Paul tells his audience that they who judge those for those evil, wrongful practices, practice the very same things. He says that both those who are known to be evil doers and those who seek to do what is right are left without an excuse before God. In the end, the verdict is that no one is a good person before God and all are left in condemnation. This is where we come to verse 4. Paul writes, **Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**

What Paul draws out here in this profound statement is that God's kindness has a purpose. It is not kindness in return for our good deeds, but kindness despite our sin so that we might turn in repentance. Now, this is important to note that God's kindness to people does not mean He endorses or approves of people's actions.

This goes contrary to so much of what we experience today. Today, kindness is used to demonstrate inclusion into a group or community, or to modify one's behavior, or to demonstrate how we feel about someone. But check out what Jesus says in Luke, we will look at this passage three times today. Jesus says, **"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."** So the Holy Spirit within us gives us the Godly character to be kind to the ungrateful, kind to those we see as enemies, kind to those who will not reciprocate. **The purpose of showing kindness is to open the door for the Holy Spirit to bring about repentance.**

II.Prize

We are kind because it reflects God's kindness, the purpose of which is based on repentance. One of the aspects that is frequently missed is the fact that our kindness is not forgotten by

God. Let's turn back to Luke 6:35, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great ..." Paul draws upon the same idea when he writes to the Colossians. He writes, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

What we find in both passages is that God is diligently watching our actions, and He is doing so to reward us. It shows us that **God rewards kindness**. We are kind because God is kind to us, and his reward will be upon those who demonstrate His kindness to others. He will lavish his eternal riches and eternal security on those who live a life marked by the fruit of the Spirit. This is a very tricky principle in Scripture because it is often misunderstood or simply misused.

I must warn you as a pastor that there are those who lace the message of the Gospel with the idea that God will reward your kindness or your devotion to Him with wealth right now in the present, physical, and temporary form; or that He will reward kindness or a commitment to Jesus with security in this life now. Full devotion, commitment, and kindness to others should be done so with no greater expectation for our life than the example of the other followers of Jesus. The Apostles with all their commitment, devotion, and kindness were met with persecution and poverty. As they demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit, the result was imprisonment and death.

But God rewards those who are faithful to Him. God blesses those who, like Him, show kindness to all people. God wants to pour out His blessing on those whose lives are marked by kindness.

III. Practice

Now that we know the purpose of kindness, and how kindness is not forgotten by God, what is the practice of kindness? Again, remember Jesus' words in Luke 6:35, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return ...". In that passage Jesus associates kindness with loving, doing good, and generosity. Another passage that echoes that same idea is Proverbs 14:21. **Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.** The writer uses the opposite of kindness, which is despising someone, and puts it in contrast with kindness demonstrated through generosity.

So what we hear from these passages is that practicing kindness looks like being generous: giving to people in need and expecting nothing in return. It looks like being observant of those who are in need, taking the time to listen to how people are doing, and seeking out those that God impresses on your heart. Giving people what they need especially when they do not deserve it. Doing good to others because God is good. As a reminder from last week, through the Holy Spirit we can do good by doing all that we do in the name of Jesus, which means living our daily lives with his heart and purpose as the primary goal.

What rises to the surface, as we look at these passages and talk about practicing kindness is that biblical kindness is directly related to God's grace. Therefore, **kindness is the outward expression of God's grace through one's loving generosity.**

At the beginning, we talked about the television show I watched as a kid with my brothers, and how the contestants had so much trouble piecing the puzzle together. Well, let's try to do it a bit more smoothly. So, **kindness is the outward expression of God's grace through one's loving generosity with the purpose of repentance with the understanding that God never forgets.**

This past week, we had a Worship Intensive take place where almost fifty students came and developed their gifts and abilities, learned about worship, and heard from the experience of worship leaders, all of whom were connected with Valley in some way. On Wednesday, one of our worship leaders shared a story that perfectly demonstrates biblical kindness.

This worship leader played the violin. The violin that she had was a nice instrument, which her family purchased for her when she was younger. As time progressed, she got better and better at the violin, so good, that people enjoyed listening to her. One of the ways she blessed others was to play her violin for people who were sick or recovering. This was a form of therapy.

One of the people she played for was an elderly man who was recovering from surgery. After she played one day, the man pulled her aside and shared with her that he was taught by the famous violinist, Otakar Sevcik. The young woman was awestruck! She told the man that he should be playing not she. After talking for a little while, they exchanged contact information, he recovered, and she no longer saw him.

While she was content with her violin, she really wanted a better instrument for a better sound. She began to save, little by little. In the process of her saving the money, a good friend of hers came into a difficult time. She was in financial need, and the violin player felt called to give her the money that she had been saving. This was a big sacrifice because of what it represented. As she was on her way to the bank to get the money, she said out loud to God in the car, "God, if You want me to have a new violin, You, You can get me a violin." She gave her friend the money she had saved, and demonstrating God's kindness and grace to her through this free gift.

The next day, she gets a phone call. It is the elderly man that she had met before. He asks if they can meet and she agrees. They get together, and the man shares with her that he wants to give her one of his French violins made in the 1800's. This instrument was far beyond anything she would have ever saved her money for. He tells her that she plays beautifully, but she'll sound much better playing this instrument. This violin

player is our very own Eve Burtness. Every time we hear her play, we hear God's reward for her showing kindness!

We show kindness because of the kindness extended to us from God. We have the Holy Spirit, so we go out, by his power, to demonstrate purposefully God's grace in physical ways through our generosity. While we don't give so that we can receive, as our loving Father, God takes joy when we show His kindness, and He remembers it. Again, that is not our motivator; instead our motivators are repentance and that people would come to know Jesus.

Last week, we talked about goodness, and now we are seeking to live out the flavor of kindness. One of the best ways that we can show kindness is our response to actions when it is easy to react in an unkind way. It is normal to be angry, and frustrated, to lose your patience, and to feel wronged, but when we show kindness in those situations, it will leave a meaningful mark for the Kingdom. We can show kindness because God is sovereign and has everything under His control. We don't need to think that we need to be a replacement for the Holy Spirit, but instead be people who are the result of the Spirit's work. One of the things that I have found is that I am a terrible replacement for the Holy Spirit; He convicts and reveals wrongs, but my kindness to others could very well be the conduit He uses to act.

So, let's be a people who ready ourselves to be kind. Again, what I mean by kindness is an outward expression of God's grace through loving generosity. So, let's be generous and may we do so knowing that kindness is not left unnoticed by God, but He wants to bless those that do His work. May our reward be the joy of seeing people who come to know the living Jesus.

Let's take our time, let's take our abilities, let's take our money, and go be kind. And then, let's watch God work!

Close in Prayer.