

Love is kind

Welcome

Opening Scripture & Prayer: Ps 103:1-5

Opening Hymn: 880 Lord I come to You (The Power of your Love)

Prayer: Adoration and Praise

Reading: Psalm 92

Notices / Testimony / Prayer

Main reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Hymn: 449 - Love Divine

Sermon: Love is kind

Hymn: 333 In Loving Kindness Jesus Came

Closing Prayer and Benediction

Close -----

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The audio file is [20_10_18.mp3](#)

Welcome, pray

- Marie Adams always went to a branch post office in her town because the postal employees there were friendly. On one occasion, just before Christmas she went there to buy stamps and found there was a particularly long queue. Someone pointed out that there was no need to wait in a queue because there was a stamp machine in the lobby. "I know," said Marie, 'but the machine won't ask me about my arthritis.'

Here - in essence - is this morning's message.

There are many who like Marie will go out of their way to experience the kindness of others. It attracts. – and so it should. For it is a Godly quality. The passage we read in 1 Cor.13 describes love. The second phrase in the passage reads '**love is kind**' x2. To be loving is to be kind. Are you loving? Then others will see you are kind. Love is most often seen – and experienced - in kindness. Look at the list, love is most visible in kindness.

In our country as people become more ungodly, people are more unloving - and therefore more unkind to one another. It is obvious, it is tangible. Visit another country it is one of the most obvious indicators - it gives an immediate 'feel' of what that country is like.

Interesting what people say of the top 10 friendliest – and rudest countries
God's love is supremely manifested in his Son. Christ's body, his Church is therefore God's showcase of love, his shop window. Here between Christians, love is on prominently on display.

Sadly in Corinth there's a problem.

So let's see the context....

I am sure you have noted the context. Paul brings up the subject of love here for good reason. The church there had been given many gifts, i.e. abilities. Paul said they **had been enriched in their speaking and knowledge**, they **did not lack any spiritual gift**. They immediately concluded that God was very pleased with them – and accordingly patted themselves on the back.

It's an easy trap to fall into. Which is why Paul gives fair time to explain how these gifts were to be used; you only have to read Ch. 12 & 14. Here in the middle, in the centre, Paul says the main point is not gifts - but love.

Those gifts God has given you – he gives you as He determines, - for his purposes, - for His Glory – and the good of others. It's not about you!

They had their fruit and gifts mixed up! If you are in Christ, if he is the root, then love is the fruit. Every Christian must, must display love. If you don't love your brother or sister then you are not a Christian,... Bible's very clear.

In 1 Cor 11 Paul rebukes the church about how they approached the Lord's supper: **when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else.** v20,21 ... they were acting impatiently – and therefore unkindly - towards each other.

Love is patient, love is kind, love is not proud and so on, is this list v4-8 an exhaustive? No, is there a connection between these characteristics, certainly. Those in the church who didn't wait for one another showed impatience, in going ahead they were being unkind, and probably driven by pride, or aloofness. They showed a lack of love for their fellow Christian.

Love displayed in kindness should be the mark of all of God's people. The men and women of God have always shown kindness - because God is kind.

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. Jer 31:3

...with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer. Isa 54:8

I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD. Jer 9:24

In the NT Paul says: **do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness 5544, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness 5543 leads you towards repentance?** Ro 2:4

In Christ we are told **the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared,"** Tit 3:4

A Christian should display Christ-likeness; ... this is where the church in Corinth had fallen down. For all their spiritual privileges, they had a worldly mindset, a worldly attitude and it showed in their lack of love for each other.

Kindness is, as love is, proactive. It takes the initiative towards others - and so it is open to abuse, displaying kindness makes you vulnerable. In Corinth they took the easy route and held back: Paul, who had been with them a long time said: **We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—open wide your hearts also.** 2 Cor 6:11-13

You can feel both Paul's sadness and appeal in his rebuke. He expects Christians to be loving for he knows that **God has poured out his love into**

2a

our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Ro 5:5 and so **"We love because he first loved us."** 1Jo 4:19

✚ **Love and kindness is the new disposition from a renewed heart.**

Just as I said about visiting a country, so too when someone visits your church. When someone walks in to your church they are likely to be more affected by kindness than anything else. It is not **patience** they will immediately observe, nor **not keeping a record of wrongs** etc. No, it is kindness that communicates to them that you are with them - and for them. In being kind I move towards the other person - not away from them, and that person knows it. You are positioning yourself with them. 'I am with you in this' That is love.

Do you know what visitors say about your church? If they come back or stay. it is most likely they experienced love through someone's kindness.

In the list it's kindness that is particularly proactive, it seeks out ways to show love to others, opposite to the loveless, taking, grabbing world around.

The word **kind** used here means to be good-natured, gentle, tender, affectionate. Love wishes well. Tindal renders it, "is courteous."

But note - kindness is not 'niceness'. Beware of 'niceness', the curse of the postwar church. Niceness is like gloss paint, it puts on a surface sheen, it can be smarmy and deceptive. **There was someone at school who gained the unkind nickname of 'grimace' because he always went around with a feline smile on his face.** Niceness smacks of sham, a mask over every kind of ill.

■ You a behind someone in the shop, it's the returns queue. The person in front who is being very 'nice' does not continue to be so nice when things no longer to go their way. That 'nice' soon becomes 'nasty'.

A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbours deceit. Pr 26:24 No, kindness is genuine - and the sign of Christ in me.

Let's look at two areas: kindness displayed in speech and kindness displayed in action, that is in both 'word and deed' and let's get practical!

✚ **Kindness must show in our dealings with each other - in *kind words***

But sometimes there are no words, no effort is made to talk at all. We have all experienced our brothers and sisters in the Lord who walk past without a greeting - or even a word. It hurts.

2b

I can think of one Christian brother who often walked past and rarely said hello.

That should not be. Do you do that? Do you just walk past? It's easy to be too caught up in your own busyness, if so thoughts of kindness towards others will evaporate. Are you easily self-absorbed? Then like the world around there will be no room for thinking of showing kindness to others.

It could be laziness, - or weakness; "I don't feel so keen to greet 'that' person", that should never be. Are there people you tend to avoid greeting?

Kindness does not frown, or show indifference or annoyance, or prickliness. Kindness is never harsh, sour, churlish or ill-tempered.

In Zechariah we are told **the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel** Zec 1:13

So our conversation in being kind should be full of grace, grace even when it is not reciprocated, Grace when you are faced with hostility. Grace always. Grace whatever....

Paul knew all about that saying: "**When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly**" 1Co 4:12-13

As someone has said: *Hatred* prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire for revenge. But love is the reverse of all these. A man who truly loves another will be kind to him, desirous of doing him good; will be *gentle*, not severe and harsh; but courteous.

As we know the proverb says: **a gentle answer turns away wrath**

To be **kind** is to be generous hearted to all, even to our enemies, but especially to the household of faith. The one who accommodates himself to the quirks and strange manners of others – reflects Christ.

- Are you to the point in the phone call?: Are you an expert at the three word or four word call - "where are you", or "when will you be back"

We must value relationships. The person is nearly always more important than the job. The world around is often hard, insensitive, off hand, but love and kindness prompts courtesy and true politeness.

Often communication is not verbal but written....

- Sunday afternoon at school was letter writing time, I remember sitting there wondering what to say and how to stretch things out so as to

reach the bottom of the page. We were taught how to write in the detail; address, date how to start and finish how to address the person.

Now with electronic media such as email or text it is just straight in with what you want to say. No gracious beginning, no ending, *if the number wasn't stored one wouldn't know who was speaking* - not saying it should be a formal letter but... re-read it, think how does it come across, is it hard? is it hurried? Is it impatient? think can I change the wording to add grace, something that it feels warmer? Take a moment.

- It is so easy to hit the send button - and then regret it later.

The old way gave time - time to consider, mull over what you wrote, once in the envelope you have to walk to the letterbox. Now that 'text' is quickly sent, and perhaps poorly conceived, and regretted, Think twice, reread it.

Then there is not the receiving of a message, email or text. Do you, like many others - only respond when it suits you or it is to your advantage.

- My father's principle was that normally one would respond "by return"

- A few weeks ago I was replacing an upstairs front bedroom window. A fair number of people walked past, one particularly stopped for a conversation. A week later I was up a ladder and a friend appeared in the drive. In both cases, I tried to carry on a conversation as well as do what I am doing. I feel very exercised about this. I know what I should have done, stop what I was doing, come down, spent time with them, put the kettle on etc. I am impressed when others have done just that to me. I remember it.

There are all sorts of ways that a little thought combined with much self-control can make all the difference in communicating love to others.

Are you a task orientated person? Watch out it is harder!

- I am impressed when I walk into the office of some at BCM, they are very busy but they swing away from the screen to give me full attention. There is no hint of annoyance or impatience.

- Whether it is the pc or the phone, it is obvious when you are not giving that person attention and listening. It takes real control to listen, speak kindly - and have a good demeanor - when it's inconvenient.

People heard Jesus: **they were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips**. So to were they amazed at what he did, he went around **doing good**.

Kind words, now kind 'actions'

In 1 Cor 13:4 the word for **kind** 'chresteuomai' is from the word chrestos which carries the practical element of 'usefulness', in others words being 'helpful'. This word is used by Jesus showing how he helps by making something 'easy' as in **For my yoke is easy** ⁵⁵⁴³ **and my burden is light.**" ^{Mt 11:30}

In other words the Christian in being kind makes herself useful. The AV says of a woman: **She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.** Do you remember this woman? ^{Prov 31:26}

She, in seeking to be useful searches out the opportunity to do good, even when faced with insults, Why? because she knew that God is **kind to the ungrateful and wicked.** ^{Lu 6:35} her character is such that she does all the good in her power. **"She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.** ^{Pr 31:20}

The [Swiss Protestant](#) theologian Frédéric Godet (1812-1900) said of kindness **"that person is full of goodness, animated by the constant need to make oneself useful; it is the victory over idle selfishness and comfortable self-pleasing. The verb strictly means the to put oneself at the service of others."** Just as Christ has done for you, in coming not to be served - but to serve.

So in summary

Remember you are a Christian today because of God's kindness to you. May no-one ever **show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you towards repentance?** ^{Ro 2:4}

Remember - God has not struck you down - but in his Kindness given you a way of escape through the punishment of his Son on that painful Cross.

*In loving-kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame, Through grace He lifted me.
From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light, Oh, praise His name, He lifted me!*

What can you do to display that to others? As Christians we should **be kind** ⁵⁵⁴³ **and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** ^{Eph 4:32}

Remember love is always 'other centered' It seeks the best for the other.

- I remember Simon giving up an evening to take me out to play squash.

Remember the Lord sees what is done in secret and will reward you.

- I remember another man was a good example of visiting church members and prompted me to start doing so.
- One brother learned about gardening to relate to his unsaved mother

What a good example of humble love in action, love in thoughtful kindness. Because kindness gives - when some sees kindness in you they see Christ.

✚ It pulls people. It pulls people.

Do you steal? No of course you don't. I used to but no longer, I hate it. You hate it. ^{Eph 4:28} **He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.** The point is Christians turn from a taking to giving

- I even went through a phase of baking cakes to have something to share

Let's never lack kindness. Ask yourself "how can I show kindness, who can I show kindness to", and be proactive.

- Counsellor Larry Crabb out for a meal with his son, thought sitting here have an edifying conversation "I'm not sinning" then he thought "Am I doing all I can to present and be Christ to the person across the table"

That is active love and obedience to Christ. We should ask as David did: **"Is there no-one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"** Ziba answered **"There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet."** ^{2Sa 9:3}

In this OT picture of the gospel - it is kindness x2 - that is used to demonstrate God's grace.

*A little word in kindness spoken, A motion, or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken, And made a friend sincere.
Then deem it not an idle thing a pleasant word to make:
The face you wear, the thought you bring, A heart may heal or break*

So will you act? And will you speak? As Isaiah said: **I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses** ^{Isa 63:7}

What will they say about you? That you were kind? May that be true – to the Glory of God. Amen _____end