

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022 10 am

## Prayer & Exordium

Those who belong to Jesus now - are those who will be with him in heaven later. The question is how can you tell if someone belongs to Jesus?



A number of those are here this morning, not all. How can you tell who they are? They know who they are, and if you are one of them you will know.

How can you spot them? x2 There is nothing visible that sets them out, no uniform, no badge, nor clothing. It is not that they go to a place of worship for many do that, nor that they speak in tongues, or wave their hands in the air, or use Christian language or throw lots of money into the offering. No it is how they are, what they are like. They are known because they show **love** and manifest **joy** and **peace**. They are those who love and serve someone who is invisible, and therefore love and serve people. They are different from those in the world around, and different from how they once were.

Their hallmark is Christlikeness. That's the evidence. That's how you can tell. That is they bear the fruit that comes from Jesus Christ living in them. Is that you?

As we continue to look at the fruit of the Spirit we come to **kindness**. Christ's characteristic of '**kindness**' The last time we looked at **patience**.

Before that it was **love, joy** and **peace**. Here is 'the experience' x2 enjoyed by Christ's people. They come from Him to His people - internally.

The next three **patience, kindness, goodness** are not so much our enjoyment of Him - but how we now relate to others. We looked at being patient with those with whom it is very difficult to be patient. Yes we are all difficult people, we all have our oddities and quirks, they are not so obvious when we pass each other at the back of the church for ten minutes, but the more we engage with one another - as we must for how otherwise can we love each other as Christ commands us - the more we need patience.

Live with someone, go on holiday with someone, work with someone and it is all very different. - There our patience - or lack of it is clearly seen.

The next word in the list is **kindness**, the fruit of the Spirit is **kindness**. So why are **patience** and **kindness** together?... because it is easy to pretend to be patient, you find a person or situation demanding and we can grin and bear it. We put on the smile, or more a grimace, and I try to not let my inner frustration show. It is quite possible to be angry, annoyed, dismissive, aggrieved, and yet with a modicum of self-control you hold your horses and give little away, hiding the fact that you are boiling over inside.

✚ That is not true patience, it is not patience at all.

True **patience** that comes from the Lord is full of love, a heart driven by a love for Christ and for others. That's why **kindness** is next in the list and connect to this. **For one lays the foundation for the other.**

In other word we are told that patience is not passive, something I only refrain from doing - although we surely will refrain from doing much - But it is active - the response to that person who wears me down with their speech or action is not to put up an invisible glass screen, to tune out, to allow your eyes - and thoughts - to wander, but to be consciously desiring the very best for that person. To show that actively in seen in **kindness**, a positive outworking of a heart of love for them. That genuine love - of which kindness comes - comes because God is kind. ... Yes God is kind...

**I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.** Jer9:24. Yes He is kind to all. **Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;** Psalm 138:6

Paul's spoke to the crowds in Lystra of God's kindness to all people: **He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."** Ac 14:17

God is kind to the undeserving - **Lot** who had made a big mess of his life and deserved to be judged with all those in Sodom, said: **you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life.** Ge 19:19

Or **Jacob** that trickster, he deserved nothing from the Lord. When he was about to meet his brother Esau and up against it as he had a chance to review God's gracious dealings with him and declared: **I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant.** Ge 32:10

His son *Joseph* - saw the Lord's kindness follow him to prison; **the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warder.** Ge 39:21

The Lord is kind to his people - **In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,"** says the **LORD your Redeemer.** Isa 54:8

Later in Jeremiah 31:3 The prophet recalls **The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.** And again in Hosea **I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love;** Ho 11:4

Do you get the point? God is kind, very kind. When we pray we should appeal to him on the basis of his character. "*Lord be merciful to me*" why? because He is a God of mercy. "*Lord I need your grace continually*" because he promises grace to those who seek him. And as He is Kind, We say "*Lord I appeal to your kindness, please forgive me, please help me.*"

Just as *Naomi* prayed for *Ruth*: **May the LORD show kindness to you** Ru 1:8.

And as the Lord is kind - so his people are kind - as in *Boaz*. *Naomi* says of him: **"He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead."** v3, 10

*Jonathan* says to *David*: **But show me unfailing kindness - like the Lord's kindness - as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,** 1Sa 20:14

*David* rejoiced "**he shows [me] unfailing kindness**" Ps 18:50, 2Sa 22:51 something that *Solomon* saw in his father **"You have shown great kindness to David my father.** 2Ch 1:8 As 1Ki 3:6

God is kind, and kindness gives - but I wonder if some put up the [stop sign](#).

As did King *Hezekiah* who resisted the Lord. His **heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him;** we are told 2Ch 32:25

Are you an "I can manage" person, "I don't need help thank you" then you will not receive it. And on that day when you are called to give account, and all your sin is laid bare there will be no help. None.

✚ **Now is the time, this is the day to seek salvation.**

David foreshadows Christ in his dealings with *Mephibosheth* – Here is a man in a hopeless state, banished from home and destitute, he describes himself as a dead dog. 2Sa 9:1 **David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"** v3, 7

So to you and I God is willing to show kindness for Christ's sake.

2a

Now that Christ who had no sin suffered and died so terribly for the sins of others, God is willing to freely give you the benefits. Do you want them? Are you a seeker after His righteousness? Or are you trusting in your own? [Cross](#).

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

Did you notice kindness leads, it doesn't push or pull you, it beckons you and calls you to repentance. The Lord is patient with you - and he is kind to you.

Are you one of those who has found this in Jesus? **But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared,** Tit 3:4 Titus it goes on to say "**he saved us, can you today say "he saved ME?"**" x2 and **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 Saviour,**" Titus 3:5-6

✚ **How do you, how do others know you have received it?**

Because God's people show that same Grace and kindness; we are **kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** Eph 4:32 **Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you have against each other.** Col 3:12,13 (See also 2Ti 2:24, 2Pe 1:7)

*Let's be practical.*

Do you display the true patience and kindness that the Lord has shown you?

As you relate to people is there an inner frustration? do you excuse yourself and walk away the moment you can - or even avoid them altogether?

What does your body language say? Are your arms folded metaphorically, or actually? Is there that disinterested gaze, or uninterested 'ummm'. I know that person is not 'interesting'. I know that person requires more 'effort'.

✚ **Do not easily succumb to such simple hindrances.**

■ **Louis is one man who always picks me up the moment an eye moves away from him.**

Love for my brother and sister means I will want to be kind, for **love is kind.**

True kindness is the signal that 'I am with you, I will listen to you, my interest is in you - I will listen carefully to what you say – to your interests - and I will go at your speed. All this is to actively be Christ to that person. In both speech and action, kindness communicates Christ's love to all.

2b

### ✦ Not to do so - is to fail to recognise the Lord's kindness to you.

After the service kindness in speech is not just going to speak with those you find easy, or sitting tight where you are. **Maybe we should do what you do at any good party does and that is remove the chairs** to get us moving and stop us becoming stuck.

Being kind is active not passive, it is the outworking of a loving heart, love seeks out to do good. You cannot love and do nothing, kindness means I take initiative. No-one should find a Christian distant, aloof, short, or silent.

Some people are easier than others, others are difficult.

There are some who do not respond at all which makes it very hard. Some are unkind to you, some don't reply to your messages, some don't do what they say, - never respond in like manner. Do not do likewise, don't be silent.

In the NT the word kindness (chrestotes) means: "usefulness," "beneficence, that is wanting the best for the other person, kindness helps the other person.

There are some who are downright hostile, they are harsh or rude.

Here so often pride gets in the way, so often emotion gets in the way. Paul said: **when we are slandered, we answer kindly.** 1Co 4:13

### ✦ And when someone's actions against you reflects an unkind heart – you respond with a kind heart. Let me give an illustration of this...

■ One Christian recalled the Lord prompting him to respond with kindness. He said: "My family lived in a twin home, with our landlady and her daughter living next door. For a while, our relationship was fine and living there was a pleasure. But then, for reasons we did not understand, things began to change. Bridget, our landlady's daughter, began to respond to us in anger whenever we saw her. She yelled at our children and accused us of saying and doing things we did not do. She played music as loudly as possible late at night, waking our children. Life quickly turned from pleasurable to intolerable.

■ We were living on a meagre income and right after we had moved into the house, our fridge broke down. Bridget had allowed us to borrow hers. It was now summer and my wife's parents had come to see us. In preparation for their visit, we had loaded the fridge with food. But the day after they arrived, we got a call from Bridget saying that she wanted her refrigerator back immediately. I asked if her mother's had broken. She told me that it hadn't, but that our fridge belonged to her and she wanted it back. I told her that it was full of

food and asked her if we could return it in about a week. She said she wanted it back by five o'clock that day.

■ He said "I was steaming by the time I got off the phone. This was the climax of all we had been enduring for the last few months, the final indignity! We took the food out of the fridge, placed it on the kitchen table in the heat of our 90deg.C, un-air-conditioned house, and returned the refrigerator to the garage. I walked out wishing that I would encounter Bridget because I had things to say to her!

■ Thankfully, God had another plan. That afternoon Luella his wife was making bread. He said "As usual I asked her to make a batch of cinnamon rolls. As she was placing the rolls in the oven she turned to me and said, "You know, Paul, we ought to give a plate of these rolls to Bridget." (Yes—exactly what I was thinking!) "God tells us that we should overcome evil with good and that we should look for ways to do good to those who mistreat us. Since I'm making the rolls, why don't you write a note to Bridget telling her how much we love her and desire to have a good relationship with her?" (Another brilliant idea, I thought!)

Remember - **when we are slandered, we answer kindly.** 1Co 4:13

■ That was one of the hardest notes I have ever written. I was filled with my sense of being wronged. I wanted Bridget to hurt the way she had hurt us. I wanted her life to be as hard as ours had been over the previous months. I wanted her to feel what it was like to walk on eggshells all the time, only to be yelled at anyway. I failed to leave room for God's wrath (Rom 12:19) because I was so filled with my own.

■ He said: "But by the grace of God I did what Luella suggested. I took the note and the plate of warm rolls over to the adjoining house. Our landlady answered the door. When I told her that the rolls were for her daughter, she told me that I must be some kind of nut. (She had been very embarrassed by her daughter's behaviour.) I told her that I thought this was what God wanted me to do.

■ That plate of rolls represented our submission to God's mission and methods in the midst of personal difficulty. We looked for every opportunity to do good and to speak kindly to Bridget. We sought to love and serve wherever and whenever we could. Yes, the old anger would well up, but we continued to encourage one another to overcome evil with kindness.

■ Later one afternoon I heard a knock at the door. When I saw it was Bridget, my heart sank. I thought, what now? We have worked so hard

to be kind! When I got to the door I could see that Bridget was upset. She asked if she could come in and talk to us. Luella and I sat down with her as tears streamed down her cheeks. She said, "I know that I have been impossible to live with and that I have done many things to make your life difficult. I don't know why I have been so mean, so angry. I have alienated my family and all of my close friends. You are the only two people that I know for sure love me. I've come here because I need your help." In our dining room that afternoon, we talked with Bridget about the help that only Christ could give.

He sums it up "Luella was right", he says "she had seen God's agenda for our relationship with Bridget. My self-righteous, angry words would never have produced that scene. Allowing myself to be drawn into an ever-escalating war of unkind words would not have produced it. I realized that afternoon that the whole situation had not been a mistake. We had not been in this trial because God had forgotten us. No, he had been at work all through it, sanctifying us, and he had also been at work through us. He had put us there as his ambassadors to show kindness as a witness to Bridget. He called us to speak words of love and kindness, to speak out of hearts that were willing to die to self, willing to forgive, willing to be part of his work of reconciliation.

✚ This he said was a most vivid learning experience.

What are the lessons? Don't let emotions rule, ask what is God doing? in them? in me? And, How should I be? WWJD? allow others to speak to you.

There then is kindness in action, counter to all I would naturally do.

Did you see being kind is a decision, a decision to take an initiative. How does your kindness show? Is it through ringing someone up, sending a card, inviting someone round? Find out what their need is and help, time off from the kids, a listening ear, a lift, don't wait to be asked – If you do then you lose the Lord's blessing because it has not come from you.

✚ Yes being kind is active not passive

1. Now we will have a moment to quietly come before the Lord to repent and seek forgiveness for those times you have been unkind to others.
2. Now a moment to forgive those who have been unkind to you.  
Pray a prayer of repentance and forgiveness, *Lord I know that if I don't forgive others you won't forgive me*

Forgiveness means it never come up again, never, ever. In the battleships of old ammunition was stored way below and brought up on lifts to the surface to the guns. The sins of other are not stored away in the depths of the heart to be brought up in the future, ammo for our guns of hate.

Finally listen to another example of kindness:

- Jonathan Sachs the well-respected ex chief Rabbi commented on the queen and her kindness: "Punctuality, said Louis XVIII of France, is the politeness of kings. Royalty arrives on time and leaves on time. So it is with Her Majesty the Queen, with one memorable exception.
  - The day was 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and the place, St James Palace. The Queen was meeting a group holocaust survivors. When the time came for her to leave, she stayed. And stayed. One of her attendants said he had never known her to linger so long after her scheduled departure time. She gave each survivor – it was a large group – her focused, unhurried attention.
  - She stood with each until they had finished telling their personal story. It was an act of kindness that almost had me in tears. One after another, the survivors were coming to me in a kind of trance, saying, Sixty years ago I did not know whether I would be alive tomorrow, and here I am today talking to the Queen. 'It brought a kind of blessed closure into deeply lacerated lives.
  - "To me" the Queen said, "the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace... is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. (Christmas 2014)
- ✚ Kindness is a great healer as those survivors discovered on that day.

**The fruit of the Spirit of God is kindness.** Ga 5:22

The signs of the new community is that we live in a very different way to those in world around.

Do you have the Spirit of Jesus living in you? then He reminds us **From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded;** Luke 12:48

Kindness is one of the marks of a true believer. Does the Lord see that in you? Do people see that in you?

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