

Love is Kind

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[0 : 00] On a dry cleaner's front door hung a sign, If you are unemployed and need an outfit cleaned for a job interview,! We will clean it for free.

That is love. Love is kind. An elderly man was pushing his grocery cart through the store and a young man who worked at the store, he had his apron on and everything, he bent over and tied that elderly man's shoe for him so he wouldn't trip.

And that is love. Love is kind. An elderly white couple sat on the subway and across from them in the subway car sat a young black man and he was all dressed up, looking pretty sharp, but struggling to get his tie right.

And the elderly lady stood up and sort of blocked the view of all the other passengers and her husband helped that young man get his tie put on straight.

And that is love. Love is kind. Carol Sukman is a businesswoman. And in 2015 she had a very good year working with her investment firm.

[1 : 36] And walking to work one morning in New York City, she saw a toy store that was going out of business and she did a quick scan of the inventory and sort of on the spur of the moment, she bought the whole store's inventory.

And now she has this problem because she has a whole toy store worth of toys and what to do with it. So she sent an email to the New York City's Department of Homeless Services.

And the email began, I have a problem. I just bought a toy store. Can you help? And they were able to give all those toys away to children.

And that is love. Love is kind. It's looking for good. To do good. More than a few years ago, there was a young immigrant and she couldn't find a job.

And she had come on the spur of the moment. She didn't have any food. No one would hire her. So she went out into the fields around the town where she was living, hoping to find maybe some grain that the harvesters had missed.

[2 : 48] And she was out there just trying to get enough food to eat. And the farmer came up and he saw her and he said to his men, who is that?

Where is she coming from? What is she doing here? And the answer was, she's some foreign woman. She's from another place. She says she knows one of your relatives. She's been working all day.

And the farmer said, no one here better touch her. If I catch you giving her a hard time, you're going to answer to me. And later on, he said to his workers, I want you to make it easy on her.

Leave the barley on the ground for her, right in front of her so that she can pick it up. And whatever you do, don't rebuke her. Don't make fun of her. You better not give her a hard time for what she is doing here.

And when Ruth made it home to Naomi that evening, Naomi was stunned at what Ruth had brought back. And her question is, where did you go today?

[3 : 51] That's a question you would ask. How did you end up with this much food? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. And Ruth said, the man's name was Boaz. And that is love.

Love is kind. Well, why is love the greatest? That's what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. So, if you need your Bibles, we're just looking at that little phrase, love is kind, this afternoon.

Why is love the greatest? Because love is kind. Love does good to others. It seizes opportunities to do good to others. It creates opportunities to do good to others.

You can't say that about spiritual gifts. You can't say that about faith. And that's Paul's point.

Spiritual gifts are good. Faith is good.

Talents are good. But without love, they're only good if they're done in service to love. Without love, everything else is pointless.

[4 : 52] It's useless. It doesn't do anyone any good. But the beauty of love is this. Love is kind. And I really mean all of those words.

The beauty of love. The way we see the goodness of love. The wonder, the splendor, the glory, the beauty of love is that it is kind. It's how we show it and it's how we see it and feel it.

So let's think about kindness this afternoon. Let's think about God's kindness to us. God is love and so that means God is kind.

And the Bible from the beginning to the end is painting that picture of God with a kind heart. So how kind? Well, think about how he first made angels and men.

He made angels glorious and happy. He didn't create them to have a terrible lot. They were living with him. They were living in beauty and glory.

[6 : 03] Their lot fell in pleasant places. Even the angel that turned against him. God gave him one of the highest places in kindness.

Is it strange for you to think of that? Ezekiel says, you were the signet of perfection full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Why was the angel that became Satan like that?

Because God was kind to him. Satan's story is such a tragic one. God was so good to him. Filled him with such glory, with such joy.

Why? Because he's kind. He knew all that would happen. He knew everything that he would do, Satan would do. And yet, he did not create Satan miserable and unhappy.

He filled him with joy. Because he is a kind God. Now think about Adam and Eve. How did he make them?

[7 : 05] What do we see of his kindness there? Well, he didn't put them in a desert. He put them in a garden. And he didn't make food hard to come by. He made food extremely easy to come by. Every tree in the garden is yours except for one.

When he saw that it wasn't good for man to be alone, he made a helper for him. And was Eve just sort of enough of a helper?

Adequate? Was she ugly? Was she repulsive? Was she just enough? A good friend? A nice lady? And that's it? No. When Adam saw Eve, he realized she is everything I didn't even know I needed.

And more. That's kindness. That's kindness. The whole story of salvation right from the fall and even before that, an election, but right from the fall to the very end of the story is a story of how kind God is.

How kind. That's how Paul puts it in Romans 11. He says, Consider the kindness and severity of God or sternness of God.

[8 : 19] Sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. that phrase, provided that you continue in his kindness.

Christian, what is your whole life? What is the life of faith? What is that life that you are living right now in faith? Well, Paul calls it continuing in God's kindness.

It's like saving faith introduces you into this river of God's kindness and Paul says, now the life of faith is continuing in it, living in that, in that stream that provides everything that you ever need.

It starts in kindness, surely, in choosing his enemies and choosing to save them. That is a kind act of God. Something that we, in this world, see so very little of, being loving to your enemies.

It's done in kindness. Titus 3, But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. Jesus' incarnation is the very incarnation of God's kindness to men.

[9 : 24] It's God's kindness appearing. It's like kindness in the flesh. And so, our salvation starts with God's kind heart. It starts there.

Jesus saves us in kindness. In this life, we continue in kindness. And what is eternity? God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

Why? For what purpose? in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Now, have you ever had someone be kind to you? Or they were really nice and did something good for you? And then I want you to think about, has anyone ever been so kind to you as God has been kind to you?

Every single one of us, Christian and non-Christian alike, are swimming in God's kindness to us. In Acts, he writes this, In the past, he let all nations go their own way.

[10 : 34] Yet, he has not left himself without testimony. He has shown kindness. Kindness to who? Well, to all these nations that don't know him, don't recognize him, people that don't care about him, don't understand him.

He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their season. He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

For thousands and thousands of years, all these nations, God has been filling their hearts with joy. He didn't have to do that. That's not what they do.

They haven't deserved that. It's God's kindness. Do you have that in your understanding of God is kind even to the unbelievers?

And so, every one of us here should be saying with Jacob, Who am I that you should show me such kindness? Who am I?

[11 : 36] So, if you aren't feeling that, and we struggle sometimes to feel that, but if you aren't feeling that, you need to do that old thing of counting your blessings, naming them one by one.

Or go through your Bibles and believers, count your privileges. Write them down. What are the privileges that you have? That's God's kindness and action.

So how great the love of God that we should be called the children of God. brothers and sisters, he doesn't spoil us and his kindness, but I want you to see he comes as close to that as possible.

What I mean is, I'm just trying to say what the psalmist is saying. No good thing does he withhold from us. No good thing. If there's anything good, he, in his proper time, he gives it to us.

That's his kind heart. Now, I want to turn to us and say, that's God's kindness. Kind to his enemies, generous with them.

[12 : 46] He blesses his children. He pours privileges on them. He's been pouring privileges and blessings upon us. And the question is, are you then a kind person?

If people were describing you, would they describe you as being kind? How are you reflecting God's glory?

You want to glorify God. That's what we say our purpose is. Well, you glorify him in one way by imitating him. We have that saying that imitation is the highest form of flattery.

We speak volumes about what we think about something or someone when we imitate them. So, if you're playing basketball and you have visions of Steph Curry in your mind and you want to shoot like him and so you imitate him, that is to the glory of Steph Curry.

Well, this is one way that you can glorify God. He is kind. I want to be that kind of person. I want to be kind. So, let me ask you, who has felt your kindness lately?

[14 : 02] You don't have to tell anyone, but ask the question of yourself. Who's felt my kindness lately? Who's known my kindness lately? You know, what is kindness?

It's this generous willingness to do good. We know the difference when we're coming up to someone who is kind. We're expecting them to help us. We're expecting them to do us good.

Well, who has been able to come up to you? Or who have you gone out of your way to show kindness to? Who here has heard a kind word from you this week?

Maybe in an email. Maybe in a text. In person. Who have you seen hurting and encouraged and encouraged them?

Whose broken heart have you touched with a gentleness, kindness? Maybe who's seen and felt your generous smile on their face?

[15 : 07] Whose soul have you welcomed into your love? Kindness is a very hospitable thing. It welcomes people in. It brings them into your life. You share with them.

So you can be kind to your brothers and sisters here. Encourage them. Encouraging them, blessing them, listening to them, comforting them.

Everyone here hurts from time to time. It's true of every single person. Everyone here hurts from time to time. Everyone here gets discouraged.

encouraged. And we need each other's kind words. A smile. A hug. An encouraging word. Blaise Pascal, the wonderful French Christian philosopher from several hundred years ago, said, Kind words do not cost much, yet they accomplish much.

Kind words do not cost us very much, but they do accomplish much. And so we should be showing kindness in spiritual ways, in those kind words to each other.

[16:24] We can't let people, we can't assume that people understand how we're thinking about them, but we need to express that in words of kindness, in deeds of kindness. kindness.

We can show kindness in spiritual ways. We can also show kindness in outward ways, in physical ways. Proverbs 19, 7.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord. I think you'd be surprised if you went through Proverbs about how much it talks about being kind.

Wisdom and kindness are like brothers and sisters. They live together. Proverbs 19, 17. Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord. Proverbs 14, 31. He who oppresses the poor taunts their maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors him, honors the maker.

In a very strange way in the book of Proverbs, God puts himself in solidarity with the poor. He says, you lend to them, you lend to me. You make fun of them, you make fun of me.

[17:32] You dishonor them, you dishonor me. You honor and are kind to them, you honor me. So God takes how we treat the poor as how we treat him.

Kindness to the poor is lending to the Lord. So have you been lending to the Lord? Saying, you can have this. Religion that God our Father accepts is looking after orphans and widows in their distress.

kindness. So I have to ask, how are you showing that kindness to the less well-off, to the poor? Job was righteous. Have you considered my servant Job? And what was Job's righteousness? How did he live out this life of righteousness?

righteousness? Well, we hear things about what he did. He prayed for his children. I'm sure he offered up sacrifices for them. He had this relationship with God for sure.

[18:38] But when Job goes to defend himself, he doesn't necessarily talk about those things. This is what he says, I rescued the poor who cried for help. And the fatherless who had none to assist him.

The man who was dying blessed me. I made the widow's heart sing. What Job is saying there is, I went into a situation where a man was dying and his wife was there, and I helped that dying man. And I think what he's saying is, I was promising to take care of his wife. The man who was dying blessed me. I made the widow's heart sing.

According to Ezekiel 18 7, righteousness is giving your food to the hungry and providing clothing for the naked. And so when John the Baptist arrived on the scene, the people came to him and asked, what should we do?

And he said, if you have two coats, you should give one to the poor. Someone summarizing that said, if you have two coats, one of them belongs to the poor. You should be giving them.

[19:47] We should have that generous spirit. So I have to ask myself and I have to ask you, who is eating better because of you?

Who is warmer because of your kindness? Whose children are going to school because of your kindness? If you aren't sure how to do this or how to do that, there's lots of opportunities.

There's lots of possibilities. You can ask me, email me. I have lots of ideas and possibilities. That's actually what Rick Horner, our brother, is doing. We prayed for him this morning.

He's part of a ministry called Oak Tree, or Oak Seed Ministry. And what they do is he goes into local ministries throughout the world that are helping the very poor in India and Africa.

And he vets those ministries to make sure they're good quality ministries. And he allows, and through that, people in the States are able to give to these ministries.

[21:02] There's too many to talk about here, but my point is this, don't let not knowing stop you. You can find out if you want. Brothers and sisters, love is kind.

it does do good to others. And so I want to end with Paul's words to Titus. And I want you to hear his insistence, his determination.

This is not something that he puts on the minor, the things of if you get to it. You know, sometimes we have a to-do list, and it's not down there at number 13 that you never get to.

Listen to his insistence. our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good. That's why Jesus saved us.

That's what Paul says. This is why Jesus saved us, to purify himself of people his very own, eager to do what is good, eager to help, eager to show kindness to people.

[22:10] And so go and be eager to do good. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, you have blessed us so much physically and spiritually.

Keep us from being dams that just collect water, but make us to be pipes and conduits and fountains of goodness to others.

That other people who are hurting and are discouraged or who are poor and are needy and life is so difficult in oppressing them. I pray, Lord, that you would make us to be a reflection of yourself, that we would have generous, kind hearts that are not all bent in on ourselves and only caring about ours.

And as long as our children or our friends are taken care of, that's all we do. but I pray, Lord, that you would have us to be more and more like you, outgoing, loving, and kind in our generosity and our goodness to others.

Holy Spirit, make us to be like that. Make us more like Jesus, who was surely the kindest man who ever lived. Pray this in his name.

[23 : 37] Amen. Amen. Amen.