

Digging Deeper

Kindness

The Lord Jesus Christ, while upon this earth, was the type of individual who could make the common person feel special, the unbeliever believe, and the unrighteous desire for righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ showed many kindnesses to others, did many good things for the unfortunate, did not neglect the poor and suffering and, when preaching and teaching, did not avoid those who were outside his cultural understanding. Through His enduring loving kindness the Lord Jesus Christ neither boasted of his self-worth nor ridiculed or belittled an individual because of the burdens carried within their hearts and minds, which weakened their nature. By His loving kindness he not only relieved them of their challenges in life but also restored them so that they could further exemplify the kindness He bestowed upon them to others in need, rekindling the kindness over and over again -so great was the effect of THE TREE that bore the fruit of kindness.

The Lord Jesus Christ's kindness must have branched forth from Him as the sun radiates from the heavens. His Kindness and favor were renowned and His reputation preceded and followed Him wherever He journeyed. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said,

"I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and My sheep know Me." (John 10:14)

Thus, He knows our need for His kindness and favor and, most importantly, He bestows it upon us. **He is good to us.** The fruit of kindness is abundant in its effects as it can also bring forth comfort. It signifies a comforting deed performed from the heart. St. Clement of Alexandria said, "*Fear works abstinence from what is evil, but love exhorts to the doing of good, by*

building up to the point of spontaneity." (c. 195)

There are many symbolic inferences in the Holy Bible which allude to the Lord Jesus Christ's kindness in bringing comfort to others, such as in the beloved Psalm of David,

"Your rod and Your staff they comfort me." (23:4)

A rod and a staff to the multitudes of sheep in a shepherd's flock meant caring, guidance, and safety. Used correctly it could be a kind act which saved the lives of his herd which could, in ancient days, incorporate the young, the middle aged, and the elderly among the sheep. The herd could be comprised of a ram or lamb, a pure bred or mixed, a sickly or healthy one, one that frequently strayed or one who always obeyed the commands of the shepherd. But the rod and staff meant the same to them all, an act of kindness, caring, and comfort. For us an act of kindness can also be in simple teaching, in redirection, and in an act of faith.

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes Lord you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" (John 21: 15)

What is the Lord Jesus Christ saying to Simon Peter? The Lord is instructing him to do works of kindness: feed the hungry; minister to the sick, the handicapped, and terminally ill; remember those others have forgotten (the sick and shut-in perhaps); care for those without homes; love those whom others do not; and take the love and kindness of the Lord to all those who will listen.

St. Peter certainly did not expect to take the Word of God to the Gentiles. Most probably, the thought did not cross his mind or enter into his heart for consideration. But being provoked by a dream and receiving visitors sent by Cornelius (Acts 10), St. Peter understood the need to cross boundaries of culture and his own weak understanding. With courage, he ventured forth to extend the Lord's loving kindness and teachings to all those people in need of it and who would listen.

The opposite of kindness is hate. Often,

The Branch that Holds
the Fruit to THE TREE

By H.G. Bishop Youssef

in visiting families I hear “I hate you” frequently and liberally used. Those who say “I hate you” to their parents or brothers and sisters, are developing a deep seated problem in their personality. It is both wrong and unhealthy. Hating one another is not alluded to anywhere in the Holy Bible as acceptable or beneficial. It leaves no doubt that one person hating another is wrong. The Holy Bible rather teaches us that hating sin is proper hatred.

Therefore, when you tell someone, parents, or siblings that you hate them, you are committing a very sinful act. The wrong action here is telling the person you hate them not for the wrong or perceived wrong you believe to have happened. A second wrongful action would not have occurred if the person had chosen kindness rather than hate to approach the problem at hand. The Lord often hated the sin but He did not hate the sinner. Kindness can defuse hate; it can defuse the sinful nature of man. Kindness is most often the right thing to demonstrate in any given situation, and it is proven both psychologically and physically to be the healthy thing to do. Hate and bitterness can lead to heart disease, ulcers, and somatic pain. It can lead to many physical complaints. It increases our internal stress level, leads to premature aging, and can ultimately lead to premature death, a severe price to pay for hatred. We are taught an exact act of kindness to perform for those whose acts we oppose and that is prayer.

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:43-44)

Polycarp (c. 135) taught, “*He that has love is far from every sin.*” We must put forth the image of God.

“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God.” (Exodus 34:6)

The Lord Jesus Christ exhibited His loving kindness with every opportunity and situation, and those of desperation and courage it was often recognizable by the look of compassion upon His holy face. For the hemorrhaging woman, suffering with the most untoward situation imaginable by Jewish law, was condemned unclean. For twelve years she was labeled as an outcast because of an illness that she had derived, most

probably through no fault of her own. The Lord Jesus Christ entered her life en route to bringing a young girl back from earthly death. The Lord Jesus Christ was assumed to be surrounded by His chosen disciples and an ensuing crowd of people thickly gathering around them. He was preaching and teaching. She reached out only to touch the hem of His cloak. Her bravery and her courage cannot be put into words. Where did she find it? What made her take this leap of faith often spoke about in sermons? Most probably the kindness upon the face of the Lord Jesus Christ gave her the faith to become not only physically well but also changed her spiritual life and gave clarity to her strength of faith. The Lord Jesus Christ had made an outcast into a woman of great faith, and history would make her an example for others. The despicable woman with a bleeding disorder, an

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outcast of her own culture, would be a chosen example of the kindness of heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. This example would live on in history, outlasting even her earthly existence. She did not die an outcast of Jewish law but as an example of kindness shown directly upon her by the Lord Himself.

Kindness can be heard in one’s voice as well as seen upon one’s countenance. It is an old adage that some people are unable to see because of egotism, materialism, prejudice, greed, fear, love of power or revenge, and sometimes because of self-hate. Blindness can indeed also be of a physical nature. The voice of kindness is more readily listened to willingly and can often be better understood without defense. The voice of kindness can induce someone to inspect and see the damage or defect in them and want to correct it.

“Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him, and when he came near, He asked Him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ He said, ‘Lord, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Receive your sight, your faith has saved you.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God, and all the people when they saw it, praised God.” (Luke 18:40-43)

The blind man it can be asserted could definitely not see the cause of the excitement around him when he was told Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. But could the blind man discern the voice of the Lord when he actually did pass by? We know he added his voice to the crowd. Did the Lord Jesus Christ happen to stop at just the right moment in His lengthy and unceasing travels, and/or did the blind man recognize and relate to a kind voice with great faith? It was clearly documented that the Lord Jesus Christ directly and purposefully asked the blind man what he wanted and the blind man gave him a direct answer, the blind man asked for his physical sight (it is almost obvious that the man possessed the ability to see spiritually in recognition of his ability to ask the Lord for sight and expect to receive it). The Lord Jesus’ kindness, giving sight to a blind

man, increased his followers that day by another faithful one, one now prepared to follow Him. His kindness had made a willing heartfelt follower out of a blind man.

Kindness affects many people in different ways but it typically AFFECTS people. These are but a few effects of kindness. Other acts of kindness included preventing the stoning of a woman, causing a sinful man to give half his goods to the poor, restoring fourfold to those he had taken from with false accusations. Kindness can change the lives of others and we should and can serve as the branch to produce its fruits in the lives of others today.

“Lord You know the alertness of my enemies; and as for my weakness, You are aware of it, My Creator. Therefore, I, hereby, place my soul into Your Hands. So cover me with the wings of Your goodness (kindness), lest I might sleep to death. Enlighten my eyes by the greatness of Your sayings, and raise me up at all times for Your glorification, for You alone are good and a lover of mankind.”
--Blessed Prayer of the Veil



Glory be to God forever.