

## **Increasing in Holiness The Holiness of Kindness**

**Intro:** As we've talk about increasing holiness this year, we've taken our guidance from the apostle Paul who shows us the holy qualities that the Holy Sprit produces in God's people to make them a holy people. Today let's focus on the fourth quality--"kindness" (NASV).

Some of you are old enough to remember that in the 1992 presidential election George Bush, then president of the US, appealed to the nation to put away some of the mean-spirited and harsh rhetoric that had come to characterize our political life. He appealed for a "kinder, gentler nation".

But as we can see, there is an even higher call than that of a former president. God himself calls us to be "a kinder and gentler people."

Even now unkindness can take its toll on all our relationships. The absence of kindness may destroy a church, break up a marriage, alienate parents and their children, and incite ill will in the work place. All of us have probably had the unpleasant experience of being treated unkindly by someone.

But what is the solution to this problem? The solution is to let the Holy Spirit produce in us the "holiness of kindness." Let's begin by doing a little word study to help clarify the meaning of the word Paul uses.

Kindness is the quality that makes a person want to provide what is beneficial or helpful to others.

*The Greek word for kindness is chrestotes, a word that Trench describes as "a beautiful word for a beautiful grace." It is often translated kindness, goodness, or gentleness.*

*The verb form "chresteuomai" means "to provide something beneficial out of kindness toward another." (Louw-Nida).*

*And if something is beneficial it is said to be "chrestos"*

Thus Jesus says that his yoke is "easy" (chrestos), that is, providing benefit to mankind.

And Paul says, "Evil companionship corrupts "good" morals." (1 Cor. 15:33).

*Of course, that also means that we refrain from the harshness that causes pain to others. Plummer comments that this word describes "the sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain." The KJV in Gal. 5 translates "gentleness."*

There is no greater motivation to kindness than to know how God Himself has displayed this quality toward all of us as His creatures.

*In the provisions of nature that make life possible*

*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 Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. (Lk. 6:35)*

God, in spite of human ingratitude and sin, provides for human need.

In the parallel text in Matthew:

*for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Mt. 5:45)*

***The greatest manifestation of kindness is the giving of His Son, in whom we have salvation.***

*But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. 3:4-7)*

When we deserved nothing from God, His kindness was manifested in cleansing and renewing us and making us His children.

***Even now his kindness is not exhausted; but will extend even into the ages to come, into eternity itself.***

*... in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7)*

God's kindness toward us is not yet exhausted in this world, but extends into the world to come.

***Thus the NT urges us to:***

*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. (Rom. 11:22)*

***And it also urges us to:***

*like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,<sup>3</sup> if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (1 Peter 2:2-3)*

**So then, motivated by the kindness of God toward us, we seek to act with helpful kindness to those around us from day to day.**

***By being kind we demonstrate the qualities of both God and our Savior in whose image we are being renewed.***

*And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... (Col. 3:12)*

We live in a world of such verbal harshness and brutality. Let us have a kind heart toward others.

***The NT shows that this quality is especially needed in some particular situations.***

In our relationship with our brethren

Paul addresses the divided and jealous members of the church at Corinth with a more excellent way--the way of love. And as he enumerates love's qualities he says:

*Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, (1 Cor. 13:4)*

And to the Ephesians he writes that we are not to use angry words toward one another but instead:

*And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Eph. 4:32)*

In our efforts to teach others

*And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, (2 Tim. 2:24)*

*.. in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, (2 Cor. 6:6)*

Kindness helps make the truth attractive. If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it. (Alexander Maclaren)

**Conclusion: That human beings have not always been kind is self-evident. Man's own harshness toward his fellow-man serves as grounds for Paul to establish man's sinfulness and need for forgiveness from God:**

*All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." (Rom. 3:12)*

**Yet in spite of our unkindness, God's kindness has been made known to us through Christ. And it should cause us to repent:**

*Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)*