

Repentance through Kindness

(Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 2:1-16)

Yearly Theme: “Kindness is... Action”

Series Title: “Kindness is a Verb”

January 1st, 2023 (New Year’s Day)

Something to think about:

As we start a new year here at North Main, our theme for 2023 is “KINDNESS.”

Since 2019, we have been taking a fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23, and focusing on it for the whole year as we work our way through the Bible. Let’s take a look at that passage from Galatians again as we get started:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT),

***“²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*”**

So, what is a proper definition of kindness?

The word that Paul uses in the Galatians passage in reference to the fruit of the Spirit is the Greek word, **χρηστότης**-ητος, ἡ; (*chrēstotēs*), N. *goodness; kindness*. A deeper understanding of this word is:

- **kindness (quality)** — *the quality of being warmhearted, considerate, humane, gentle, and sympathetic.*

For our purposes throughout this coming year, we will working from a definition of kindness that leads to a response. Our definition is as follows:

Kindness (v.): “An act of compassion motivated by a love for GOD and others.”

But what does kindness look like in action? Well, in another one of his letters in the New Testament (the letter of Romans), Paul explains to his readers that even though they have been stubborn and sinful, and don’t deserve GOD’s grace, that it is GOD’s kindness that ultimately led them to a place of repentance and salvation. Let’s take a look:

Romans 2:1-16 (NLT),

***You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. ² And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. ³ Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God’s judgment when you do the same things? ⁴ Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*”**

***⁵ But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will judge everyone according to what they have done. ⁷ He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. ⁸ But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. ⁹ There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. ¹⁰ But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.*”**

***¹² When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God’s written law. And the Jews, who do have God’s law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. ¹³ For merely listening to the law doesn’t make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. ¹⁴ Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. ¹⁵ They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. ¹⁶ And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone’s secret life.*”**

The very nature of GOD extends kindness to even the most despicable of people. His patience is long, and His love covers a multitude of sin. He isn’t reactive to our sinful nature, but rather He was proactive in dealing with the evil in the world through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. And the reason He hasn’t returned to completely wipe out evil once and for all, is also an action of kindness. His waiting is an act of patience and kindness so that as many people can come to know Him as possible.

Here’s the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: “GOD’s kindness leads to repentance, and our kindness should lead others to GOD.”

Since we will be working from a definition of kindness as an action, and since we are unpacking the evidence of GOD’s kindness in Paul’s letter to the Romans this morning, we see that kindness does several things. Consider the following:

- **Kindness is tolerance.**

Romans 2:4 (NLT), Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you?

- **Kindness is patience.**

Romans 2:4 (NLT), Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you?

- **Kindness is impartial.**

Romans 2:11 (NLT), For God does not show favoritism.

Something to take home:

Quoting the late A. W. Tozer, “Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. Its use to us sinful men is to save us and make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God’s kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 3:9-10, 15 (NLT), ⁹ The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. ...

¹⁵ And remember, our Lord’s patience gives people time to be saved.

It is the tolerant, patient, and impartial nature of GOD that has brought us salvation rather than destruction. It is GOD’s kindness that truly does lead us to repentance. GOD’s promises are not slow in being accomplished for His mercies are new every morning. However, someday (and maybe even in the near future) Jesus will return, and as the final act of kindness, the world will experience a final judgment that will once and for all deal the final blow to sin and death. Those who have believed in Jesus will receive everlasting life, and those who have rejected Him will receive the punishment they chose. In the meantime, those of us who believe in Christ and have received salvation must take the light of Christ into the world so that the world may know of the loving-kindness of a GOD who desires for them to know Him. This is the kindest thing we could ever do.

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