

The Right Kind of Love

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This is why I invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to the book of 1 Corinthians as we have come to a very famous and well-known chapter in all of the Bible, 1 Corinthians chapter 13. It is known as the Love Chapter. It is a chapter that we have heard read at weddings and we have seen it mounted and calligraphied and framed and hung on walls. And yet as Paul wrote this, his immediate thoughts were not wedding services nor truths being hung upon a wall, but what was in Paul's mind as the Spirit of God led him was how desperately the Corinthians needed to become more loving, more caring, more generous to one another as they had become very self-absorbed. And so I want to begin by reading in verse 4, verses 4 through 7 and today I simply want us to look at the second of these 15 virtues, love is kind. The title of this message is "The Right Kind of Love." I want to begin by reading the text.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Several years ago, President George Walker Bush called upon America to be a kinder, gentler nation. That is precisely what Paul is calling upon the church at Corinth to be, to be a kinder, gentler, redeemed body of believers. We may not think of being kind as a mark of true spirituality, but it is. The more godly we are, the kinder we become. Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit and wherever there is one's growth in grace, there is always a growth in kindness. Regarding kindness, it has been said, "Kindness is a language which the blind can see and the deaf can hear." Kindness is that powerful. It is an expression of love that comes through loud and clear. Kindness speaks volumes about the power of the gospel that transforms our lives and radically changes how we interface with one another, and as we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, we actually become kinder and kinder in our dealings with one another. Kindness makes the gospel attractive to an unbelieving world. Kindness is like honey that draws unbelievers to the saving power of Christ. The church must be a bastion of kindness.

We're in 1 Corinthians 13, as I said, and we're in the love chapter and what we have in verses 4 through 7, as I have drawn to your attention already but just to restate it, is 15

virtues of love. They are systematically arranged by Paul. Do not think that they are just thrown together in a haphazard fashion, but there is intentional movement and progression of thought in these 15 virtues. Just to draw to your attention again, the first two are positive, love is patient, love is kind, and as we will note in just a little bit, patience and kindness are the heads and tails of the same coin. They are twin sisters, twin brothers. Wherever you have one, you will find the reciprocal with the other. After that are eight negatives in which the word "not" is found, love is not jealous, does not brag, is not arrogant. Verse 5, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, etc. etc. Then it ends with five positives, love rejoices with the truth at the end of verse 6, and then verse 7, bears, believes, hopes, endures all things.

There is a rhyme and a reason regarding the way that Paul has laid this out and it would also be important for me to bring to your attention again that this is translated into the English language with a sense that these are nouns. In reality when Paul wrote this, these are all verbs, these are action verbs. Love is action that we take towards one another. It's not mere emotions. That's the superficial love that we hear about on the radio at times, that love is a feeling. Not in the Christian life. It's much deeper than that. Now there will be affections that we will have for one another and I can say before God, I have deep affections for you and I have been the recipient of your deep affections for me, but true love is much, much deeper than mere emotions, feelings, or affections. Love is, in reality, a choice of the will by which we take decisive steps in demonstrating and carrying out our love for one another. Love is something we do, not merely something we feel or something that we say.

Specifically today we want to consider the second virtue of love on this list which is love is kind. Now I want to put this before you under five headings but I'm only going to give them to you one at a time lest you faint at the beginning. And I actually could preach at length on what all I have and you may say, "Well, how could you go at length on just this one word, love is kind?" Well, come go with me and we will see. I want you to note first the meaning of kindness. Number one, the meaning of kindness and note where it is placed, number two on the list. Patience and kindness are the heads and tails of the same coin. Kindness is the flip side of patience. Patience is restraining oneself when irritated or wronged by another. On the other hand, kindness is positively showing grace to those who have tested and tried your patience. Kindness actually goes beyond patience. Kindness stands on the shoulders of patience and reaches yet higher. Kindness is being nice to people who make being patient a challenge for us.

Now this word kind, do you see it, love is kind, means to be warm, generous, thoughtful, helpful. In looking up this word, I looked first in the definitive Greek theological dictionary to delve into the meaning of this word and Jeffrey Brummel writing in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that kind means "to be good-hearted, to be friendly, to be gentle, to be of good disposition." John MacArthur says that this word kind means it is active goodwill. Gordon Fee, who is a very eminent exegete, says that kindness or being kind is active goodness on behalf of others. Many of us have a Vine's word study book, a Vine's Dictionary of New Testament words and Vine's defines this word kind to be pleasant, good, gracious, useful. And A. T. Robertson, who is

probably the greatest Greek scholar among Baptists that there has ever been, identifies this word as meaning gentle in behavior. It is the opposite of being abrasive and needlessly offensive. It is being gracious towards others with whom you come in contact. It is being sensitive towards others and being tender in your dealings with others. It is to deal gently and graciously with others. It is the opposite of being bombastic and over the top and rough. That is carnal. That is fleshly. Kindness is to show compassion and mercy towards others. It is to be pleasant in the company of others.

Digging a little bit deeper and putting this in more of a language that we can visualize and understand, this word kind, love is kind, includes the idea of being courteous, of being polite, of showing hospitality, of having good manners, of demonstrating social graces, of being considerate. It is to be pleasant, to be friendly, to be winsome, to be gentle. This is exactly how the apostle was, the Apostle Paul was, in, for example, his relationship in dealings with the Thessalonians, and Paul presented himself to them and reminded them when he said that he proved to be gentle among them "as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children." Can you see a nursing mother gently caring for her newborn baby and holding that baby in her bosom? That is the picture here of being kind towards one another. 2 Timothy 2 verse 24 says the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all.

I know people who have a distinct gift for immediately finding a point of disagreement with the person that they have met; within 10 seconds they can immediately isolate out of 100 things that we hold in common the 101 thing where we have a difference of opinion and they immediately go to that in their interactions with me and I think how unkind you are. Really I think how insecure you are and what a child you are in the Lord. that that is your immediate place where you choose to interact with me. You are needlessly abrasive and needlessly offensive, where to be Christ-like is to be kind and gentle and to be looking for points of common agreement.

2 Timothy 2:24, which I just quoted, hear it again, the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all, patient when wronged. Ephesians 4, verse 32, Paul says, be kind. It's a different word than what is used here, but it conveys the same idea. Be kind to one another. This should be the kindest place in Mobile, Alabama. There should be more gentleness and more expressions of grace in our interfacing with one another than any place else in town. Be kind to one another and let me say how I thank God for the kindness and graciousness and gentleness that is expressed in the fellowship of this church. That is a part of being Christ-like and being conformed in the image of our Savior. This is in part the target of which God has designed for our spiritual lives. It is in part that we would be kind because this is what love is and it is what we must be. We must be kind.

Second, not only the meaning of kindness, but second, the missing of kindness. And by that, it sounds a little awkward, but it's the best word that I can find. What does it look like, what is it like when kindness is missing? The Corinthians desperately needed to hear this, that love is kind because they were so unkind with one another. They, as a group of believers, had become ungracious in their dealings with one another. They were abrasive.

They were needlessly sarcastic. They were rude. They were offensive. They were harsh. To get close to a Corinthian was like trying to hug a porcupine, had some good points, but very hard to be close to.

And this is the only place in the Bible where this word kind is found as it is translated kind here, but even more rare was kindness in the Corinthian church. When they gathered together for the love feasts, those meals they shared with one another before the Lord's Supper, they were ungracious. They were uncouth. They were unkind. They fought with one another. They cut off one another. They did not wait for one another. They were impolite. They were caustic. They were biting. There are few qualities more unseemly than being unkind, and there are few qualities more visible and obvious than being unkind. It is not something that can be hidden and reserved within one's heart, hidden from others' sight. It is out in the open. And when we are unkind and ungracious, there is an odor that is released and there is an odor, if you will, to the body of Christ. When we are unkind, when we are walking in the flesh, we are unkind. Unkindness is like vinegar. It attracts no flies. It repels others. No one desires to be in a place where there is unkindness. So let me ask you, could kindness be missing in your life this day? Could it be that kindness is absent? The fact of the matter is we are all probably less kind than we think we are and the truth is we are probably a lot less kind than we ought to be.

Third, the model of kindness. There is one towering model of kindness and that is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ and I want to say up front right now that Jesus Christ was the kindest man who ever walked this earth. He is the friend of sinners. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He ate with sinners. No one was as kind as the Lord Jesus Christ and if we are to be like Jesus, we must be kind to one another. To grow in Christ-likeness, I've already said, is to grow in kindness. That is not the whole of what it is to become like Christ, but it is an indispensable part of spiritual maturity and growing in grace.

Let me give you some cross references to substantiate that Jesus Christ is the paradigm, he is the model of kindness. Isaiah 42, verse 2. In the Old Testament, it was prophesied of the Messiah who would come, the suffering servant of Jehovah and he was represented prophetically through the prophet Isaiah over 700 years before he came as one who would be marked by kindness. In Isaiah 42 verse 2, we read he will not cry out or raise his voice. He won't be a big mouth. He won't be intimidating others. He will not be abrasive in the use of his mouth and putting others back on their heels in a very ungracious, unkind way. "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish." The picture here is of a flickering flame that is ready to be extinguished, just one little movement of air and that flame will be blown out, and it represents someone's life who is so discouraged, who is so despondent, who has lost all sense of hope that it would just require the slightest little bump or bruise in life from someone else and they would totally dissolve and come crashing down, and this says that even a bruised reed he will not break. And a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish. He will be so gracious in his interactions.

Now, please note there is a great contrast between how Jesus dealt with the Pharisees and the scribes and the Sadducees and how Jesus dealt with people who had been trampled under by the blows of life. With the religious leaders of Israel, Jesus played hardball. Do not think that he was just walking around smiling all the time and having nothing but polite little things to say and patting everyone on the head. No, he would say to the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, blind leaders of the blind!" He held them accountable and responsible for God, for their access to the truth of God, and Jesus got in their face. But with those who were not the religious leaders of Israel, those drawn from common life, those who were people just like you and me, Jesus dealt so tenderly and graciously with them. To the woman at the well, Jesus walked up to her at high noon and said, "Give Me a drink of water." She was startled. She was amazed. She was shocked that Jesus would even speak to her and she said, "How is it that You, being a Jew, asked me for a drink since I am a Samaritan? No Jew would speak to me, no male would speak to me, and yet You have been so kind to address me." In John 8, verses 10 and 11, if that is an authentic text, Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "Did no one condemn you? Neither do I. Go and sin no more." He received little children to himself.

Do you remember how he dealt with Peter after he told Peter, "You're going to deny Me three times," and Peter, Mr. Big Mouth said, "Oh, may it never happen. It'll never happen. I know myself." And sure enough, Peter, within hours tripped, fell flat on his face, and do you remember in John 21 how Jesus needed to restore him to be the point man among the ministry team and Jesus dealt so kindly with Peter. "Do you love Me? Do you love Me?" And Peter would marginalize his answers until finally Jesus came down to Peter's level after Peter said, "Well, Lord, you know I like you a lot," and Jesus said, "Do you love Me?" How patient and gracious the Lord was. He reached out and touched the leper when no one else would. He attended a wedding and they ran out of wine and Jesus, not drawing any attention to himself, restored what was needed. And there was a time he was drawn into a small room and there was a dead girl laying in the bed and he just gently took her by the hand and said, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." To Judas in the night of his betrayal, Jesus to him even handed a sop of bread.

I want to say it again. I want to say it to myself. I want to say it to you. The kindest human being who ever walked this earth, the personification of perfect kindness was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was never abrasive. He was never needlessly offensive. Oh, the message he brought was a big pill to swallow for the arrogant and for the proud but Jesus was so full of kindness. As you and I would grow up spiritually, as you and I would mature to the next level, as you and I would be pruned and conformed into the very image of Jesus Christ, there will be a flow of kindness like a river that will increasingly gush from our lives.

4. The marks of kindness. What would kindness look like? We've defined it. We've tried to put our arms around it. We've tried to frame the picture. But let me be even more specific with some marks of kindness as we open the lens and take in the full counsel of God and draw from many other verses. Let me just mention a few marks of kindness. This is what it would look like in my life and in your life for us to be more like Jesus in this regard. Number one, there would be kind greetings. We're to greet one another with

kind expressions of love and grace. For example, in 2 Corinthians 13:12, Paul says greet one another with a holy kiss. Everyone in the church was to greet one another with a holy kiss. Now let me quickly say, I really believe this is a first century temporal expression. I am a cessationist on the holy kiss. But each culture has its own way of demonstrating this and in our culture it may be a handshake that I would have with another man. It might be putting my arm around and hugging a woman who is a little bit older. With a younger woman it might just be touching the hand or shaking, whatever. But these are expressions of kindness, of greeting one another, and we are to verbalize greeting one another. Please do not just walk in to church with your head down, find a pew, and as soon as the service is over, just evaporate. Speak. Greet. That is an expression of kindness to one another. Read Romans 16, how many times Paul uses the verb greet. Greet Prisca and Aquila. Greet Mary. Greet Junius. Greet, greet, greet, greet, verse by verse. Surely this is an overflow of his own life, how he would, with friendliness and graciousness and kindness, extend kind greetings. So we are to do the same.

Second, a kind countenance. Kindness is also expressed non-verbally with one's own body language. It's possible just to fold your arms and frown and look like you've drunk some prune juice and there is no kindness that is coming forth. Proverbs 15:13 speaks of a cheerful face, a cheerful face. Numbers 6 says the Lord will make his face to shine on you, meaning to be gracious to us. While God does not have a face, it does communicate the warmth and grace and kindness to be projected from God towards us and even so, there is to be a cheerful face by which we express kindness to others.

Third, kind conversations. Kindness is further expressed with pleasant words, courteous words, gentle words. Let me give you two verses. Colossians 4 verse 6 says let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt. And to quote the footnote in the MacArthur Study Bible, listen to the synonyms that he lists for the meaning or interpretation of our speech being seasoned with salt, and you can see the idea that salt brings out flavor. There is an enrichment that comes with salt and MacArthur interprets this as our speech should be wholesome, fitting, kind, that's our word, sensitive, purposeful, complimentary, gentle, truthful, loving, thoughtful. Wives, everything you've hoped your husband would be right here. In Ephesians 4 verse 29, Paul writes that we are to speak only what is good for edification that will meet the need of the moment. Edification, meaning to build up, to be uplifting in our relationships with one another. We have an obligation to one another to be kind in our conversations. Proverbs 31 that we speak of the Proverbs 31 woman, this woman who presides over her house with so much grace, in verse 26 we read of this virtuous woman she opens her mouth in wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue, that is to say, she instructs her children not with wrath and not with anger but with kindness and directs her helpers and servants within her home in like manner. Proverbs 10 verse 11 says the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life. In other words, a source of blessing and even kindness that would flow from our mouths.

Fourth, there should be kind manners. Kindness includes what we would call social graces that are unique to each culture but ways that we convey respect and love and kindness to others, saying things such as please, thank you, could you please, addressing

people as Sir or Ma'am. Now, that can differ from generation to generation. That differs from region to region. That differs from culture to culture. I understand that. I'm not being legalistic on this at all. But every region and every culture and every generation needs to discover what are ways that they show honor and respect, especially the young towards those who are older than they are. In John chapter 4, for example, even the woman at the well, as she addresses Christ, continually refers to him as Sir. And the royal official who approached Jesus to heal his son said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." The paralytic at the pool at the sheep gate in John 5 said to Christ, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool." It's an expression of general kindness.

A couple of months ago, I was in Orlando and playing golf with R. C. Sproul and my son John was with me, and John has been trained and taught to say, "Yes, sir, No, ma'am." And into this round of golf, R. C., who was raised in the north, different region, different part of the country, was not used to being peppered with, "Yes, sir." And finally, on one tee, after John had expressed respect and honor by continually saying, yes, sir, yes, sir, R. C. looked at him and said, "John, would you stop saying yes, sir." And John said, "Yes, sir." You can take the boy out of the country, but you can't get the country out of the boy.

Love is kind and I need more kindness. You need more kindness. And as I have grown in the Lord, and how much more do I need to grow in the Lord, it's embarrassing how much more I need to grow in the Lord, but if you had known me 30 years ago in my first pastorate, 25 years ago, and my sarcastic humor, and my abrasive, immature ways of using humor towards others, even at times from the pulpit, there were several times, if not many times, the next Sunday, I had to get in the very same pulpit and ask for the forgiveness of the entire congregation because I had used unkind expressions of using humor at someone else in the congregation. Oh, it got me a big laugh but when the laughter was over, my conscience was killing me.

To be kind is to be like Christ and to be like Christ is to use kind manners and kind expressions. Also, there are kind actions. Kindness reaches out and helps those who are in need. Kindness helps the aged. Kindness helps the poor. Kindness helps those who are deeply discouraged. Kindness helps those who are undergoing great affliction and adversity. A prime example of this is in Luke chapter 10 in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Allow me just to read this one more time and I would like to draw just a few observations. In Luke 10 verse 30 we read, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance," well, we know there's no such thing as chance, Jesus says this with tongue and cheek, it just so happens, "a priest was going down on that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." He didn't want to be involved. He chose to ignore the need before him. "Likewise," verse 32, "a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan," at this point, the Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jews. They were half-breeds. They were half-Jew, half-Assyrian, and they weren't fully Jew, and so therefore they were shunned by the Jews. They were considered the other side of the tracks, the other side of the country. And as Jesus says this, he intentionally says, oh, the priest didn't get

involved, and the Levite didn't get involved, but a Samaritan who was on a journey, meaning he had some place to go, some place to be. He no doubt has a pace about his walk. He's on a journey, came upon him, now listen to the verbs, and when he saw him, the priest and the Levite saw him, but didn't really see him. The Samaritan actually saw him and we read he felt compassion and came to him. He didn't avoid him. "He came to him and bandaged up his wounds and pouring wine on him." I've marked up my Bible so much I can't even read my own Bible, "and put him on his beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.'" I'm good for it. Just put it on my tab. "'Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?' And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.'" And mercy here is a synonym for kindness. "Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" Remember we said, Paul is teaching us that kindness is not a feeling. Kindness is not just words. Kindness is action. It's actually getting involved. It's taking definitive steps to show grace to others. Listen to these verbs, saw him, felt compassion, came to him, bandaged up his wounds, poured wine on them, put him on his beast, brought him to an inn, took care of him, gave two denarii, "Whatever more, I will repay you." Action verb after action verb after action verb. This is what kindness is, it is kind actions. John Wesley said, "Do all the good you can in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, and all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Always try to be kinder than necessary. J. W. Alexander, a great Princetonian of the 19th century, the son of the founding president of Princeton Theological Seminary, noted, "He is too busy who is too busy to be kind."

How we must always make time to be kind to one another and then finally, under this heading, kind reactions. A part of kindness is not just our actions, but our reactions, and sometimes most telling about our spirituality and where we are with the Lord and whether or not we're walking according to the Spirit or according to the flesh is our spontaneous, immediate reactions as we find ourselves in situations with people who often irritate us, with people who offend us. True love responds with kindness. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matthew 5, whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him. If someone wants to sue you, take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. In other words, when put in a difficult, demanding situation and others are ungracious and unkind to you and even pushing, perhaps metaphorically, your chest and you're being backed into a corner, do not respond in like manner, but respond with kindness. And Jesus said also in Matthew 5, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. I've already read 2 Timothy 2:24, but hear it one more time under this heading of kind reactions in the context of when wronged. Paul said, when wronged, the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all. We must always respond to unkindness with kindness.

Finally, the means to kindness. If in fact kindness is an important element of Christ-likeness, and it is, and as we see it in his life and we hear it described by the prophet, then surely we would desire to be kind, would we not? We would desire to say love is kind in my life to others. Let me lay before you some ways that you and I can grow in our kindness to others. This is under the means to kindness. Number one, remember the

golden rule. We all want to be treated with kindness, do we not? Yesterday morning I was standing in the London airport trying to get suitcases checked through and the woman who was helping me was acting unkind. Now first of all, I knew if I would be unkind to her, I'd still be in London. So with selfish motives in my flesh, I knew I needed to be kind to her. But as she walked off to a supervisor for something related to me, I looked up at Ann and I said, "That woman is being very unkind to us." And I thought of this text in Matthew 7 verse 12 when Jesus said, in everything treat people the same way you want to be treated. The old familiar King James, do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Or as we say in America, do unto others before others do unto you. How do you want to be treated? You know how you want to be treated. There's not a person in this building who wants to be treated unkindly. The least of us here today want to be treated kindly, therefore, if you want to be treated kindly, then you should treat others kindly and so our growth in kindness really begins with just a basic observation of human nature that we all want to be treated kindly. Jesus said then we need to be kind to others. Sometimes people walk into a church just parenthetically and say, "Well, you know, they were just unfriendly to me." My question is, how friendly were you? If you want to be treated kindly, you should be a very friendly person yourself.

Number one, remember the golden rule. Consider how you want to be treated. That's how you should treat others. Second, remember the Pharisees. We learn not only by positive example, I've set before you Christ, we also learn by negative example and some of the greatest lessons I've ever learned in the ministry have been by negative example that I have seen in others, and every one of us here today I am sure would say, "Lord, I do not want to be a Pharisee. I do not want to be like a Pharisee." And nothing would be more repugnant to us than to see Phariseeism in any one of our own hearts or lives. But we know that the Pharisees had strong convictions but shallow kindness. Adrian Rogers has said, I remember him saying years ago, in the Pharisees, the milk of human kindness had curdled. I'll never forget that. We need to go in the opposite direction from the Pharisees. They were harsh. They were abrasive. They had no tenderheartedness towards people. They were so right, they were wrong.

Third, remember your election. Remember God's election of you from before the foundation of the world, how God with great purpose and great intentionality, as a sovereign act of his will, God chose to be kind to us and he did so not because we were inherently good, it was in spite of us as an act of his will, God chose to lavish his kindness upon us. And it becomes the the very foundation of Paul's appeal to the Colossians to be kind to one another as he reminds them of God's sovereign election in their lives. Listen to what Colossians 3 verse 12 says, "As those who have been chosen of God put on a heart of kindness." There may not be a more practical truth in all the Bible except the death of Christ than the truth of sovereign election, of which we sang earlier in this service. It is a great sanctifying truth in our lives. On the basis of our expressing kindness to one another, Paul says, is to remember our election and therefore we are to be as intentional in the exercise of our will towards one another in expressing kindness. In other words, we cannot say, well, we're sovereign grace people and we believe in election and then just be abrasive Reformed Baptists who go around looking to have a fight with people with a theological revolver cocked and loaded in our pockets. Even when I was in

England, the people, or in Scotland, the people who were abrasive with me, I only had two people, they were both Reformed Baptists. They have an extraordinary ability to find one point of disagreement. And with one man, I even agreed with everything he was saying. He still was wanting to put a finger in my lapel. May we never be like this. Let's be kind and gracious. We have deep convictions. We are immovable. We will not be swayed from what the Scripture says but we must be kind and tenderhearted and gracious, and even the truth of sovereign election should humble us and there should be kindness oozing out of our pores. May God bring more of this out of my own soul.

Fourth, remember your Master. Would you be more kind? Then look to Jesus. His greetings were kind. His actions were kind. His reactions were kind. Jesus personified perfect kindness. 1 Peter 2:23, while being reviled, he did not revile in return, while suffering, he uttered no threats.

And then fifth and finally, rely upon the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22 says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. When the Spirit of God is powerfully at work in our lives, he is producing kindness in our lives. 2 Corinthians 6:6 is an extraordinary text, often overlooked. but listing out of the middle of this verse these five words in kindness, comma, in the Holy Spirit. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who empowers kindness, energizes kindness, supernatural kindness flowing out of our lives. But listen to Galatians 5:19 and following. "Now the deeds of the flesh are...enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions..." But the fruit of the Spirit is kindness. A Spirit-filled believer will always be a kind believer. It is God who is at work in our lives, and it is kindness among many other things that he is producing in us.

As I bring this message to a close, I simply want to say to those of you here today who have not come to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that God extends kindness to you in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. God is unspeakably kind to sinners. God shows infinite, immeasurable kindness in the free offer of his Son to sinners. If you have never turned to Christ by faith, I urge you to do so this day, even this moment, and receive and respond to the kindness of the Lord that is extended in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God is so kind, he will forgive your sins. God is so kind, he will reconcile you to himself and the enmity and the warfare will be over. God is so kind, he is willing that his wrath would be appeased and his vengeance and his anger would be placated. God is so kind that he is willing to treat you as his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is willing to adopt you and bring you into his family. God is so kind that he is willing to give paupers and beggars such as you and me the inheritance of royalty and to give to us treasure in heaven and abundance of grace in life. God is so kind, he is ready in his Son to lavish his goodness and his grace upon you.

How could you walk away from his kindness? How could you just turn your back upon such kindness that is offered to you? The offer of the gospel is motivated by the kindness of the Lord. Have you ever received his kindness? Have you ever believed upon Christ? Have you ever come to see what a pauper, what a bankrupt beggar you are before God, and that he offers to you the treasures of forgiveness and grace? Believe upon the Lord

Jesus Christ. I urge you to do that which is best for your soul. I plead with you to respond to do that which will bless your life both in this life and the life to come. How hard your heart must be to refuse the kindness of the Lord. Refuse it no longer. Run to Christ. Flee to him. Come to him. He desires to show kindness to you. He is the friend of sinners. His arms are opened wide to you. Come to him, believe upon him, and you will find the kindness of his salvation in your soul.