



“Love Is Kind”  
(1 Corinthians 13:4b)

Introduction: Love is the most powerful emotion in the world. If we were able to see what was behind most of the greatest sacrifices which have ever been made in the world, we would probably find that love had something to do with it. If this is true of the love which the world has, how much more true is it of the pure and holy kind of love which God has and which He gives to those who love Him. What motivated God to chose a people to save from their sins? Why did He send His only begotten Son into the world to die for them? What compelled Him to want to bring this countless multitude of people into His presence for the rest of eternity? It was the Spirit of love, holy love, the most powerful force in the universe. John writes, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (3:16). Love constrained Him to do it. Love is a very powerful force, for it was able to overcome even the great hatred which God has for sinners, so much so that He would send His most beloved Son into the world to save them. Love will also have a powerful effect in our lives as well, if we will only nurture it and cherish it.

So far we have seen that God has given to us a great treasure in this love. It is far greater than any of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. It is that which gives life and true worth to the things we do for God. It is that which will bind us together as the people of God and allow us to present to the world such a powerful witness that they will know that Jesus lives in us. Last week we saw how it will help us to bear up with the weaknesses and sins of others. It will give us the strength to remain peaceful and calm, without seeking revenge, when others offend and mistreat us, which as we saw, will happen quite a bit in this world. This evening, Paul shows us something of the active nature of this love.

***Love is not lifeless. It is not something which is made up of words only. But it shows itself to be true and genuine by the works of kindness it compels us to do.***

**I. What is kindness? Most simply put kindness is doing something good to someone. We could further divide it into spiritual good and physical good. Good may be done to a person’s soul or for their body.**

A. First, let’s consider what it means to do something good to someone’s soul.

1. The first thing you need to realize is that when you help someone in this way, you are giving them more than you could in any other way.
  - a. If you had a lot of money, and you gave that money to someone, someone who needed it, you would certainly be helping them, at least you would be outwardly. They may never get hungry, or thirsty. They may never be without clothes, or without shelter in this life.
  - b. But what you have given them would only be good for this life. Once their life was over, what would they have to show for it? Jesus said a person might gain the whole world, and yet lose his own soul. What you did was good, but it was not as good as you could have done.
  - c. On the other hand, if you are rich spiritually and are full of spiritual wisdom and knowledge, and you give this to someone else, not only would you not lose what you have, but you would be giving them something that would help them not only in this life, but also in the life to come. You would be giving them a treasure which they could never lose. This would be a far better blessing and a far greater act of kindness.
2. What are some of the ways that we can give this spiritual treasure to others?
  - a. The first thing we can do is to give them light, if they are walking in darkness, that is, if they believe something that is wrong, you can give them the truth. If one of your brothers or sisters in Christ, or one of your children, believes something which is wrong, something which is dangerous, then you can correct them. You can tell them the truth. All of us are called to teach one another in this way. Even if their error seems small, it can still be dangerous. If an airplane is off only by a few degrees at the beginning of its flight, it will be miles off course by the time it reaches the end.
  - b. The second thing we can do to show spiritual kindness, is to admonish others when they fall into sin. Paul writes in Romans 15, “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another” (v. 14). We should do this in two ways. We should warn them with our words, but we

should also warn them with our lives. Nothing can add more power to the things we say than the power of a godly life. If the way we live doesn't agree with the things we say, then others won't listen to us, but will probably consider us hypocrites.

- c. Another thing we could do is strengthen another's faith, or to help them live a more obedient life. Maybe you could encourage your brother or sister when you see them growing dull to the things of the Lord. When they are tempted, you could help them conquer that temptation, so that they can move on in the Christian life. If someone needs advise, you could counsel them. Or when they are undergoing difficult trials, you could comfort them. There are many things you can do to help others spiritually.
- d. But certainly, the greatest spiritual good that you could do for anyone, is if they are without Christ to speak to them about Christ. The Lord has put unbelievers in everyone of our lives. They are all around us. And as Jesus told His disciples that the poor they would always have with them, and that they could do good to them whenever they wanted, so we can do good to these whenever we want. They are not only spiritually poor, they are spiritually bankrupt. We cannot give them life, of course, but we can point them to the source of life, Jesus Christ. Talk to your family members, your friends and neighbors about Christ. Invite them to church. Warn them of the danger they are in. Their house is on fire and that fire will eventually burn them up forever. You may very well become the means the Lord uses to bring them to salvation.
- e. When we consider the different things we can do to show kindness to someone, there is no greater kindness we can show than to lead them to Christ.

B. But of course, kindness may also be shown by ministering to their physical needs.

1. When you see someone who is hungry, the kind thing to do is to feed them. When you see someone thirsty, to give them a drink, when a stranger, to invite them in, when naked to clothe them, when sick or in prison, to visit them (Matt. 25:35, 36).
2. When you see someone who doesn't know how to manage their money, you can help them. If they need something fixed on their house or car, and they are too weak or poor to do it themselves, you can give them a hand. If someone has slandered them or is spreading gossip about them, you can help clear their name.
3. There are many things you can do to show kindness. And of course when you help people in this way, both believers and unbelievers, it can also open the door for you to do good to them spiritually. Our message will be more willingly received if it is accompanied with kindness.

## **II. Understanding that there are many things we can do to show kindness, the next thing we should consider is, To whom are we to show this kindness?**

A. This shouldn't be hard to answer. We are to show it to whomever we can, to whoever needs it.

1. Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:39, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
2. And who is my neighbor? Jesus answered this question in the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37). A neighbor is anyone who is in need, and a good neighbor is one who is near to help them, even if they happen to be your enemy.

B. This means that we are to be kind to all men.

1. We are to be kind to those who are good and bad.
  - a. Jesus tells us that His Father "causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt. 5:43-45). He tells us that we are to do the same.
  - b. Paul says that while we have opportunity, we are to good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:10). We are not only to help those who are inside the church, but also those who are outside: the proud, the immoral, the covetous, the blasphemous, the unjust, brawlers, and even those who hate God. They're the ones, after all, who need the most help.
  - c. When we used to go out evangelizing on the street, we didn't stand outside of the church to tell people about Christ, we went out on the streets and down to the bars. That's where the people were who needed the Gospel.

2. We are also to be kind to those who are our friends and our enemies.
  - a. Now it's not hard to be kind to those who are kind to us. Our hearts naturally go out to those who love us. But Jesus tells us that this is not enough. Even the tax-collectors and sinners do the same (Matt. 5:46-47).
  - b. It's our enemies that we have a difficult time loving. But Jesus tells us, "I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). This goes for you children, as well as for you adults. When our enemies hate us, and mistreat us, and do nasty things to us, what can we do to them? The only thing Jesus will let us do is to be kind to them in return. Remember what we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:15 this morning, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men."
3. And we are to be kind to those who are grateful, as well as those who are ungrateful.
  - a. Our heavenly Father is kind to both, therefore, we are to be kind to both. Jesus says, "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" (Luke 6:35).
  - b. He says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (v. 36). We may not excuse ourselves by saying that since they will never return our kindness, or will only hurt us in return, we don't need to be kind to them. No. We must do what is our duty to do, even if we never receive anything back for it but abuse.

### **III. And how are we to show this kindness? We are to do it freely, generously and from our hearts.**

- A. Remember God won't accept what we do unless it is done out of a true love to Him. He commands us in the same way to do good to others from our hearts, expecting nothing in return.
  1. He says, "Do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35). He tells us, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind*, and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:12-14).
  2. We are not to do good to others only to receive the same back from them. We are to show them love, expecting nothing in return.
- B. And we are to give to them generously.
  1. Paul writes, "Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one *do* just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
  2. We are to have open hearts and open hands. Moses wrote, "If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need *in whatever he lacks*" (Deu. 15:7-8).

### **IV. Of course the question is, How can we show kindness in this way? How will we ever find the strength to do this in our hearts? Paul tells us that it will only come from being filled with God's love, the kind of love Paul is telling us about in 1 Corinthians 13.**

- A. Kindness is the main quality of Christian love, its most essential element.
  1. When we love in this way, we show that we have the same love in our hearts as that which is in the heart of God and in the heart of Christ.
  2. That which this love seeks more than anything else is the glory of God and the good of all men. And the greatest evidence that we can have that this love is in our hearts, is when we actually do these acts of kindness.
    - a. Whenever we do anything, it's because we really want to do it. And when we do what love requires, it's because we truly have this love in our hearts.
    - b. We really don't have this love if it is expressed only in our words. James writes, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be

warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that" (2:15-16). And John writes, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him" (1 John 3:18-19).

- c. If our desire to help our neighbor is really sincere, then we will give them what they actually need, and not only think or talk about it.

B. Is your heart filled with this love this evening?

1. Are you kind or mean? Are you generous or selfish? Do you give to others because you really want to bless them, or because you want something in return?
2. The Lord exhorts us this evening to kindness. It is not only our duty to be kind and to do good, this is also what Christian love will compel us to do.
3. Let us therefore be willing to do, to give, to suffer, both for friends and enemies, both for the good and evil, both for those who are grateful and for those who are ungrateful. And let us do it freely and generously and from our hearts, as the Lord gives us opportunity and ability, for this is what true Christianity is all about.
4. God has been good to us. He has given us the things of this world, and the things of the world to come, all through His Son. Can we afford then to withhold anything from God that He would ask from us?
5. And don't forget that God has also promised to reward us for the good things we do. Solomon said, "Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days" (Ecc. 11:1). He writes, "He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed" (Prov. 19:17). And Jesus says, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (Luke 6:38).
6. God is able to restore what you have given, and He can give you much more. It is in His power to do it. But also don't forget that when you give in this way to God, you are storing up a treasure for yourself in heaven, where no one will ever be able to take it away. Let us be kind then. Let us do all the good we can, for not only does this give glory to God, but He has promised that if we do, we will never lack anything that we need. Amen.