

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 12 Feb 2023

Sermon Title : Love is Kind

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : 1 Corinthians 13:4a

INTRODUCTION

Last week, we looked at love is patient and we learnt that the word 'patient' refers to long-suffering. To be patient is not just to wait for a long time but to not be resentful, revengeful or retaliate when we are wronged. If patient is about "not doing", then, love is kind refers to "doing" – "doing good" to others. But what does "doing good" mean?

Undercurrent Meaning of 'Kind'

The original Greek word for 'kind' in 1 Corinthians 13:4a is 'chrēsteuetai' and is only used here and nowhere else in the Bible. 'Chrēsteuetai' has a few root words with a few underlying meanings.

One of its root words is to be 'useful' or 'fit for use' as in Luke 5:39.

Another root word 'needed' or 'necessary' (Luke 10:38-42 and Matthew 9:12) like "Mary who needs the word of life" and "a sick man who needs the healer of life".

Literal Meaning of 'Kind'

While the undercurrent meaning of 'kind' is being useful or necessary (for life), the literal meaning of the word 'kind' in 1 Corinthians 13:4 is 'gentle', 'friendly' or 'benign'.

When we say a tumour is 'benign', it means it is harmless or not life-threatening. But if it is malignant, it means it is malicious, harmful, toxic, cancerous. Similarly, people who are selfish are usually described as toxic and take the joy of life out of others; while people who are self-giving are kind and they enhance the lives of others.

Purpose of 'Kind' – to give life

"Love is kind" therefore means not just to do good for goodness sake but to give, enable or enhance life – this is the heart of God. God is in the business of giving, enabling and enhancing lives. God created all life forms and has no pleasure in death:

- Ezekiel 33:11 – "As I live," declares the Lord God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live." God does not take pleasure in condemning us. He wants all to repent and turn to Him for

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life. This is God's nature. He gives life, not death. In contrast, the evil one steals, kills and destroys and devours life. (John 10:10, 1 Peter 5:8, Luke 22:31) The devil is toxic, cancerous and takes life away but God gives life.

- Luke 6:35 – “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 is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.” God wants all to repent and come to Him for life. He takes no pleasure in condemnation.
- 1 John 5:11-12 – “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son, does not have life.” Because Jesus gives us life, the Holy Spirit is transforming us to be more and more like Him.

Image of 'Kind'

The word *chréastos* when used in the Bible to describe a living being, is almost exclusively used to describe God alone. We are made in the image of God. Because of the Fall, we turned away and the image was distorted. Jesus came to transform us back into the perfect image of God that is life-giving.

- Being kind is to be useful and necessary for life. It is also to be a life enhancer or life enabler like God. This call 'Love is kind' is not a request or a suggestion. It is our life mission and the reason for our existence. He is redeeming us to become like Him.

Challenges of being kind

- Speaking out when it is needed – Instead of keeping quiet to maintain peace and not rock the boat, some situations require us to speak out even if it may be challenging e.g. when we see someone being toxic, a friend going down the wrong path or when we see that something is wrong.
- When speaking out in such situations, we need to be kind, patient, long-suffering and gentle – Take the posture of being helpful, nurturing, compassionate because we are helping the person transit from darkness to light. 2 Timothy 2:24-25a, “The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.”
- Proactively take action to be kind even for people who offend us – It is easier to be kind to a person we care about but it is hard to show kindness to people we cannot stand. Romans 12:19-21 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty,

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give him something to drink; for by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” According to scholars, when someone was repentant in the ancient world, they would take a basin of burning coal and put it on their heads as a sign of repentance. Burning coal is also seen as a picture of repentance and purification in Isaiah 6. We are called to overcome evil with good and leave the outcome to the Lord and trust Him to overcome the situation for us.

Jesus – Model of ‘Kind’

Jesus is our perfect example of how love and kindness lead people to repentance.

- In Luke 17 Jesus healed 10 lepers. One returned to show his gratitude for his salvation.
- In Luke 19, Zacchaeus, the tax collector was hated and despised by everyone but Jesus did not avoid him. Instead, Jesus showed him kindness and caused him to repent and make restitution to those he had cheated.
- In John 4, the Samaritan adulteress was avoided by everyone but Jesus showed kindness to her. As a result, not only did she repent, her whole village also repented.
- At the cross, Jesus showed kindness and forgave those who tortured and nailed him to the cross. Because of Jesus’ kindness, we know Him and are on our way to becoming like Him.

CONCLUSION

We need to take up our cross and follow Jesus by being generous and showering everyone, even our enemies, with kindness. May we have the faith to persevere even when it is challenging. We are made in the image of God who is kind, so we are to be kind – to do what is useful to enable life or is necessary for life. We must show kindness and love others genuinely not for goodness sake but because we are part of God’s plan to redeem the world. Our kindness is a matter of life and death.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:4a aloud slowly. While being patient is withholding resentment, retaliation and revenge for wrongs done to us, being kind is taking action to do what is useful and fit to enhance and bring life to others.
 - a. Who do you feel needs your kind act in your family, school/work, small group or church?
 - b. Have you done anything about it?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. How does knowing the different underlying meanings of 'kind' (to be fit, useful and necessary) impact you?
- 3b. How can we follow Jesus' example to be life-giving in our interactions with others?

- 4a. Is there a situation where it will be challenging for you to be kind to someone?
 - (i) What is one way you can be kind to the person and enhance the person's life or bring him/her to life everlasting?
 - (ii) How can you exercise gentleness, long-suffering and patience in this situation?
- 4b. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4a (i) and (ii) above, in the following week(s), until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your personal testimony of how God helped you to overcome evil with good when dealing with a difficult person, by doing what is kind to bring life to that person.

OR

Give thanks to God for His kindness through kind acts of others that led you to repentance.

6. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 4a and 4b to God, asking Him to help you be kind and love others genuinely even when it is challenging, as part of God's plan to redeem the world.

Pray for your group and our church to have the courage to follow the Holy Spirit's leading to always be kind so we may do what is useful and necessary to enhance life of those inside and outside our church family, that Christ may be revealed in us for His glory.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Fill This Place - Red Rocks Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRoRwaJ-T5A>
2. Made to Worship - Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jjqynulkFM>
3. I Want To Sing - Malcom du Plessis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6WP1Rk1_MU

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