



Summer Fruit-Part 5

Kindness

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Well, a few years before I was born, there was a Chicago pastor who wrote a book that would end up radically shaping my early Christian life. I was 18 when I first read A.W. Tozer's book, "Knowledge of the Holy," and it really gripped my heart just from the first line of the first chapter wherein Tozer wrote, "What comes to mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." What comes to mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you. If I can paraphrase that opening argument, he says, you know, everything in your life that is skewed, everything that is substandard, everything that is not what it ought to be, it all comes back to your view of God. Every error can be traced back to it, every ethical failure, every problem, everything that is messed up in your life as a Christian, even in a messed-up world, can be traced back to your view of God.

It's really, in essence, all about theology. And if that sounds too stuffy and too egg-headish for you, I just, which is officially a word this morning, by the way, egg-headish. You know, maybe you don't quite remember then what the word theology means. Theology simply means what do you think about God? Who do you think God is? What do you think God is like? What do you think he values? What do you think he is doing in the world? How does he act? Theology is my understanding of God and that is going to dictate everything in your life. Tozer wrote that book 60 years ago, and he did so because he was concerned that the culture that he was observing had dumbed down and trivialized and was sentimentalizing the view of God in the churches and Christian ministries he saw all around him. And I thought to myself, thinking back 60 years ago, can you imagine if Tozer we're here today? I mean, seeing how the modern Christian church has basically, speaking of sentimentalizing, we have perfected this theology of the nice God, this nice God. We love to domesticate our deities in our day. The church has seemingly been overwhelmingly successful in getting most people to think that God is nice.

If I say that and even as I say that you might think, well is God is not nice? Well, that's a good question. The theologians that all sit here among us, because every one of you is, if I said, is God nice? I wonder what you would say. Is God nice? That's not an easy question. Right? Is God nice? I hope most of us would stand back as theologians, armchair theologians maybe at least, and say, well, I don't know that the word nice would rightly encapsulate the triune omnipotent God. I mean, I would like to think that the God that has created everything that we just sang about is something more than nice. Maybe the adjective nice is not quite the word I would pick to describe that God. And yet we have so much in Scripture that reminds us that God is benevolent, he's merciful, he's gracious, he's generous and he's kind. All of that's true. Right? But there's much more to God than that. I think when we think about what it means to be nice, unfortunately, we see words in Scripture, we read them and to the ill effect of our own lives and our Christian lives and our relationships and how we live, we end up making this composite view of God that is really deficient of all that God has said. We must spend our whole lives thinking what God has said about himself and realizing what he said about himself so that we don't read words like "God is kind" and come to the wrong conclusion.



We have a lot, I think, of work to do in our day. We don't want to be a product of our culture, but we all are unfortunately highly influenced by our culture. Churches, since Tozer's time, have certainly work to pedal a nice God, a cool Jesus, a less than holy spirit. I mean, that is the way that our culture proffers its theology. And we have to stop and say, well, what is this God all about? Well, certainly I'm not going to argue this morning that God is the opposite of nice. He certainly isn't a hothead at slight provocation, flying off the handle and capriciously, you know, kicking the dog. That is not the God revealed in Scripture. And yet, even in his wrath, his anger, which the Bible says he's slow to get to, he still is very methodical. He's very precise. He's very exacting.

So we know that God has revealed himself to be a God of justice, a God of wrath and a God of kindness and benevolence and grace. But this concept of kindness is important for us to tackle this morning, because like everything we've seen in this Fruit of the Spirit study, there's a counterfeit, there's a less than biblical definition for love, joy, peace, patience and now kindness. And we've got to know what the Spirit is aiming for in our lives. If the Spirit of God is kind and he wants you to be kind, let's just make sure we understand what that is.

So if you're taking notes this morning and you have your Bibles, which I hope that you do both when you come to church, I would love for you to turn to Psalm 145. I'd like you to follow along as we think about who God is. I'd like you to put the note down this way if you're taking notes. The first thing I want you to do, not only this morning, but for the rest of your Christian life, I want you to study God's, let me give you an adjective here, "holy kindness." I want you to "Study God's Holy Kindness." Holy. H-o-l-y. He is holy. He is majestic. He is transcendent. He is perfect. And because I am saying that, I think we've got to look at the way God is presented in passages like Psalm 145 and say, here is a picture of God's kindness and there's so much in this passage about God's kindness. First, it starts with who he is. Who is this person that we're going to say is kind?

It starts with these words, if you look at this, a Psalm of David, the superscription reads, and it says now in verse 1, "I will extoll you," David says, "my God and my..." And here's a word that tries to put everything in perspective, "my King." I guess if you're making some sub-notes here, some-points on your notes, I would put this down. I would say kindness in Scripture is not, when it comes to God, is not a perpetual agreeability. "Kindness Is Not a Perpetual Continual Agreeability." I just want to do whatever you want. And it helps us when we read in the Bible that God is king. He's a kind king, but he's still the king. And if he's the king, then he's not trying to agree with all of you. That's not the point. He's enthroned. He is exalted. He is the center of the universe and everything else is not. Therefore, the king's job is not for him to agree with the subjects, though we've been conditioned that way in our democracy, but we need to learn that the king, the monarch, expects the subjects to agree with him. That changes everything.

Certainly he would like us to be in agreement. He'd like us to, as the old prophet said, to walk together and be in agreement. But the agreement is that we need to come to where he is in all of our views. He is not going to come to where we are in all of our views. He's king. Is he a kind king? Well, we're about to read that he is a kind king, just like Jesus was a kind king. Matter of fact, the day they hailed him king and the crowds in the biggest setting hail Jesus as king, you

might remember, in the triumphal entry we call it, on Palm Sunday, he went across the Kidron Valley, coming down off of the Mount of Olives and he went through the temple gate there. If I said, "is he king?" Yes. If I ask the crowd as they're waving palm branches, "Is he a kind king?" I think most people would look at Bartimaeus' healing and the healing of the blind man and Jairus' daughter, and say, "Yes, he is a kind king."

But he goes on to the Temple Mount, if you remember the sequence of events there on Palm Sunday, and he starts tipping over the tables of the money changers. If I ask a money changer in the temple, "Is Jesus a kind king," they would say, "Well, I don't know. But he's certainly not an agreeable king. He doesn't agree with us and what we're doing." He's making that abundantly clear in this scene of the expression of his anger. The king has the right on his Temple Mount as we studied that back in Luke some time ago to do what he wills in his temple. That was his Temple Mount and he had the right to make corrections to anyone's lives because he is a king.

David, who was the king of Israel, a human king, a monarch, he was reigning in Jerusalem, says, "Well, you, God, are my king. So I am going to bless your name forever." Even the word itself "bless" comes from the Hebrew word to bow down. I'm submitting to you. I'm bending to you. I'm seeking to agree with you. I'm going to bless your name forever and ever. I'm always going to try to adjust my thoughts and my vision and my goals and my values to who you are. "Every day I bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is Yahweh," great is the Lord, "and greatly to be praised, his greatness is unsearchable." You've got to start with the transcendent, magnificent, powerful regency of God. Then we'll start talking about his kindness. But it starts with him being the immovable, immutable king.

You start there, as Tozer tried to correct his generation and perhaps we could do the same in ours, remind people that God is not a servant to us. We are servants to him. He is not the subject to our reigning monarchy of our lives. He calls us to subject ourselves to his. "One generation," verse 4, "will commend your works to another, and declare your mighty acts." Now here's an interesting series of descriptions of what God does. I would just recommend that you go through even today's Bible reading if you did the Daily Bible Reading this morning, you see this reference to mighty acts and powerful deeds and the things that he does. It's usually referring back, at this particular point, we're in the 9th or 10th century B.C., back to the 14th, 15th century B.C., when God was bringing his people out of Egypt and all the mighty acts and wondrous deeds he did was showing his power in the world. It was the judgments he brought on a sinful nation.

Matter of fact, Psalm 45 is a great example of that when you talk about awesome deeds. The awesome deeds are defined not as you did a great miracle, but you did something that showed that you are the monarch and that Pharaoh is not and that everyone should bless and bow down to you. He says, we're going to "commend your works to one another, and we're going to declare your mighty acts. The glorious splendor of your majesty on your wondrous works, I will meditate." I'll think about what you did to show your regency over the world. Verse 6, "They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds." There's that phrase that's worth jotting down as a cross-reference. So look at Psalm 45 verses 4 through 7, the awesome deeds of God. The judgments on people who think that they rule the world like Nebuchadnezzar, like Pharaoh. They don't. We all subject ourselves to the great king.

"They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness." Now, that's the thing about God, he is not only a kind king, he's a good king. He's always right. "And shall sing aloud of your righteousness." You're always doing what is correct and right, even though we don't agree with it and we struggle and do so at our own peril. And yet this king, look at verse 8, "he's gracious and merciful." Think of those words. Gracious. He gives what people don't deserve to have. He gives them favors. He gives them blessings. He gives them things that they don't rightly earn. He's merciful. He doesn't give them what they earn on the other end of the spectrum, in that he doesn't judge people fully. He does not give full vent to his anger. He doesn't, as it says in Psalm 103, he doesn't reward us as our sins deserve. He's a merciful God.

Oh, and he does get angry, but he is "slow to anger and he abounds in..." Now, here's an interesting phrase. We talked about it in the first installment of our Summer Fruit series. Love. We talked about the word that translates these two words, "steadfast love." It's the Hebrew word. We see it all over the Old Testament. Hessed. And the Hebrew word, hessed, you say, "Oh, I know what that means. You've taught about that. That means love, God's covenant, faithful, committed, loyal love to his people." You're absolutely right. But do a word study on this with your Bible software and you'll see how often this word is translated, "kindness." That God is doing something in love, because love is a verb of course, he's trying to in the love that he has for his people, love them and be kind to them in a faithful, consistent expression of his own character. And so it is that in this passage we're reminded of his hessed, is steadfast love, his kindness.

This expands on it, verse 9, "Yahweh, the Lord is good to all." This is what we would call in theology "Common Grace." He's given to all kinds of people, things they don't deserve that are good. He sends his rains on the fields of the wicked and the good as well. He causes the sun to rise and photosynthesis to take place in the plants of both the evil and the good. "The Lord is good to all, and his mercy," the things that he holds back that he should rightly give them as the righteous judge, "is over all that he's made. All your works shall give thanks to you." One day they'll see that mercy. One day they'll see that grace, even though now people shine on the true God of the Bible and think, "Well, you know what? I feel like I'm the God and the master of my own life." But one day they will. They'll give thanks to you, "and all your saints shall bless you." They'll continue to do what they did in this life and that is bow to your greatness. Seek to agree with the monarch and the king.

"They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom. They shall tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom," you were in charge. "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom," though people are not submitting to you now, you will take your great power and begin to reign. And the person you've appointed to be the representation of all humanity, your Son, Jesus Christ, "and your dominion" in that time will "endure throughout all generations." Oh, it's there, but one day that kingdom will come and his will will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

"The Lord, Yahweh, is faithful in all his words and kind in all of his works." There's the kindness of God. What does he do? Well, "he upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed

down." Look at the recovery, the rebounding, the people who are sorrowful made cheerful. The people who are sick made well. Psalm 103. "He's healed me from all my diseases." I know that we are not going to be completely always healed in this life of our diseases. But so far, look what he's done. He's picked us up. He has sustained us. "The eyes of all looked to you to give them food in due season." I need something, they pray to God. Even the atheist calls out to God. I gave you the stats at one point in a sermon about prayer, how atheists themselves will pray. Of course, they pray when they're in a jam, when their wife is in the hospital, when they're about to go under surgery, people look to God. Even the worst and most rebellious, it seems, will eventually stop shaking their fist at God. And they say, God, I need something and I can't provide it myself.

"The eyes of all looked to you and you give them food in due season. You open your hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing," even when they don't deserve it. That's the grace and mercy of God. It's all under the auspices, the banner, the umbrella of something we are calling today, kindness.

Here it is in verse 17. "Yahweh is righteous in all his ways and kind," there it is again, "in all of his works." Think about what he's done specifically for his people. "The Lord is near to all who call on him." Not everyone does in every situation, but we are those who are bowing to him. We are those who are blessing him. So we do. We call to him. And not just everyone is just calling out to a god of their imagination, but God is a God "who is near to those who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and he saves them." Talk about the mercy and kindness of God. As we often think of, if you know your Bibles, you think about Romans Chapter 2 verse 4, that it's "his kindness that leads us to repentance." Well, then if you know Titus 2 it's his kindness that provides the salvation when we are repentant. His kindness provides us in common grace, something that draws us to the need for God. Then the kindness of Christ's death on a cross gives us the solution to our sin, the kindness of God, the kindness of God. When we call out to him, that's expressed in such an obvious, extreme way in that he saves us in his kindness.

"The Lord preserves all who love him." But here's the thing as we try to balance the idea of God's justice and his holiness with his kindness. It is not perpetual agreeability because of the wicked in hell will not say God is really being agreeable right now. "All the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak of the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh..." This is what people need to do. They need to repent. Everyone needs to bow. Everyone needs to "bless his holy name forever and ever."

If I want to think about what it means to be kind, I first have to understand that God is kind. And if I think that God is kind. I know that does not mean that he's some sentimental, trivialized, old grandpa who agrees with everything his grandchildren say. He's a king. He's a monarch. Does he love us? Yes, he loves us. Is he merciful? Of course he's merciful. We deserve hell. Is he gracious? Of course, he's gracious. If you're saved, he's extremely and abundantly gracious. So much so that Ephesians 1 says you will praise him for the kindness of his grace throughout all eternity. That is the God who we serve. He's both holy and he's kind. We understand that. Just as you, I hope, know, as we think about transitioning from studying God's kindness to what it means for you to



be kind. What is the Holy Spirit wanting you to do? To be perpetually agreeable with everyone around you? That's not what God wants you to be.

Flying on an airplane yesterday to get back here from the Hill country as Pastor Hayden said, and I bring on one carry-on bag and of course, I expect if I bring on one carry-on bag then I should be responsible to stow one carry-on bag when I get on the plane. And, you know, I hopefully I'm smart enough to buy a small enough bag to actually fit in the overhead bin. So I, you know, I go about my work and expecting that I will do what I have to do with my stuff because this is my bag. Yet if I find myself putting more than one bag up in the overhead bin, well, then I realize that's a step beyond what I would expect to do. Now you say, well, did you put your wife's up or your daughter's up? Well, if I do that, yeah, you'd say, OK. I expect that because you love them. I don't think that my daughter or my wife are going to stand back and say what was really kind of you to put our bag up because there's a commitment there. There's a hessed, there's a loyalty, an expression of kindness that's just a part of love.

But when the lady brings the bag on that she can't not only lift up over her head, but she can't fit it in there and I spend 10 minutes trying to put her bag overhead, I hope you or someone might stand back and say, well, that was kind of you to do, Pastor Mike. It was because you think you are only really responsible and expected to take care of yourself and your stuff. But not only that, you tried to care for more people than just yourself, and you did something that was beyond what is expected. Just like God gives beyond what is expected for sinners as he provides food and he provides joy and he provides relationships, not in the perfection that we would want in this life, but what he gives you is an expression of him doing more than we would expect.

If you're taking notes. I just want you to jot this down, if you would, the idea of what it means to be kind, I put it this way, is a resolve or a "Purpose To Go the Extra Mile." I don't like usually putting points together in a sermon that kind of encapsulate in a point, an analogy. I understand this is an analogy, but it's an analogy we use so much around here at Compass, I hope you understand exactly what I mean. I'm doing more than would be expected. And God does more than would be expected, not only in doing things that fit and comfortably are received as "that's a nice thing to do," because if I think about kindness, the idea of kindness, you'd say, well, it would be something that someone would engender a response from someone who would say, "that was that was kind of you." Or if it's really kind, "that's so kind of you to do that." We can think of several things that would fall into that category.

But I want you to know they are not always things that are friendly, like putting someone's bag in the overhead bin. It could be that your kid is about to run into the street and if I stop your child, you'd still say that was kind, but at the moment that your kid was being pulled on his arm as I dragged him away from the traffic, it wasn't immediately understood to be a kind act. Or what if you had your phone as you're walking into a situation and I physically grab you as a stranger and I stop you from doing that, you'd still say, "Well, that was a kind thing for you to do because I would've gotten run over if you didn't get involve." I went the extra mile in caring for the future of your life and that's something that wasn't a friendly gesture, but in the end, the idea was a kindness.



The point is that when we go the extra mile for someone else, whether it's providing for them something that they need, something that they can use, something that could be helpful, and then something that would be in the long run beneficial for them, even though it's not well received in the moment, we recognize that we're still within the category of kindness.

I say all that for two reasons. One is the word in the New Testament that is used. If you have your Bible software at some point this week before your small groups, look up this word and go to any lexicon, any Greek dictionary and find the usage and history of the word before New Testament times. You'll find this at the core of this word. It used to be known, the idea of kindness, grew out of the word that was known originally as the word "useful," something that was useful. To be kind is to do something that we know is useful for that person, even if they don't immediately recognize it as useful.

Let me give you one example, as long as we're in the Psalms and I think this is helpful, we're in Psalm 145, turn back to Psalm 141. David had a commitment to say, I want to as a person who follows God and submits to God and blesses God and vows to God, I want my life to agree with his. So I'm going to see things in my own life, look at verse 3, that I want to do and I'm going to say, no, I'm going to have to restrain that. Just like this whole series about the deeds of the flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit. I going to have to say no to things in my life that I might want to naturally do. He says this in verse 3, God, I need to watch my mouth, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the doors of my lips!" I'm going to work here to restrain my words. "Don't let my heart inclined to evil." God help me with this. I need to not want to do the things that are wrong, "to busy myself with wicked deeds," or be "in the company," as they often invoke this, "the company of men who work iniquity. Let me not eat their delicacies!" Don't let me get tempted and lured into a circle that's going to lead me to compromise your truth. That's his commitment because he claims to be a follower of God.

Then he says, there's an assumption here between verses 4 and 5 is that I'm in a situation where I don't realize I'm not doing that and I need correction. Verse 5, "Let a righteous man strike me - it is a kindness; let him rebuke me - it is oil for my head; let me not refuse it." The idea here of kindness in David's mind is anything that would ultimately be useful for me. Is it useful for Nathan to come into David's presence and say, "David, you are the man, you're in sin?" Well, it's not pleasant, but is it useful? Super useful. Does it have, as an overarching concern, the good of the other person? Yes, it does. Would you ever describe that as a nice conversation? Answer. Never. Could you say biblically it is kind? Of course it's kind. It's the kindest thing Nathan can do.

Kindness is not perpetual agreeability. "Go get it, David. Do whatever you want." As a matter of fact, Nathan learned that the hard way, though it doesn't seem like a huge event in the pages of Scripture, when David said I want to build the temple and Nathan said, "Do whatever is in your heart." Nathan was being agreeable, but he was not being kind. Because he had to go back to David and say, "No, no, no, I blew it because I was just being agreeable with you when I should have been the one who comes and strikes you, at least in the conversations by saying, 'You can't go that way.'" Just like a kid running into the street. I grab his arm and I pull him back. That is an act of kindness. You'd see it in the big picture because that big picture plays itself out in 10 seconds. But if you have to play it out in 10 years or 10 months, you might think, I don't think that



person's being kind right now. And yet the Bible says the wise realize that even correction is a kindness. Why? Because it is a useful thing that is driven by love and concern for the well-being of other people.

So I'm going to go the extra mile, which may mean I have to have hard conversations with people, which may mean it is a struggle for me. Now, again, that's the limit of something. I'm not trying to say, you know, wow, I got to go out and have all these hard conversations. Well, you may need to if you really want to be biblically kind. But let's start with some simple things. Turn with me to Deuteronomy Chapter 22. Deuteronomy 22. Here's a picture of what we're talking about. The idea of love, and there's a telescopic nature to all of these virtues in that love is obviously a driving force in all of these virtues. All the ones at least that relate to our horizontal relationships. My relationship with you, if I'm to be kind, I need to be loving and loving doesn't mean that I just do whatever you like and kindness doesn't mean I do whatever you agree with, I want to have a commitment of good in your life that I'm trying to accomplish.

It's much like preaching in some ways. Right? Some people come, they visit the church, they don't like the church because, you know, he didn't say what I wanted him to say. But that's not my job to say what people want to hear. Right? My job is to tell them what they need to hear and what is useful, which comes down to the Greek word, kindness. I'm to be kind in my preaching by telling the truth, just like you're to be kind in your relationships with your children, which is not perpetual agreeability. But it is to be kind to go out of my way to accomplish good in their lives. We've seen that already in the word love, but let's look at it here in the idea of kindness, which I think is perfectly illustrated in Deuteronomy 22 verses 1 through 4.

He says, "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray and ignore them." You can't ignore the animal that's just running around. Right? "Well, that's your problem. You should've really had a better fence on your farm, you know. I wish you'd keep a better rein on your animals." No. If you see that, you can't ignore it. Here's the biblical ethic of kindness. "You shall take them back to your brother. And if he doesn't live near you," note this very carefully in verse 2, if he does not live near you and you do not know who he is," well then forget about it. Underline that phrase, "forget about it." Do you see that there, interactive eight o'clock crowd? That's not there because you're not supposed to forget about it.

Here, in other words, we've added a layer, OK, if you see them and you go, "Oh, that's Jim's ox, I better get it back to him. But I don't know whose ox it is," or, you know, "it's somebody from a long ways away, I see a little brand here on his hind quarter and that guy lives, oh, man, that's a half-hour walk from here." "If he doesn't live near you and you do not know who he is, you shall bring it home to your house and it shall stay with you." Now, think about that. If I take your ox to my house, guess what? Your ox is going to be before noon, hungry. And then I feed him. And you what happens when you feed animals? I was just with animals in Texas this week. It's the other end of their body that produces more problems. I'm thinking to myself, this is problematic. This is costly. This is going the extra mile. I'm thinking its really bummer to be you because you didn't keep track of your animal. I'm super sorry that your animal got so far away. And the Bible says no. If he didn't live near you, if you don't know who he is, you should bring it to your house. "It shall stay with you until your brother seeks it. Then you shall restore it to him."

Hey, and if you just think I'm concerned about ox and sheep, verse 3, "You should do the same with his donkey or his garment, or a thing lost of your brother's, which he loses and you find it; you may not ignore it." Well there's so-and-so's hat, there' so-and-so's bible, there's so-and-so's whatever. If I work hard to get that back to you, I hope you're going to say, "That was kind of you to do that." That's the standard of the Christian life. That's the standard of followers of God, because that's the kind of God that we have. Verse 4, "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore it." They need help. There's a flat tire. "You shall help him lift them up again."

Now, real quickly, we're not far from it, but you've got that in your mind. Right? Clearly in your mind. Go back to Exodus 23, the second book of the Old Testament, Exodus 23. We see this and you think, "OK, I guess that's good. I mean, I can see kind of working toward that. I can resolve to go the extra mile. I'm going to purpose to go the extra mile more often. It's for their good. It's useful. It's going to be helpful. I'm going to try to be kind." Look at Exodus 23, drop down to verse 4. "If you meet your enemy's ox (oh no!) or his donkey going astray...." Well, then good deal. It's your enemy. You don't have to do anything about it. "You shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving it with him; you shall rescue it with him." Wow. I've got to do this now to people who don't like me.

Do you see the struggle that kindness brings to our lives? Going the extra mile regardless of who it is, regardless of what I think they think about me, that's going to take more compassion. That's going to take more work. That's going to take more thought. Jesus was compassionate because he put himself in their shoes. He said in Matthew 9, "These people are like sheep without a shepherd. They're helpless and harassed." They don't have what they need. He thinks about that. The woman at the well in John 4, here she is, she's needing truth. She's needing correction. And they're saying, "Jesus, you need lunch. Eat." And he says, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." I'm going to help in this situation. I'm going to do what the essence of the word kindness originally meant. I'm going to be useful right now, which is not satisfying what I want with lunch, it's helping this woman in her life. That's going the extra mile and it takes putting myself in their shoes. It's being more thoughtful.

When Joseph in Genesis 40 was in prison and you remember the cupbearer had the dream and Joseph interprets it and he gets out. He says something to him in verse 14, he says, "Listen, would you please do me the kindness of remembering me when you get out." And you remember how that went. Right? He wasn't kind. Why? Because when he got back to his old digs and he got his old job back, he got in his good clothes, he got a good shower, and he was back to eating the way he used to, and he was in a position of privilege and all that, he didn't remember to be kind. Which, by the way, look up that phrase in your Bible software "to remember to be kind." We have to think about it. It has to be a thoughtful process of putting myself in their shoes and saying, well, even though I'm not in any way prompted to think about their need, I'm going to work and thoughtfully think about it.

There's a great word in the Greek New Testament, "Kataphreneo," and it means I've got to "Kata" - "down." I have to think down. "Phreneo" - "to think." I'm going to give it some focused thought.



When I use the word purpose to go the extra mile, I mean mentally purpose to do that. By thinking. By feeling. It's the compassion. It's the thoughtfulness. And it's not trying to keep score. Do you remember that great line in First Corinthians Chapter 13, that "love keeps no record of wrongs?" You know that verse. Well, it also keeps no record of rights. Matter of fact, when it says love is kind, the whole point of that phrase is that I'm willing to go the extra mile even if I don't see that reciprocated. Jesus says if you're kind to people who are kind to you, what credit is that to you? Kindness is something, if it's biblical kindness, that just like God is kind and merciful even to sinners. And that's a struggle. I get that, because number three on your outline, if we're thinking logically and biblically through this, you're going to have to fight your temptations to be unkind. "Fight Your Temptations To Be Unkind."

I roll into a New Braunfels and start taking some video for you, which we'll show you. It's some great scenes in the hill country of Texas. In the first, I mean, this is the first time I have been there and gotten out of my car and shooting a little video in a big box parking lot where there are like 120 stores. As we're there shooting some video, this Panera Bread worker comes out with her BLM mask on and she's just ready to cause trouble. I'm shooting video away from Panera. I have no interest in taking pictures of Panera. She wants to know what in the world I'm doing out here. "I just... I'm shooting some video".

Well, my first greeting from a New Braunfels person included a lot of profanity that I haven't heard in a while. It immediately reminded me how much we need a Bible-teaching church in the hill country of Texas. As I'm trying to study for a sermon on kindness between things that I'm doing out there, I'm thinking right now I have to fight my temptation to be unkind. I'm fairly good with my mouth in retorts and responses. I had a few that were loaded up. And of course, the temptation I have is to be involved in a situation much like we just read about in Exodus. That is me giving you in response to what you're giving me and that's not certainly going to be kind. That's the challenge of the flesh.

If you look through the list of the flesh expressions of the flesh in Galatians 5, you'll see a lot of words. There's no direct parallel to the word kindness, but there are lots that are certainly contrary to it. The kinds of angers, the fits of rage, the rivalries, the outbursts, the dissension. We don't want to be kind when people are not kind to us. So I think the first thing we need to do is to recognize that when I am, as it says in Romans, cursed, I need to learn to say I'm going to try to work by having God's perspective in being one who blesses when I'm cursed, which is tremendously hard and we fail at it every day I understand. While I didn't use any profanity, I probably didn't do as well as it could have done in the situation, just like we all are hit with the challenge. What do I say? What do I do? As First Peter 3 says, I am called to receive a blessing and God is blessing me and therefore I need to work at giving a blessing even to those who are giving me curses. That's an extreme, obvious example, a literal example of that passage. But there are a lot of categorical examples of that, just even how people treat me. That person hates me, I'm not going to go the extra mile for that person.

We have to fight the temptation to be reactive. Fighting fire with fire. It certainly reminds us that in Scripture, the Bible, in terms of kindness, is always something that is released, it's enabled because I know there's a God who's keeping track of all the bad stuff. I have a Father in heaven



and in Romans 12, it says, remember that it is his to give revenge, not yours. So let's just let him deal with that justice part when it comes to personal insults and let God deal with that. You just deal with doing the thing that I've asked you to do, which is to be kind like I am in so many situations. Matter of fact, we need to overcome evil with good.

Matter of fact, that passage, I won't make you turn there because I don't have the time, but in Romans Chapter 12, there's a little line in there which people struggle with, and that is when you're kind to those who are mean to you, there's the paraphrase, it says it's like putting burning coals on their head. Have you ever wondered about that passage? What is that about? I mean, it sounds like that's just kind of your passive-aggressive way to be vindictive. Is that what this passage is about? No. If you've ever wondered about that passage it might be helpful to jot down Proverbs Chapter 25 verse 15. It says, "With patience a ruler can be persuaded." Because the thing about rulers is, as it says elsewhere in Scripture, "it's the poor who bring many entreaties. But it's the rich who answer harshly." I mean, they're not much into placating or negotiating because they have all the power. And it says, but if you are patient, you can even persuade a ruler with all the power and "a soft tongue can break a bone."

See, the end of the passage in Romans 12 is that you can overcome evil with good. You can overcome the bad situation with your kindness by being good. How do you do that? Well, you remember this. The power of kindness, as it says throughout the Scripture, a soft answer can turn away wrath. It can diffuse a situation. Even something as rigid and hard as a bone within your leg. Right? The soft word, the soft answer can break that. You can take a stiff-necked person and you can win them over. We're just talking about it this morning. An angry, you know, examples that have taken place recently, and to say the kindness and the kind, gentle response can just diffuse all that. It can be like coals on the head of a person that just melts them. The power of us being kind in a world and in a situation where there is so much anger and vitriol and cursing, God can bring so much good into even those situations. And if he doesn't, you can be assured he says this, "Don't worry, it's mine to repay. God is the judge. I'll take care of the inequities. You just worry about the kindness in this situation."

Which again, doesn't mean perpetual agreeability. But you should know your triggers. You should know the problems. You should understand this one thing. As long as I quoted Proverbs 18:23 that the rich answer roughly. The reason people don't have kindness is they feel they don't need it in certain situations and they think they don't need it because they think they have all the advantages. All I'm saying is every time Jesus looks at people who are harsh in Scripture, he reminds them, you're not in charge, whether it's Nebuchadnezzar or whether it's Pharaoh or whether it's the harsh masters of Colossians 4:1, he says, don't be harsh. You don't need to be unkind because you need to remember you have a master in heaven and it's the same master as the people who are working for you. You are not the king. You are not in charge. You are not the monarch. Even though you might be responsible as someone having derived authority in an organization or a company, you still have to be kind.

So humility is ultimately the safeguard in me knowing that I can fight my temptations to be unkind. It's going to happen with humility. There is so much in Scripture related to that. I've got a ton here on my notes, but I won't give you all those. But if you'll look for it, look for the



connection between humility and kindness in Scripture. Those go together. I cannot be kind without the proper perspective of who I am. The acerbic, harsh, unkind words. They're part of our pride.

Lastly, our time goes so quickly. But jot this down if you would. You need to "Never See Kindness As Extra Credit." I'll give you the point before I give you the biblical proof but it's all over the Scripture. We are to be kind because God has been kind to us. Much like forgiveness, it is owed because we've received so much more than we could ever give. In Job Chapter 6 verse 14, it's a good statement, it's a biblical statement that can be supported elsewhere in Scripture, it says, "He who withholds kindness," speaking here of those around me, "from a friend is forsaking the fear of the Almighty." I've lost track of who God is when I am not perpetually engaged in a resolve to be kind. In other words, I have a responsibility that has nothing to do with the recipient of my kindness this week.

Just like Mephibosheth, which is a great passage if I had time, we would look at Second Samuel Chapter 9, when David is being kind to Mephibosheth. Do you remember that name? He was a paraplegic who was related to Jonathan. David says, "Who can I be kind to for Jonathan's sake?" And they say, "Well, there is Mephibosheth. I mean, he's not going to be much to draft into your Royal Academy or to be an adviser or someone productive in your royal court. But there is a guy who is related." And he says, "Fine. Bring him here. And he sat him at his table and he ate like a prince for the rest of his life in a privileged position, not because he earned it, but because he was related to Jonathan. David said, "I want to do a kindness to Jonathan and I can't directly serve Jonathan because he's dead." And you and I can't be kind to the Lord. There's nothing... we can't serve him by human hands Acts Chapter 17 says, all I can do is be kind to his children. So acts of kindness, our responsibility we have because we fear the Lord and have been recipients of this. I already quoted to you that the word hessed in the Old Testament that has that idea of a covenant commitment is the word that is translated so often kindness. The point is, it is an obligation. It is a loyal obligation. I have to be kind.

When we talk about duty like that, I know some of you go "groan." "It's one thing if you want me just to produce, you know, strawberries. But now you've got me producing oranges and lemons and grapefruits and avocado. I can't keep track of all this stuff." Well, it will feel like a long drudgery and to-do list unless you learn to love these things. I love that phrase, speaking of love in Micah Chapter 6 verse 8. It's a famous passage. Micah 6:8. Do you remember this? It says, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what the Lord requires of you." Do you remember what he says? Three things. To "do justice, to love kindness," sometimes translated mercy. The kindness that I'm supposed to give to you. "And to walk humbly before God." There's that juxtaposition again, of humility and kindness.

I want to learn to love kindness. I want to learn to love it because there's a great product that comes from it. Final verse I'll have you jot down Proverbs 11. Proverbs 11 verse 17 says, "A man who is kind benefits himself." I went to the Hill country, got to visit some former Compass Bible Church members out there and they have a farm. Now, they don't need a farm because they got Costco they can drive to, but they have one. They can buy eggs at the corner market, but they have a chicken coop. It's a big chicken coop and there are pesky little chickens running around



that I walked into the coop and spent some time with. They got goats. They got cows. I got to feed a cow, which I haven't done lately. A lesson to myself.

But I reached out, fed the cow, got cow slobber all over my hands. I'm thinking to myself, why do you do this? Now, of course, the former Compass Bible Church members, Orange County people do it because they find some pleasure in it and it brings them joy and it's a good thing and, you know, they like it. I don't fully understand it, but they do it. But back in the day, if you're raising chickens and goats and you've got cows it's because you, I mean, you survive on these things. It's sustenance for you. I think to myself that that is something when you're going out there doing the work, knowing that these things you get from it, whether it's milk or meat or eggs or whatever it is, you're providing things that you'll sit back with a full belly and you'll say this was a good thing. When you invest in those things, you got something good. It was satisfying to you. When the Bible says you invest in producing the crop of kindness, you're just being good to yourself.

Now, I understand the first week we talked about the Fruit of the Spirit, we said this is a vineyard that God is producing fruit for him. He loves righteous deeds. But the good news is the recipient of all the Fruit of the Spirit of the people in my sphere of influence, and not only that, the things that happen in my life as I engage in producing the fruit that God has called me to. Is it easy? It's hard. I know it's getting overwhelming now. Love, joy, peace, patience and now kindness. That's a lot for us to focus on. But God wants to produce it as we learn to love those things and we learn to love the fruit of those things. The Bible says that the tongue is something that we will eat the fruit of, our own words, our own mouth, our own actions. "A man who is kind benefits himself," here's the next verse, "And the one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward."

Breaking up the fallow ground of an angry heart, a bitter heart, an acerbic vocabulary, a meanness in your actions, your hard-nosed persona, whatever it might be, that makes you an unkind person, a retaliatory person, a person who is pugnacious or fights back, I think you need to realize there's great fruit and benefit in us pursuing the things that God has called us to. In particular, this week, as Proverbs 11 verse 17 says, if you're kind, trust me, you're going to have a better week. So I release you as a church this week and commission you to go out there and reflect the Fruit of the Spirit - kindness. It's not perpetual agreeability. It's concern for holiness and righteousness. But it's going the extra mile in every area of your life, fighting the temptation of your flesh and recognizing what good God brings from this as we fulfill our loving obligation to God by being kind Christians.

Let's pray together. God, it's hard for us in a world filled with increasing hostility where it seems like now more than ever people are so mean, so angry, so retaliatory, so vengeful. And yet, God, we're called to be your people which doesn't mean we bend to everyone's opinion. We don't take polls to figure out what we believe or what we stand for. It doesn't mean we let people run into the spiritual street, into traffic without stopping them and sometimes sitting them down, even as David saw it as a kind of verbal punch in the face. Sometimes we do that, of course, because in kindness we care for people. But God, whether it's helping someone who is in need with their "ox straying," that needs to be returned and it's a long way away and it's going to cost me to be kind, I pray that we be willing to do that because we've learned to love kindness and walk humbly with you. God, we love justice. There's the one side of it we want to love kindness. And of course, we



want to love walking humbly with you in our Christian life, which is really the ultimate joy, having a harmonious relationship with you. Thanks for last week's sermon. The reminder of the root of our fruit is our relationship with you. Let that be cultivated this week that we might produce more love, more joy, more peace, more patience and more kindness.

In Jesus name. Amen.