**PP Love Is…**

**Part 3-*Love is Kind*, 1 Corinthians 13:4b 9/21-22/2024**

The year was 391AD and a Christian monk by the name of Telemachus was praying in his

garden and sensed God’s voice calling him to go to Rome, and so he did

He arrived during a Roman festival, followed the crowds to the Coliseum where he watched

gladiators stand before the emperor and say, *‘We who are about to die salute you.’*

He realized then that these men were going to fight to the death to entertain the crowds, a

senseless loss of life

He could not be silent and cried out, *‘In the name of Christ stop!’* but no one would listen

As the gladiators began to fight, he jumped over the wall to the sandy floor, and stood between

the gladiators, pleading for the bloody games to stop, to end the loss of life

The crowds erupted in laughs then jeers then anger, pelting him with fruit and stones

One of the gladiators, to please the crowds, slammed his battle ax into the monk’s skull and as

the faithful saint fell to the ground lifeless, an eerie hush came over the arena

Soundlessly, people began to trickle out, until they all left without a word

That was the last time gladiators battled to death in a Roman Coliseum

Agape love is God’s love, other-focused love, love that seeks to be demonstrated in kindness, but

today, this virtue is nearly missing in both the world and unfortunately the church

Paul is showing us what the ***still more excellent life*** of love is, and kindness is our virtue today

What is kindness, what are its effects, and how can we grow in it?

**PP 1-What did Paul mean, *‘love is kind’***

Agape love is best seen and experienced in action, not just defined by a dictionary, so Paul gave

 each of these 15 virtues is a verb in the Greek tense for ongoing, habitual action

In fact, all 15 virtues of love that Paul gives in this chapter are verbs, actions words, and the

Greek tense for each is ongoing and continuous, habitual, constant

You probably have a picture come to mind when you think of kindness, someone who smiles a

lot, never ruffles the feathers, and gets along with everyone

But interestingly, that is not exactly what Paul had in mind here when he used the word ***kind***

**PP *‘kind’*** is the Greek word, *chresteuomai* (phonetically, khraste-yoo’-om-ahee) and you only

can find the word here in the NT, and it means *useful or helpful kindness*

It is love that demonstrates itself by meeting someone’s needs; compassion in action, merciful

Not just to friends, or others like us, but even enemies, difficult students, coworkers, neighbors

Where patience delays a response to difficult people, giving us time for God to work in that

person and in us, kindness is the response of love to that person

Maybe it is a kind word, or peacefully letting that hurried driver go first at the 4 way intersection,

or not engaging or starting an argument on a chat forum

Kind, useful love, is shown when you gently ask a person to stop gossiping to you about

someone else, a gentle ask for someone to stop slandering someone to you, or providing a

meal to someone in need

It is the willingness to forgive even if the person has not asked for it, or repented with you

***“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.”* Luke 6:35**

Kind love is a readiness to be generous to someone in need, not asking for or expecting a return

It is active goodwill, a willingness to help, it is love dressed for work

Kind love is concerned for the well being of others and willing to help bring it about

Kindness is often love demonstrated with difficult people in difficult situations and what is

needed is to slow down that reaction, that response

It’s not kind to start or continue an angry disagreement on a group forum

It’s not kindness to reject or treat poorly people who don’t hold to our political parties, Christian

ways or cultural views

Neither is it kind to refer to someone by a gender they weren’t born with, or we perpetuate a lie

that holds people in bondage…agape love cannot be compatible with a falsehood

But we do so with love and gentleness, not hatred and arrogance

Kindness helps people, it betters others, and it can have a powerful effect on people and cultures

**PP 2-What are the effects of kindness?**

The 1st century world sacrificed to their pantheon of gods, engaged in immoral pleasure feasts,

entertained by gladiator killings, but the Christian church wouldn’t participate in any of it

In the second century, Christian love was so stunning in the midst of the moral depravity of the

Roman Empire that the Romans began to refer to Christians not as ‘christiani’ but

‘chrestinai’, *those made up of kindness*

There were medical doctors then, but they treated people in their homes and often they were so

called traveling experts going from town to town trying to outrun their costly failures

But there were no hospitals until the 4th century AD when Christians began organizing and

running homes for the sick, for lepers

A Roman father would be presented with his newborn baby, and if he stuck his thumb up, the

baby was accepted into his care, thumbs down, it was exposed, meaning the baby would

either be drowned in a river, or left on a public building’s steps to die if the gods willed

It was the Christians that began rescuing these babies and the Christians who began orphanages

All this happened when Christianity was illegal and they were persecuted for it

The useful kindness of the church changed the Roman Empire who would look at Christians and

commonly proclaim, *“See how they love one another!”*

In an early 2nd century manuscript, the writer explained[[1]](#footnote-0): **PP** *“Christians are indistinguishable*

*from other men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate*

*cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life…”*

The manuscript, preserved in remarkable clarity, went on: **PP** *“And yet there is something*

*extraordinary about their lives…Like others, they marry and have children, but they do*

*not expose them. They share their meals, but not their wives. They live in the flesh, but*

*they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but*

*they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends*

*the law. Christians love all men, but all men persecute them…They live in poverty, but*

*enrich many; they are totally destitute, but possess an abundance of everything. They*

*suffer dishonor, but that is their glory. They are defamed, but vindicated.”*

The manuscript is called, the Epistle to Diognetus*,* and it went on to explain how the Christians

shocked the Romans: **PP** *“A blessing is their answer to abuse, deference their response*

*to insult. For the good they do they receive the punishment of malefactors, but even then*

*they rejoice, as though receiving the gift of life…Christians love those who hate them…it*

*is by the Christians, detained in the world as in a prison, that the world is held together.”*

**PP 3-How can we grow in kindness?**

***“Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.”***

**Proverbs 21:21**

Let me offer two tips that can enable you to grow in kindness

**PP i. *Pursue a life of kindness by pursuing Christ***

**PP *“God’s love* [Agape] *has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has***

***been given to us.”* Romans 5:5**

Love spilling out in kindness is produced by the Holy Spirit to make us like Jesus

You have everything you need Christian to do all of what God commands

This happened to the Apostle Paul as well, as he said to the church at Philippi, **PP *“I yearn for***

***you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 1:8**

The affection that Jesus had for them, had become Paul’s affection and this is what happens in

us as we pursue kindness by walking with the Holy Spirit: He changes our hearts

**PP iii. *Stir your affections by filling your eyes with Christ***

In the motorcycling world, there is a saying that goes, *Your bike goes where your eyes aim*

As you immerse yourself in the Word of God, seeing Jesus and His beauty, the Holy Spirit begins

changing your desires, affections and motivations…so let’s do that as we close

Notice how Jesus looked at the hungry crowds with compassion and fed them

Watch Him walk to the begging blind man and heal him, even as others told the man to shut up

See His gaze settle on the hated Jewish tax collector Levi, and call him to a changed life

Look at our gasping, dying crucified Savior, Who looked down at His crying mother and

commanding His disciple John standing near her to care for her needs…useful love

See His kindness on Galilee’s shores as He encouraged Peter who had denied Him three times

Listen to His kindness as He rebuked the Pharisees’ hypocrisy, giving them opportunity to repent

Watch Him pour out saving mercy as He called the Christian-killing Saul to repentance

Feel His tenderness with the adulterous woman as He forgave her and called to a life of purity

Feel His compassionate touch as the leper did as Jesus reached out to heal the diseased man

Look at Jesus tenderly take the hand of a dead girl and bring her back to life

Friends, fill your minds with Jesus, behold Him, look at Him displaying useful love, kindness,

and know that the Spirit of God lives in you in order to make you just like Him

If you know you are not kind, then ask God to make you kind, let His power change your heart

When you realize that something you did or said wasn’t kind, repent, make it right if you can

with that person or people, and fill your eyes with Jesus so that His life can become yours

Pray

1. https://aleteia.org/2018/04/17/this-is-how-christians-lived-in-the-2nd-century [↑](#footnote-ref-0)