

MIGHTY KIND, MIGHTY GOOD

Job 10:8-12; Mark 10:17-18; Galatians 5:22-23

INTRODUCTION

He was sitting in a pile of dirt at the landfill. He was in intense physical pain from a hideous skin condition that had come upon him suddenly. No prescription, ointment, or home remedy worked except that he found a sharp edge of a piece of a clay pot that had broken off at the landfill. He would scrape his puss-filled oozing sores with that edge of the clay pot and find momentary relief. But that was not the worst of his pain.

His vast business empire had been destroyed by enemies. All of his investments and assets were wiped away in a single well-orchestrated attack. But that was not the worst of his pain.

His children – all his sons and daughters – had all been killed in a natural disaster – a wind, or an earthquake, or... it didn't make sense! Nothing could replace them. His wife – no doubt in throes of her own grief – turned her back on him, leaving him at the landfill to die. Now he had nothing and no one. That was the worst of his pain.

He was joined by three friends who sat and, each in their own way, accused him of doing something wrong. "Surely, you did something horrible to cause God to punish you like this!"

Sitting at the landfill with self-righteous friends, he realized he had no one to turn to except God Himself. So, Job begins to recount what God has done for him:

- Shaping him and molding him like clay.
- Into that clay pot pouring his insides.
- Knitting that milky curd together with bones and sinews. And then...
- Giving Job life and showing him KINDNESS.

The kindness of God is a wonderful truth. In Job's day, God's people knew it as *hesed* (Hebrew word on slide) and it was God's everlasting, covenant lovingkindness. **Stubborn and fierce, *hesed* wasn't going anywhere nor would it leave God's people alone. And *hesed* reveals the heart of God: a heart of goodness.**

Psalm 34:8 – "Taste and see that the Lord is good! Those who take refuge in Him are blessed!"

[FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control]

REVIEW:

1. We must turn to the Holy Spirit for the strength to live the life God has designed for us. The world, the flesh, and the devil stand against this kind of Spirit-empowerment, but God is stronger, and His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life.
2. The fruit of love is essential to the work of the Holy Spirit, and gives credibility to other works of the Spirit. Through love the Holy Spirit gives, we can more fully embrace God's love for us, embody love in our relationships and expand our role in building God's kingdom.
3. Joy from the Holy Spirit gives us a permanence and grounding that circumstantial happiness cannot. We find joy from salvation, from participating in God's work, and from investing ourselves in others. From the testimony of Robert who had cerebral palsy we learned that God has given us everything we need for joy.
4. And last week we discovered that peas and carrots... I mean peace and patience... Peace and patience can lead us into deeper relationships, help us cope with pain, and teach us the depth of God's love and power, all to transform our lives and through us our world in powerful ways.

GRANDMA SERMON

So today we get to look at snapshots of kindness and goodness... if you look it up in a dictionary you'll probably see a picture of your Grandma.

- Kindness (Cree-sto-tays)... is compassion in action (CIA)... [Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:7]*
- Goodness (a-ga-thos-nyee)... holiness in action.
- Both must come from the heart... authenticity. Just like Grandma.

In Galatians 5, the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us a list of opposites. In v 17 he says that the sinful nature and the Spirit of God are enemies, and that evidences of the sinful nature are as follows (starting at v. 19): sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. It seems that kindness and goodness don't fit in this list... *kind* idolatry? *Good* selfish ambition? Hmmm....

GOODNESS OF GOD: MARK 10:17-18

Only God is good. Jesus was identifying Himself with God, but He was also proclaiming truth about God. God is good all the time and all the time God is good. He is the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness or shifting shadows. God is good. Goodness is not God. God defines goodness, and God is good.

WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF KINDNESS AND GOODNESS?

1. Undeserved. The recipient doesn't deserve the kindness and goodness shown to them.
2. Fair, yet merciful. In other words, there is an account to be paid. Kindness and Goodness recognize that the deficit is there, and then cover it anyway.
3. Generous.
4. Sacrificial.
5. Relational
 - a. You can give good and kind gifts to people, and that's wonderful, but you can't be good and kind to someone you don't know.
 - b. Word of caution: sometimes it's easy to allow yourself to be drained by goodness and kindness. Consider...
 - i. If you feel drained: how much time have I spent in prayer lately? Do I need to prayerfully back away from the drain and set some time aside alone with God in private to recharge batteries?
 - ii. One thing that I'm good at is expressing goodness and kindness over there, and then not expressing it right here, yet the people here need it as much as the people "over there."
 - iii. Is the impact you're making on those closest to you full of goodness and kindness? Just as a stone in a lake makes the biggest impact on those closest, so do you! See, you can have a great ripple effect in doing that... and that, I must confess, is what I need to work on the most.
 - c. Kindness and Goodness are relational in that they must be fueled by the relationship with the Holy Spirit... and that is nurtured through prayer, worship, reading and meditating on the Scriptures, and being quiet before God. Priorities are important or this will quickly become about us and not about God.

HOW CAN KINDNESS AND GOODNESS CHANGE YOU?

1. Inside... like peace and patience, kindness and goodness start within and are expressed by words and actions.
2. When somebody wrongs you, what do you think? Now... go ahead and condemn yourself for a natural response of "why you! I can't believe you did that!" And let's move beyond those moments... cuz your feelings are your feelings... it's how you THINK about them and what you DO about them that determine whether you're living God's best for you or not. So let's get past the initial emotional reaction and talk about what happens next... do you harbor the negative feelings that you feel or do you hear a voice inside you that encourages you to put your feet in their shoes? Do you hear a voice inside you that reminds you that we're all humans and as such, imperfect? Do you hear a voice

encouraging you to love an unloveable person? Do you hear a voice inside you that is telling you to seek reconciliation over revenge?

HOW CAN KINDNESS AND GOODNESS CHANGE THE WORLD?

... ACTS OF RANDOM KINDNESS – how are kindness and goodness expressed?

- *Investing in others*
- *Finding people in need and humbly helping, regardless of whether or not they deserve it.*
- *Generously giving to God*
- *(Interesting that these expressions of kindness and goodness in return build our joy in the Spirit... this is a victorious cycle...)*

What do Kindness and Goodness look like the most?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a man who was good... so good that he could not tolerate Hitler and where Hitler was taking Germany and Germans immediately prior to and during the Second World War. One of Bonhoeffer's first assignments as an ordained pastor was a confirmation class in Wedding, North Berlin. This group of rough and rowdy boys, Bonhoeffer was convinced, brought on the demise of his elderly predecessor who died suddenly upon his retirement. Bonhoeffer transformed this mob of boys born on the other side of the track into a group of young men who each had a living, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He did this through kind words and behavior, giving them Christmas gifts, moving into their neighborhood, and spending time with each boy individually.

But beyond Grandma and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, kindness and goodness look like the One who left the comforts of heaven for your neighborhood. They look like the One who took your cross and died your death so that you could know the grace and forgiveness of God. They look like Jesus Christ. Amen.