



We are on our second week of #BeKind.

If you haven't started reading the #BeKind Bible reading plan – get started today. Take a few minutes before you go to sleep and read and reflect on the first reading.

If you have been reading – keep it up! God is speaking words of kindness and blessings into your lives.

Some of you have also been working through the 30 ways to #BeKind. I'm excited for you to share your stories tonight. If you haven't started yet...today is the best day to begin!

Last week we looked at some examples of kindness from my life. We also set up a framework for what kindness is and what it is not.

This week and the next two weeks, we are going to look at examples of kindness from the Bible and how to apply these examples to our lives today.

The story I'm about to tell you is a story about history's most well-known unnamed person.

Jesus had just responded to the question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

He answers a question with a question. Don’t you hate when people do that?

“What does the Law say?”

The guy says something like:

Love God. With all your heart and soul and strength and mind. And love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Jesus says: “You got it. Do those things and you are good to go.”

But the man said,

“Just for clarification purposes, Jesus, can you remind me just who my neighbor actually is?”

This time Jesus doesn’t respond with a question. He responds with a story.

**A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.”  
–Luke 10:30**

Jericho is about 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

You go down. Jerusalem is 2500 feet. Jericho is 800 feet. It’s a tough trip. The downhill trek takes its toll on your legs.

They didn't have Casey's back then and the water stops were few and far between. Thieves and thugs had plenty of places to hide. It was best not to take the trip solo.

This traveller did and he paid for it. The thugs beat him up. Took his money. Took his clothes. And just left him there.

**By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. -Luke 10:31**

The priest would have been a Jew. The man lying on the road was one of his people. He didn't even stop and check on him.

It's easy to criticize the priest. I used to do that a lot. Until I realized I've been the priest.

My first church was in northwest Iowa. A man in his late 70s would come to church each week. He was funny and friendly and appeared very healthy.

But to his surprise and all of our surprise, he wasn't. He ended up in the hospital. Eventually made it home.

He wasn't able to make it to church anymore. I'd drive by his house most days. The inner door was always open. I'm guessing it was his way of inviting anybody to come and chat.

I always had some reason not to stop.

I was busy. Had a one-year-old son. A big, goofy two-year-old dog. And a church that was over 100 years-old.

All three of them were giving me problems.

Sometimes I thought: “Maybe it’s not a good time”

Other times I thought: “There is always tomorrow.”

One day I got a phone call and heard there would not be a tomorrow. He died and I would be doing a funeral.

So I would drive by his house and realize I was the priest who passed the traveller.

**A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. –Luke 10:32**

You’ve had missed opportunities as well.

An opportunity to practice kindness and you passed by on the other side of the road.

Checking up on the buddy that didn’t make the sports team.

Listening to the co-worker going through a tough time.

Not tapping into your excess resources to help somebody with no resources.

Judging your child for failing instead of supporting them and using it as a learning opportunity.

Whatever it is...all of us have passed up opportunities for kindness.

Enter the Good Samaritan. History’s most well-known unnamed person.

Here are a few things we learn from him.

## 1. Compassion is the birth of kindness.

Compassion is a characteristic of God.

We are created in God's image.

Us – at our best – we are compassionate.

**Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. –Luke 10:33**

He is a Samaritan.

These were the bad guys.

The Samaritans and the Jews didn't get along.

It's like this.

A Husker football fan was travelling from Omaha to Lincoln on Highway 6.

He was beat up and robbed.

A Husker donor saw him and passed him by.

Another Husker fan did the same.

An Iowa Hawkeye fan saw the Husker fan and had compassion.

I see the face of the Samaritan.

It is a face of compassion.

Compassion has nothing to do with affinity.

Race, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class...compassion is blind to such things.

Compassion has nothing to do with affinity.

Compassion has everything to do with our humanity.

Therefore:

**Kindness has nothing to do with affinity.  
Kindness has everything to do with our humanity.**

Frederick Buechner says:

**Compassion is feeling what it's like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is not experiencing peace and joy until others experience peace and joy.**

So here is the best way to be compassionate.

Do kindness.

If you feel compassion – do kindness.

If you don't feel compassion – do kindness.

The best way to get the feeling is to do the related activity.

Kindness, at its best, is a verb.

It's something you do that naturally flows out of who you are.

Compassion leads us to kindness and

## **2. Kindness is giving your available resources.**

Kindness isn't about the size of the act of grace.

It is us giving our available resources.

**Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. –Luke 10:34**

He used what he had.

A little olive oil and some wine.  
He put him on his donkey.  
He gave his time and energy.  
He practiced kindness.

We are United Methodists.  
Our founder John Wesley lived in the UK in the 1700s

He was kind.  
He was well-to-do too.  
Not because he was a pastor—that's not how it happens.  
He sold a lot of books.

His kindness led him to give to churches, orphanages, schools, and hospitals. The kindness of one man that started a worldwide movement.

Perhaps Wesley's most well-known, pieced-together quote:

**Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.**

Kindness is giving away, in love, your available resources.

### **3. Kindness expects nothing in return.**

If you expect something in return, that is an investment.  
Kindness expects nothing in return. It is a gift.

**The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, “Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.” –Luke 10:35**

So the Good Samaritan pulls up in his Dodge Dart to the Motel 6. Pays the bills for a week or so. Makes an IOU if the bill runs higher. And then goes on his way.

He expected nothing in return.

**The purest form of kindness is when you do something for somebody with no expectation of anything in return.**

You should do this today. Or tomorrow. Or both.

A while back, we were out to eat. It was one of those gourmet burger places where they put things like brussel sprouts and feta cheese on your burgers. It was crowded. The boys were wanting to go. So I asked for the check. The server said it had already been taken care of by another customer. David then asked: “Does that mean we can have dessert now too?”

The coolest thing about this kindness is that it was given with absolutely no expectation of me repaying them.

#### **4. Kindness is God’s dream for our lives.**

I have dreams for Benjamin and David.

Over the years, I have been trying to make those dreams less specific and more general.

So they aren't about a sports team they will play on.  
Or winning the national championship in debate.  
Or going to a certain college.  
Or being a certain occupation.

The dreams are that they treat people well.  
That they have a few people who are their people.  
People they can always turn to.  
That they set meaningful goals and achieve those goals.  
That they are kind to others and themselves.

Our loving heavenly parent wants the same for us!

Jesus asks a question to the experts in the law:

**“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.” -Luke 10:36-37**

Jesus says it.

Go and do the same.  
Be kind.

It's amazing advice he gives.

Be kind.

As I look back on my life I can't think of a single time I regret being kind. Be kind with your words, your resources, your time and energy, your skills, and your life.

There are a lot of stranded travelers who lie on the road waiting for travelers.

The new kid at school who sits by herself at lunch.

The man who lives in an assisted living facility.

The driver stuck in traffic.

The kid who is being bullied.

The parent who misses their child.

The child who misses their parent.

The person whose responsibilities exceed their resources.

The overworked, unappreciated teacher.

The stressed out clerk in the grocery store.

The man having a bad day.

The woman with low self-esteem.

Somebody struggling in a social setting.

**Every sunrise is God's invitation to emerge from rest and practice kindness.**

Now go and be kind!

...

I want to repeat what I said last week.

The most important part of your small group hasn't happened yet.

It is about ready to happen.

It is not my teaching.

It is the small group discussion.

I encourage you to listen to the stories and experiences of others.

I encourage you to share your stories and experiences.

Ask questions.

Be real and authentic.

Support each other.

Encourage one another.

Be kind to each other.

Grow in your relationships with God and each other.

Have a great discussion, and I'll see you next week!