

July 26th, 2020
Luke 6:27-36

Kindness matters. We all want to be the recipients of kindness and we're all certainly interested in reaping the benefits when we extend it. I mean, it does the heart good to do a kind thing for someone else. Kind people tend to have meaningful relationships, they're appreciated, and have a greater chance for experience happiness in this life. It's good to be kind! But what if there's a better way? What if there's a kindness that doesn't just make this life more beautiful but secures a beautiful life to come? And, what if our way of kindness isn't as pure as we like to think it is? What we learn from Jesus is that the intentional kindness of heaven in Jesus compels us to be the intentional kindness of Heaven to the world.

In Luke 6:27-36 Jesus speaks about the impact that Heavenly Kindness has on the world – but he also acknowledges that we all haven't recognized and received it yet. He describes Heavenly Kindness as unnatural – in deed, word, and prayer. He says that Heavenly Kindness does good to those who hate you, blesses and encourages those who curse you, and prayers for those who mistreat you. How amazing? How mysterious! Heavenly Kindness is certainly different than our own. Jesus goes on to explain why.

In verses 32-34 we learn that Worldly Kindness is self-centered and manipulative. Worldly Kindness is about promoting the individual good, rather than the good of Heaven. That's the fundamental difference – Heavenly Kindness is others-oriented, for the glory of God, and is connected to everlasting joy. Worldly Kindness is self-centered, for the glory of self, and lasts for but a moment.

Jesus closes the passage by teaching us how to embrace Heavenly Kindness. He opens the section with the phrase "love your enemies", the second time he's said it in a matter of minutes. The word love, used in verse 27 and in verse 35 is the Greek word *agape*. It's a kind of love that is committed, willful, and not circumstantial. It's a serious kind of love. By using the word and the phrase again at the end of the passage what we learn is that Jesus is committed to loving His enemies. Who are his enemies? Simply stated – those who stand in opposition to God. As sinful people, we are the enemies of God. But look at how God has treated us? He's treated us with Heavenly Kindness by serving us and making a way for us to become children of God in Jesus! If we're to embrace Heavenly Kindness we first have to embrace Jesus as Heaven's kindness to us. Jesus goes on and says that we must love with *agape* love – a willful love. We must take action and embrace *good* deeds towards others. And he says that we must serve others by freely *lending* to them.

Heaven has loved us unconditional, has shown us kindness and goodness by taking action, and served us by freely offering salvation through Jesus. It's in this reality that we find hope and strength. It's in the Holy Spirit that we find the power for spiritual change. It's in Jesus that Heavenly Kindness is displayed and experienced.

Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time you received a random act of kindness and how did it make you feel?
2. Can you recall a time when you did something kind for the wrong reason?
3. Describe a situation where someone treated you poorly but you “turned the other cheek”. Why were you able to do that? Can you share a time when you failed to do so?
4. Which of the three markers of Heavenly Kindness are hardest for you to embrace (Love, Good, Lend) and why?
5. Heavenly Kindness is revealed in Jesus. If you believe this to be true share about the time when you first realized this. How did it make you feel and how did you act in the days that followed?
6. What can you do to remember Heavenly Kindness on a daily basis?
7. How should Heavenly Kindness impact your thoughts, actions, and prayers on a daily basis?
8. How can you share Heavenly Kindness with others in your life currently (Work, Home, Family)?