

DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 8th July 2019)**Read - Ruth 2:1-18**

The story of Ruth can be a captivating story. In this story we discover Boaz. He is an example of what it means to live generously. He was a landowner and he had the means to help. He also understood his responsibility and helped.

In those days the law required that during the harvest enough grain was left in the field for those who were hungry to glean. Boaz went beyond that and instructs that the young men are not to harass Ruth. He goes still further and tells her that she can drink from the water the men have drawn. Boaz even invites Ruth to eat with the harvest gang, and instructs the reapers to help Ruth glean.

Many would argue that he did so because he could. But think again he could also have ignored showing this KINDNESS to Ruth. Something else to note is that Boaz was not acting to fulfil the expectations of others. His motivation was doing what he believed to be right.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, our motivation should not come from a list of outside rules. Instead, we are moulded and shaped by the Holy Spirit. We are guided by the Spirit, and empowered to be God's faithful and obedient servants. We should be natural showers of kindness.

Ruth worked hard to glean, yet showed KINDNESS to Naomi by sharing what she gleaned.

Kindness is the nature of the Spirit in us so we should not think that it needs to be taught or learnt.

Prayer: *Lord forgive my selfish ways and encourage me to be open to showing kindness.*

DAY 2**Read - Ephesians 4:29-32**

Showing kindness to others is not only God's command, but it also is the character of God. Our communities and even the world could use a little more kindness and love.

So we should be showing KINDNESS to others if we believe that we are Christ's ambassadors here on earth. God commands us. We read it – *"be kind and compassionate to one another."* Jesus commands us to love our neighbours. Love for others is not an emotion or a feeling, it is a choice. We choose to love others because God tells us to

Another reason to show kindness is because it is the character of God. God tells us to show KINDNESS to others because that is part of God's wonderful character. God is full of loving kindness toward us. God has forgiven us not because we deserved it. God forgives us for Jesus' sake.

God didn't just tell us He loves us, God proved it. Romans 5:8 says, *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Similarly it's not enough for us to say we love others; we must show it.

It is sad that society dictates and we go with the flow of 'what's in it for me'. Many of us only show KINDNESS to our friends and family...and we should. But one of the reasons we are kind to them is because we want them to be kind to us. But we must also remember that true KINDNESS to others does not expect a reward.

KINDNESS is a selfless act. So it's okay to be kind to family, friends, and fellow church members, but also to focus your kindness on total strangers – those who can't pay you back.

Meditate: *Are my acts of kindness for selfish reasons.*

DAY 3**Read - Luke 10:25-37**

Have you ever been taken out for lunch or dinner with no strings attached? If that happens it would really be good. But people will tell you that there is no such thing as a free lunch. People who take you out either want something from you in return or they want your support for some cause.

We need to be good and kind people. To be honest, most of the time goodness and kindness may cost you something and require sacrifices on your part and that may be the reason folk always want a return on their gesture.

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan when challenged about what needed to be done to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him this parable as to how to love and be kind to one's neighbour.

The basis of this story is not just about some guy who happens to be a good guy and helps a guy who's in trouble. The guy who gets beat up and robbed is from Jerusalem and so are the priest and Levite who choose not to help him. They were literally his real neighbours. But they say no way. They don't show KINDNESS.

But the guy who does help is from the wrong side of the tracks. He's a Samaritan. That's key in the story. Jews and Samaritans hated each other, yet the Samaritan helps the Jew.

Do we seek out who we show KINDNESS to? Or are we prepared to go out of our way to show KINDNESS to anyone?

Prayer: *Lord help me to show kindness to whoever needs it most. Amen*

DAY 4**Read - Ephesians 4:29-32**

Your act of KINDNESS can lead others to do the same. However that should not be your aim. The story is told about a woman who was standing at a bus stop. She had just cashed her tax refund cheque, so she was carrying more money than usual. She glanced around and noticed a shabbily dressed man standing nearby. And as she watched, a man walked up to him and handed him some money. She was so touched by the act of kindness she decided to do the same. In a burst of generosity, she reached into her purse, took out R10, and handed it to the man.

We should be performing our KINDNESS in Jesus' name and not for our own glory!

However we can never have too much kindness, but there needs to be purpose behind our acts of kindness. We need to be deliberate when we perform our acts of kindness. That's why I call these intentional acts of KINDNESS.

Our intentional acts of KINDNESS are to give glory and honour to Jesus Christ, and not to take any credit or honour ourselves. I suggest this because if you perform an act of kindness to someone and don't make some form of statement about why you did it, they are going to give you the credit. They are going to say something like, "You are such a kind, loving person!" The point of our good deeds is to point people to the love of God, to allow Him to get the glory.

Jesus said, *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16)

Prayer: Lord help me find areas where through acts of kindness You receive Glory. Amen

DAY 5**Read - Matthew 5:7; 14-16**

By definition mercy is defined as showing more KINDNESS and love to a person than they deserve. It is a love determined by the state or condition of the person needing mercy, regardless of whether they are worthy or deserving of mercy. Mercy/KINDNESS is a hallmark of Christian behaviour.

By its very nature mercy implies:

1. Generosity
2. Forgiveness
3. Compassion
4. Removal of Wrong
5. Alleviation of Suffering
6. Providing of healing ... The list could go on in this vein.

Now when Jesus was teaching the people on KINDNESS he was not suggesting obligation or even justification.

Our way of thinking about neighbour often is in terms of title. But for Jesus it is about showing KINDNESS irrespective of worth. Being a neighbour the way Jesus would have us be is to care and show love to the most vulnerable in our communities and beyond.

Being a merciful/kind person is seeing the need, seeing the wrong, and being generous in providing what is necessary to heal it.

James 2:13 (NIV) *"... because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!"*

Meditation: Am I vulnerable enough to show acts of kindness to anyone.

DAY 6**Read - 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

When God's people fail to practice kindness, they fail to be God's people. Kindness shows respect for the dignity of man as one who is created in God's image. It is a way of showing reverence to God himself.

It is amazing how cruel and unkind people can be, not just to animals but especially to other people. I saw a video clip which went viral not so long ago about a guy who literally rode over a car guard. All the car guard was trying to tell the guy was that he was going in the wrong direction as it was a one way.

God's word says, *"Love is kind..."* 1 Cor. 13:4

One of the things our 3 yr old granddaughter has come to love doing is picking flowers in our garden. She will make sure that there is one picked for everyone in the family whether they are there or not. I see it as an act of showing kindness. It obviously brings a smile to my face. But I have also come to realise that one does not have to do massive things to show kindness. There are many effortless deeds that one can do.

Our communities are rife with crime, corruption, poverty and so forth. Those are areas where we may not be able to solve the problems but can come alongside those struggling, with acts of kindness.

For example one can help holding a door open for someone coming in after you. Pointing out to someone the lovely shade of lipstick they may be wearing. Being kind and blessing others is a beautiful thing.

Prayer: Lord open my eyes to opportunities for showing and sharing kindness in Your name. Amen