

Kindness

As we continue to study about the different qualities of God's character, I begin to realize just how much they overlap, yet there are some things about each that also make them unique.

Kindness is something the world is very familiar with and some even believe that it is a quality that God has instilled in all people from birth. I don't think I can go quite that far yet, but it is undeniable that some extraordinary acts of kindness have been recorded down through history, from all cultures, including those that didn't know God's identity as we do.

One good example of this is the story of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock.

A group of 122 people set sail from England on a one way trip, driven only by faith, to settle a new land. When they got there they weren't familiar with any of the plants or animals they found, and struggled to find enough food to eat.

Also, the soil there was different from what they knew, so they couldn't get crops they were familiar with to grow.

That first winter, the weather was much harsher and colder than it had been in England so they were ill prepared for it.

As a result of all this, almost half of them perished that first year.

The local native Indians had been watching these strange looking, strange dressed, and strange acting people from a distance, and saw them struggling.

They knew they would not survive another winter the way they were going, and had compassion on them.

Even though they were likely afraid of them and couldn't understand their speech, they overcame their fear and went to them offering their help. Eventually they taught them enough, that they were able to feed and shelter themselves, and survive in this new land.

That is the kind of kindness the world might know about, and it is good in itself, but kindness of God is also this, but much more.

Jesus teaches us what God's kindness looks like in the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10: 30-35.

A story of a man who was traveling and was attacked, robbed, and left for dead on the side of the road. 2 different men came by that were known by the people as spiritual leaders, devoted men of God. But, when they saw him, they chose to not get involved, and just passed by on the other side of the road and did nothing.

But a third man, a lowly Samaritan came by, and when he saw him, had compassion on him.

He went to him and treated his wounds the best he could.

Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, and paid the inn keeper to take care of him till he returned.

The key difference in these two stories is the Samaritan.

Jesus told this parable to a Jewish man, an expert in the law of Moses, and to a Jewish audience.

The Jews barely tolerated the Samaritans, had deep rooted prejudice against them, and regarded the Samaritans somewhat as barbarian, compared to them.

We might compare them to, "the heathen, ungodly group/race that lives on the bad side of town."

Makes me wonder, if Jesus was telling this parable to us today, what group he would use, in place of a Samaritan.

God has kindness to all in need, and I know that's what he wants us to learn, and practice.

It doesn't matter if it's family, friend, stranger, undesirable, or enemy.

He wants us to be kind whenever we have an opportunity, not because he commands it, but rather because we grow to desire to do it.

True kindness is another gift of God.

It is a reflection of God and his heart, and another way to let our light shine, glorifying him for the world to see.

James 1: 17 says " Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..."