

SERMON SERIES: FRUITS OF KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY

“Generously Kind: A Reminder” based on Luke 10:25-37 and Gal. 5:22-26

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Friends in Christ, kindness, according to dictionary, means the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. Being kindness means looking beyond our interests to the interests of others. It often requires going out of our way or setting aside things that we think are important for our sake.

Generosity on the other hand, translated from the Greek word *agathos* which sometimes also translated as ‘goodness.’ *Agathos* describes when a person being good in character or constitution, will be beneficial in its effect on others. So, goodness then can simply be understood as being honourable and charitable.

With these two definitions in mind, we begin to see a shift in the Fruit of the Spirit. The first four—love, joy, peace, and patience—invite us to reflect on our own hearts and on how we respond to the circumstances we face. They are very heavy on our inner life and our relationship with God.

But when we come to kindness and generosity, the focus expands. These are qualities that move us beyond ourselves and into our relationships with others. They are not simply about how we feel or what we believe; they are about how we treat the people God places in our lives. Kindness and generosity revealed through our character that showed up before the people we meet everyday. They show the world what the love of Christ looks like in action, expressed through compassion, mercy, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others.

One quotes that I found interesting about generosity or goodness say this, *“Goodness is love in action, love with its hand to the plow, love with the burden on its back, love following God’s footsteps who went about continually doing good.”* So, it’s not only about being good. Goodness or generous here is far beyond, because there is willingness to bear a burden on our back while at the same time, our hands helping others by doing what we can do.

For generosity, I remember someone taught me one illustration when it relates to material things. This person said, “If there is fundraising at church for a family whose house just caught fire. Which one, you think more generous, the person who have \$1000 and willing to give \$10 or the other person who have \$10 and willing to give \$5?”

If we talk about number, \$10 is definitely bigger. But if we talk about heart, the first person only surrenders 1% from what they had, while the other willing to give up half of what they had and leaving themselves in uncertainty if the \$5 they had, will be enough for them. And yes I know it’s a very radical illustration about sharing. But is generosity only touches about money?

As I was preparing this sermon, I couldn’t help but think about three couples I met at a mission retreat last week. The retreat was hosted by Mustard Seed International, a mission organization based here in North America that serves rural and remote communities in Indonesia.

During the retreat, I had the privilege of hearing their stories from ordinary people who had responded to an extraordinary call. One couple first moved to Indonesia in the 1980s, when the country was far less developed than it is today. Listening to them, it became clear that they weren't motivated by comfort, recognition, or personal gain. They left behind the security of life here—their careers, their extended families, and the familiarity of home—to faithfully serve people they had grown to love.

What struck me most was not just what they gave up, but how freely they gave of themselves. They gave their time. They gave their energy. They gave their resources. They served with humble hearts, never asking, "What can I get in return?" Instead, they simply asked, "How can we love the people God has called us to serve?"

As I listened to their stories, I realized that this is what generosity looks like. It isn't just about giving money. It is about giving ourselves for the sake of others because we have first experienced the generosity of God.

To be biblically generous, friends in Christ, is to recognize God's generosity to us in Christ and to give extravagantly in worship to God, relative to what one has. The reality of life unfortunately a lot of people are afraid to give more because they scared they won't have enough.

So, the questions for us now, *how much are we willing to share?* Biblical giving isn't waiting till the end of the month or the close of the year to see if there is anything left. One thing that a lot of people forgot is that God belongs first. And it's not only talking about money or material things. It can also be applicable for time. *How much are you willing to give up your time for listening to others or taking care of neighbours?*

It can also be about willingness to volunteering for church, or it can be simply sharing "room" in your prayer—so your prayer not only include yourself and your family member, but you also pray for your pastor, your boss, your neighbour, or even strangers who are in distress.

How much do we want and ready to offer back what God has been given to us? I believe, we all have something to give. Big or small in our eyes all are matter in front of God. The question is, *are we ready to give?*

Acts of kindness, whether small or great, reveal a heart that desires to serve others. And at the heart of genuine love is a willingness to serve. Kindness is choosing to put someone else's well-being before our own, even when it requires sacrifice.

The world often teaches us to live with a self-centred mindset. We are conditioned to think, "I'll be kind to you if you're kind to me. I'll help you if you help me." In other words, kindness becomes a transaction.

But the kindness that the Holy Spirit produces is different. It is not based on what another person deserves or how they treat us. A Spirit-filled Christian says, "I will be kind to you regardless of how you treat me." And that is the kind of kindness Jesus showed us. He loved us, served us, and

gave Himself for us while we were still sinners. Our kindness, then, is not a response to another person's goodness—it is a response to God's goodness toward us.

We may not ever see the results of our sacrifice when we act kindly, but we are called to serve others simply because we know that one act of service can change lives. Kindness can be remarkable simple while on the other time can be super difficult.

And in our Gospel reading today, Jesus teaches through one parable that promotes kindness and generosity in a radical way. The parable of Good Samaritan.

This is the second time I used this parable for a sermon. Last time I share, I said that Good Samaritans help where needed. Good Samaritans are good people who place the welfare of others first.

From the first chunk of conversation between Jesus and the young lawyer we can see that both of them agreeing that the law of God requires we to love our neighbour as ourselves. But, the question that this man raise, might be our question until today; “who is our neighbour, and how are we to show kindness and generosity to them?”

We know that throughout His ministry, Jesus invited us to treat all people around us as our neighbour. All people, those who we love as well as those who we hate. Those who we identify similar with and those who we called enemy. And if we understand it seriously, then I believe the invitation to love, being kind, and being generous will be an exhausting thing to do.

Today, in our time we are confronted with a complex needs and problems surrounding our lives and communities, and it's easy for us to become overwhelmed. We can see people in need literally everywhere. Those who got discrimination because of their skin colour or accent, single parent who facing another night on the street with her family because they can't afford rent, those who got lay-off and haven't got new job until now, those who feel hurt because of unhealthy leadership within country, city, or even within church. Those who we know are in need of care. But we know we only have a very limited resources.

Friends, instead of thinking of big and grand things for showing kindness and generosity to other people, maybe the invitation for us today is to start small, with those who are before us. A Samaritan in the parable met the man in need unexpectedly and he was the only one that stop and provide help. Firstly, by stop and helping the wounded man, he might put himself in risky situation, but he feels it's necessary, because he seen this other person as a human being, same as himself.

He feels it necessary to help. He feels burdened to make sure this other person be taken care of. He helps with what he has and here, literally, we can see that he put burden in his own back while his hand doing good deeds. Even though no one will judge him if he didn't do it, anyway. Also, without knowing if this other man would be able to pay him back later or not.

We all know roughly what kindness means and what generosity means, don't we? But today we learn that what Jesus calls us to do is what I called the true kindness and true generosity.

True generosity requires us to give to those in need and make a place for them. God delights to reign over our lives and to bless us, which include such things as material, healing, peace, hope, and joy. God's own lavish grace given to us starts us on the path to generous living. Sometimes God show God's generosity in a magical way, but most of the times, God show that He provides by using people around us. God show that God care by the warm hands of those who caring for us.

If we read the Apostle Paul's letters, we find that the early church was a beautiful example of kindness and generosity in action. Congregations in one city regularly cared for believers in another. When one church experienced hardship, another church stepped in to help—providing financial support, encouragement, and prayers. They didn't ask, "What will we get in return?" They simply saw a need, recognized that God had blessed them with the ability to help, and responded with generous hearts. Their love crossed geographical, cultural, and social boundaries because they understood that they belonged to one family in Christ.

I have experienced that same kind of generosity firsthand. Even before I arrived in Niagara, many of you from Stamford extended kindness to me. Some of you offered support because you knew I would need help during the transition. Others worked to make sure I had a comfortable place to live and enough food in the fridge. What touches me most is that many of these acts of kindness happened before I had even begun serving this congregation. You welcomed me not because of what I had done for you, but simply because you saw an opportunity to love someone in Christ's name.

To me, that is exactly the kind of generosity and kindness the Bible describes. It is practical. It is thoughtful. It is sacrificial. And it expects nothing in return. So first, let me simply say, thank you. Thank you for allowing the Holy Spirit to bear this fruit in your lives. Your kindness has been a blessing to me personally, and it has reminded me of God's faithfulness through His people.

But I also believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us to go even further. Let's not be satisfied with being a kind church only to those we know or those who sit beside us on Sunday mornings. Imagine what God could do if we became known as a church that intentionally looked for opportunities to show radical kindness—to the newcomer, to the lonely, to the struggling family, to the neighbour who has no church home, and even to the person who has hurt us.

Imagine if every day we woke up asking, "Lord, who can I bless today? Who needs encouragement? Who needs a meal, a visit, a phone call, a listening ear, or a helping hand?" Those simple acts may seem small to us, but in God's hands they become powerful witnesses to the gospel. When people experience undeserved kindness, they begin to catch a glimpse of the undeserved grace that God has shown each one of us through Jesus Christ.

Remember, the good Samaritan recorded in the gospel of Luke saw the need, had compassion on the man and acted with compassion. He did not leave it at "I feel sorry for him." But he acts like a loving brother who kindly stop and make sure that his brother is okay and with generosity helping with everything, every little thing that he can do.

Amen.