

Kindness (CAKE Kids Christmas program)
Titus 3:3-8 on December 12, 2021
Pastor Jerry R. A. Johnson

Do you happen to remember seeing a chart something like this? (Maybe back when you were in elementary school, or maybe Sunday School?)



Life was much simpler then; getting along seemed much simpler too:

- Learning about good manners
- Be kind
- Say “please” and “thank you.”

My favorite one on this chart is probably “Be kind.” In part, because there’s a picture of a dog, and I love dogs. But also because it’s so short and simple. Just 2 words: be kind. “Kindness” is the theme of our Kids Ministry program today. But even more importantly, kindness is a consistent teaching throughout the Bible. Let’s take a look together! First of all, let’s define what we mean by kindness.

KINDNESS is about “goodness, generosity, being helpful, and benefiting others.”¹ That’s what God is like; He’s kind. He’s good. He’s generous toward mankind. He works in ways that are helpful and beneficial for

¹ The word “kindness” in Titus 3:4 is χρηστότης in the Greek. It means “the quality of being helpful or beneficial, goodness, kindness, generosity.” Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature (3rd ed., p. 1090). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

mankind. This isn't because we're so great, it's because God is so great. He treats us kindly, better than we, as sinners, deserve.² The Bible talks about God's kindness in places like Jeremiah 9:24. Here's how God describes Himself: "but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD."³ So kindness is not just some kind of an afterthought in God's character. Kindness is something that the LORD DELIGHTS in. Yes, this verse also talks about God's justice, and His righteousness, but kindness heads up the list!

One of the ways that the God who created us reveals Himself, is through kindness. The Bible talks about this in Titus 3:3-7, "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." Let's walk through these verses together. And as we do, we'll discover that...

The God who created us, reveals Himself through...

1) His kindness toward sinners through Jesus. Titus 3:3 begins, "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another." This is talking about the spiritually lost condition that all of us begin with, before we decide to put our trust in God. Rather than living God's way, we live our own way. That's what sin is, rebellion against living God's way. Sin makes us do foolish things. We disobey God. We're deceived and enslaved by all kinds of human passions and pleasures. Now, passion and pleasure are not inherently wrong, in and of themselves. However, being enslaved by sinful passions and pleasures is a problem. This enslavement leads us to malice and envy, which not only causes us to hate other people, but also causes other people to hate us. This deep and mutual hatred, stands in stark contrast with kindness, which is what we find in the very next verse. Titus 3:4-5 goes on, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy...." You see, kindness and love go hand in hand; when God appears, they appear with Him. And the

² See Psalm 103:10-14 and Psalm 8, especially verse 4.

³ Same Hebrew word for "kindness" as Isaiah 63:7. יְדֻדָּהּ "II. of God: kindness, lovingkindness in condescending to the needs of his creatures." Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). [*Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*](#) (pp. 338–339). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

reason God appeared, was to save us. God's kindness is reflected in His merciful posture toward us. Although God has every right to judge our sin, and to punish us with His holy wrath, instead, He offers to save us. Verse 5 makes it clear that God doesn't save us because of the righteous things we do. In fact, verse 3 already reminded us, that we were enslaved by all kinds of sinful passions and pleasures.⁴ So if we're not saved by living a righteous life, by cleaning up our act and making better choices, then how are we saved? God just "shows us mercy?" Well, no, not exactly. We are saved because of God's mercy, but that's not how we are saved.

Titus 3:5-6 explains it this way, "...He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior." Now this probably sounds more complicated than it actually is. All this means is that in order for us to be spiritually cleansed from our sin, we need the Holy Spirit to wash us. Spiritual "rebirth and renewal" is not something that we can control or drum up on our own, we have to ask God for it. Fortunately, God is not only kind, but He is also generous. In fact, generosity is part of kindness, as we saw in our earlier definition. So when we come to God and ask Him to clean up our sin, He pours the Holy Spirit out on us, generously, through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Savior, and, as I mentioned at the beginning the God who created us reveals Himself through His kindness toward sinners, THROUGH Jesus. In other words, God's kindness toward sinners motivated Him to send Jesus Christ to planet earth. Jesus came to earth on that very first Christmas. He then went on to live a godly life, which ended with Him dying on the cross, and then rising from the dead on Easter morning. Titus 3:7 says that Jesus did this, "SO THAT, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." "Justified" simply means being made right with God. We are made right with God by His grace, which means it's a gift, and there's nothing we can do to earn it. In fact, if we could save ourselves from sin, then there would've been no reason for God to send Jesus as our Savior. Thanks to Jesus, we have an opportunity to have the hope of eternal life. If you'd like to learn more about this opportunity, please contact one of the pastors at church. We'd be glad to visit with you over the phone or get together in person. Or, you could also simply talk to a friend of yours who's a follower of Jesus.

⁴ Luke 6:35 says that "[God] is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

Well, God not only reveals Himself through His kindness toward sinners, **He also reveals Himself through...**

2) Acts of kindness done by followers of Jesus. Titus 3:8 goes on, “This is a trustworthy saying.⁵ And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.” In other words, there’s a direct connection between trusting in God, and doing what is good.^{6 7} So “doing what is good,” or what some of us call “acts of kindness” are a significant part of what it means to follow Jesus.^{8 9} Jesus Himself said it this way in Matthew 5:16, “...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Acts of kindness, done by those who trust in God, not only bring God glory, but they also REVEAL God, through the kindness of His followers. Followers, who desire to be kind, like their Heavenly Father is kind. So if you’ve ever wondered if it’s really all that important for Christians to be kind, the answer is “yes, absolutely!” And if you’ve ever felt like your efforts to practice good deeds, may have gone to waste, well, they didn’t! The end of verse 8 states it clearly: “doing what is good” is EXCELLENT and profitable for EVERYONE.¹⁰ Your acts of kindness reveal God’s presence in this world.

⁵ “This is a trustworthy saying” refers back to vv. 4-7. (See *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2058 footnote on Titus 3:8.) In other words, Christian beliefs should inform and motivate Christian behaviors. Paul wants Titus to stress this teaching about God’s kindness toward sinners, so that those who’ve trusted in God, will devote themselves to doing what’s good.

⁶ James 2:14-17 says it this way: “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” To be clear, James is NOT saying here, that our good works save us. What he IS saying, is that if we’ve truly placed our faith in Jesus, then it will be accompanied by action, by acts of kindness. Acts of kindness like providing for physical needs like food and clothing. These “acts of kindness” don’t earn our salvation, they flow out of our salvation. Titus 3:5 also made this clear, “he saved us, NOT because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy....”

⁷ Back in verse 5, we learned that God did not save us, because of ANY of the right things we had done. However, once we put our trust in Him, God calls us to acts of kindness. Shortly after Ephesians 2:7 highlights that God expressed His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:10 then explains, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

⁸ Colossians 3:12 declares, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Same Greek word for “kindness” as the one used in Titus 3:4.) So kindness is not the only godly characteristic that flows from our salvation, but it is most certainly one of them.

⁹ In fact, the same Holy Spirit that washed us clean from sin, begins to bear godly fruit in our lives. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control....” This is the same Greek word for “kindness” as the one used in Titus 3:4.

¹⁰ “profitable for EVERYONE” meaning fellow believers, but also unbelievers as well.