

# St Andrew's Presbyterian Parish, Gisborne

## Reflection for Service 10 January 2021

**LOVING KINDNESS** – being kind (See cover of hymn sheet)

The Psalmist shows us how to overcome an ungrateful attitude by cultivating a spirit of thanksgiving and praise. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits' He encourages us to remember what God has done for us and to do as an old favourite hymn urges us to 'Count your blessings, name them one by one..and it will surprise you what the Lord has done'

He encourages us to do three things – **first** think about what God has given us (His forgiveness, healing, protection, life and growth, a beautiful world, redemption, love and compassion); **second** to think about what God has NOT given us (punishment for our sins) and **third** to think about what God is YET going to give us and future generations 'From everlasting to everlasting the Lord's loving-kindness is with those who fear Him'

God's wonderful gift of loving-kindness is a gift to be shared. John 3:16 'For God so loved the world....' He gave the supreme gift of His Son Jesus for us, so what can we do for Him? I believe that Jesus not only showed us what God's love is like but that He became our role model in the way He went about doing good. That must be the understatement of all time... Jesus went about doing good! Showing kindness, in my view, is practical Christianity. James says that faith without action or works is dead, and similarly Liza Doolittle's song in 'My Fair Lady' spells it out 'don't talk of love – Show me!'

Dictionary definition for kindness states - Having a friendly nature or attitude. Helpful to others; considerate or humane; cordial, courteous....

Every day we hear of really kind deeds that have been done. Eg The Marathon runner who assisted another exhausted competitor to the finish race and forfeited his placing; A famous baseball player sits in the cafeteria by a lonely autistic boy and they become friends; a retired 82 year old barber who sets up his chair, complete with clippers and car battery in a local park and gives free haircuts to the homeless. These are stand-out kindnesses – not often reported – few and far between most of the tragic and horrific news items.

For years to come we will still be hearing stories of how globally different folk went 'beyond the call of duty' and did exceptional things during the corona virus pandemic. A recent Readers Digest has a whole chapter about folk deemed to be heroes because they responded with extremely kind and unexpected acts during the pandemic. Interesting that our Prime Minister encouraged our team of 5,000,000 to be kind during the pandemic – may it long continue, not just for the pandemic.

Here is God's way with emphasis on the Loving-kindness, not just kindness. It's going the extra mile. We read in God's word....

1 Corinthians 13: 4 Love is patient and kind .....

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness.....

Proverbs 14:21 He who despises his neighbour is a sinner, but happy is he who is kind to the poor. Proverbs

14:31 He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honours him Ephesians 4:32 ..

and be kind to one another. Outdo one another in doing good....What a challenge!

One way of confounding any opposition, I have found, is to 'kill them with kindness' (not literally) - they don't know how to respond. -it is a good way to deal with a difficult person, it encourages friendship rather than animosity, it will change attitudes of both parties and is often very challenging. There are lots of ways we can show kindness and every day lots of kindnesses are shown to us by family, friends, neighbours, caregivers, even enemies, especially over Christmas. Don't just be kind for being kind's sake - **do it because you really care.**

Here's three quotes from Mother Teresa who must have been the kindest person ever...

'Let no-one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.' 'Be the living expression of God's kindness - kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes and kindness in your smile.'  
'I prefer you to make mistakes in kindness rather than work miracles in unkindness'

You will recall the Bible verse that 'You reap what you sow' If you sow pansy seeds what do you get? If you sow silver-beet seeds what do you get? If you sow positive attitudes what do you get? If you sow unkindness what do you get? BUT if you sow kindness - what do you get?? I'm pretty sure you've got the message! You **do** reap what you sow!.

What shall we do? ....Keep on doing it and practice random acts of kindness so that folk will see our good works and give God the glory. (Matthew 5:16)

Every morning plan to do or say something especially kind and say to yourself 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits'

Re word John Wesley's maxim. Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as you ever can.

It will now read ..Be as kind as you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to as many people as you can, for as long as you ever can.' Amen

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever ..... AMEN**