

ASPECTS OF LOVE

Scripture: 1 Cor 13 vs 4 to 7.

Philip Powell

Part 3.

The Second Aspect

K.J.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things”.

N.I.V.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres”.

The truth of the tense that is being conveyed here by Paul, is that the word love is in the present active. He is not referring to love as some past action, that has ceased, neither does he refer to it as being some future action yet to be, but makes reference to it as some form of performance that is ever present in an active sense. So his phrase ‘Love is kind’ is in active voice, therefore, love performs the action.

The active voice represents the subject as the doer or performer of the action, for example, in the sentence, "The boy hit the ball," the boy performs the action.

I believe what Paul says here is something to be taken note of, because this love he is making reference to, is not something which is here today and gone tomorrow. It is not a love that is kind today and acts differently the next day; it is always the same. For when an act of kindness needs to be shown this love is presently active, and performs some act of good.

Let’s consider here that in this love there is.

The will to do Good.

When we think of the word ‘kind’, we do not associate it with anything bad or evil, it is a word we connect to those things we admire.

The Apostle Paul says in Phil 4 vs 8 & 9: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you”

Anything that is decent, or commendable, we are encouraged to give some thought to them and practise them. We who are the professors of Christ should be careful never to act unkindly, or speak words that are mean or dishonourable, unjust and impure, but conscientiously and habitually we are to act in love, showing that ‘love is kind’.

The Greek word for ‘kind’ renders this interpretation “To show one’s-self mild; to be kind; use kindness”. This ties in with what I was saying earlier that the love spoken about is active in the present.

To give us an understanding of how vital this aspect of love is we need to consider at this stage.

‘THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD’, which is actively manifested through Christ. By doing this we shall see that the aspects of love that we are covering in this Bible study have their origin in the very nature of God, and is therefore shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This then enables us to function in an absolutely normal manner, with the will to do good.

There should be no will to do evil in the heart of anyone who has been born again, only the will to do good, thus following the example set by our Lord. Acts 10 v 38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him”.

I know that the basic instinct of man in an unregenerate state is inclined towards evil, however the bias of the regenerate is towards good. We do have to note though that Paul did struggle with this very thing, and so enlightens us when writing to the Romans, saying even though there is in us the will to do good, the basic instinct is there fighting against it, wanting it to do evil. I think this is why he wrote in Romans 7 v 21: “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me”

In confronting this thing in his nature he asks the question in verse 24 “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He then answers his own question by stating in verse 25 “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Whilst carrying this wretch man around until the day of our full deliverance, we must not in any way allow the new man to be eclipsed.

There is deliverance, which is complete, everlasting. It is deliverance from all evil, and all inclination to evil, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8 v 9. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

Here are two other verses, which show clearly the kindness of God through Christ.

Eph 2 v 7 “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”.

Titus 3 vs 4 to 6 “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”.

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘GREAT’

Neh 9 vs 16 & 17 “But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments. And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsakes them not.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘EXCELLENT’

Psalms 36 vs 7 & 8 “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘GOOD’

Psalms 69 v 16 “Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘MARVELLOUS’

Psalms 17 v 7 “Shew thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘PLENTIFUL’

Isaiah 63 v 7 “I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘EVERLASTING’

Isaiah 54 v 8 “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘MERCIFUL’

Psalms 117 v 2 “For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth forever. Praise ye the LORD.”

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD IS DESCRIBED AS ‘BETTER THAN LIFE’

Psalms 63 v 3 “Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee”

When considering the dealings of God with the world, the nation of Israel and also individuals, it gives to us the knowledge that the love of God is kind.

As individuals with feelings, and often moved emotionally by what someone does for us, we are drawn to them because of their kindness. In the same way, we can become estranged

from some because of their arrogance and wrong attitude. It is essential that as Christians our attitude, manner and actions are right.

The good reputation Jesus had among the ordinary people was because He showed kindness. He was moved by compassion towards them, and this motivated Him to take some form of action on their behalf. It may have been speaking a word of healing, a word to cleanse the leper, or to set a person demonically possessed, free. It may have been an act that resulted in multitudes being fed, or sending a blind man to a pool to wash clay from his eyes, which would result in him having his sight restored. Love is kind.

I believe relationships are preserved by love that is kind. The foundation on which the Christian life is built, and the abiding relationship we have with God, is love. As we have noticed in this study, God is a God whose loving-kindness excels in His dealings with man. The variegated aspects of his loving-kindness show to us the great extent of His love towards us. If we can grasp hold of this truth about the love of God being an essential part of His nature and character, it will have a bearing on how we act, and how we deal with others in all kinds of situations.

Another thing that is worth mentioning is this. By having this love, which exercises itself in kindness, we are quickened in our spirits to show kindness to people, rather than aggression and hate. Think for a moment of Joseph whose life story you can read in the book of Genesis. Even though he had been treated shamefully by his brothers, then the wife of Potipher, and forgotten for a time by the butler whose dream he interpreted correctly whilst in prison. It never stopped him from showing kindness to any. Paul expresses what a lovely thought it is. 'That love is kind'.