Be Kind To One Another
Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4, and let’s read verse 32.

Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

INTRODUCTION

Illustration: The story is told of a woman who was standing at a bus stop one day. She had just cashed her tax refund check so she was carrying around more money than usual.

She looked around and noticed a shabbily dressed man standing nearby, and pretty soon she saw another man walk up to the shabbily dressed man and hand some money to him as he whispered something in his ear.

The woman was so moved by that man’s act of kindness, she decided to do the same. And so she reached in her purse and pulled out a $10.00 bill and walked over to the shabbily dressed man and put the money in hand. Then she whispered in his ear, “Never despair, Never despair.”

Well the next day when the lady returned to the bus stop she saw that same shabbily dressed man standing there again. But this time he walked over to her and handed her $110.00. The puzzled woman said, “What’s this for?” He said, “You won lady!” Never Despair paid 10 to 1 at the track yesterday.”
I want to talk to you about KINDNESS this morning. This is one of those messages, that if we will leave here this morning committed to putting it into practice in our every day lives, GOD can use us to make a real difference in the lives of others.

Over the course of my 59 years of life, I have met a lot of truly KIND people. And I have also met a lot of UNKIND people. And ironically I have met both kinds of people in the same place, THE CHURCH.

Frederick William Faber said, “Kindness has converted more sinners to Jesus Christ, than zeal, eloquence or learning combined.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.”

Bob Goddard once said, “Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and fallen, for at sometime in life, you will have been all of them.”

The apostle Paul says it this way in our scripture text:

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 NKJV)

KINDNESS is a word that is used in both the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS.

The Hebrew word for kindness in the Old Testament is the word “chesed.” Chesed means “to treat someone courteously and appropriately.” Chesed also means “loving kindness” as used to describe God’s kindness towards us.

The Greek word for kindness in the New Testament is the word chrestos. (Chres -tose) which means “to be useful, helpful or gracious towards another.”

Putting the meaning of chesed and chrestos together, we could say, “Kindness is caring enough about others to treat them with gentleness and graciousness.”
In this 32nd verse Paul is commanding all of us who are Christians to **BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER!**

Let’s consider three ways you and I can practice kindness in our every day lives.

First of all........

I. Let Us Be Kind In Our **WORDS**

1. If you will back up a few verses to verse 29, you will notice the emphasis Paul places on **THE WORDS** we speak.

   **Ephesians 4:29 (NKJV)** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

   **ILLUSTRATION**

   Back on June 10 of this year (2014) five American service men were killed in southern Afghanistan when a coalition jet that had been called in to help ward off a Taliban attack mistakenly bombed them.

   The Pentagon officially ruled the deaths of the five Americans the result of “friendly fire.”

2. Sadly, many Christians have been casualties of “friendly fire” not from stray bullets or misguided missiles, but from the **hurtful, spirit-crushing, discouraging words spoken to them by a fellow brother or sister in Christ.**

   **Proverbs 18:21a (NKJV)** Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

   * Our words have the power to **BUILD UP** or **TEAR DOWN**.
   * Our words have the power to **HEAL** or to **HURT**.
   * Our words have the power to **ENCOURAGE** or to **DISCOURAGE**.
   * Our words have the power to **LIFT** spirits or **CRUSH** spirits.
4. As you think about the WORDS you spoke to others this past week or the tone you used, can you think of anyone you may have hurt with UNKIND WORDS?

   Perhaps it was your mate.......or a son or daughter. Perhaps it was your mom or dad......or one of your brothers or sisters. Or maybe it was a long-time friend or one of your co-workers........or even someone here in your Church family.

5. KINDNESS should flow from our mouths, not only in the words we say, but in the tone we use.

6. Before you and I speak, we need to ask ourselves these FIVE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

   *Is it TRUE?
   *Is it HELPFUL?
   *Is it CONSTRUCTIVE?
   *Is it NECESSARY?
   *Is it KIND?

7. LET US BE KIND IN OUR WORDS!

Secondly................

II. Let Us Be Kind In Our DEEDS

1. Look once again at verse 32.......

   Ephesians 4:32 a, b  “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted....”

2. The Greek word Paul uses here for “tenderhearted” has an interesting and rather peculiar meaning. Its the Greek word splagchnon , which literally means “to have strong, healthy bowels.” In ancient medicine, one's inward organs were considered the seat of one's emotions.
So to be “tenderhearted” means “to be moved with deep emotions” or “to be moved with compassion, pity or sympathy.”

In today’s vernacular we might say, “It gets me right here in the pit of the stomach,” or “My heart goes out to them,” or “It’s gut-wrenching to see them go through this.”

2. But to be “tenderhearted” means more than just having feelings of sympathy or pity towards someone; it involves taking action to lighten the burden or ease the pain of another.

**ILLUSTRATION**

Despite his busy schedule during the Civil War, President Lincoln often visited the hospitals to cheer the wounded soldiers.

On one occasion Lincoln saw a young soldier who was near death. Moved with compassion, President Lincoln asked the young soldier if there was anything he could do for him.

Barely conscious, the young man didn’t even recognize it was the President he was talking to. The young man began to dictate a letter as the President wrote.

The letter read: **“My dearest mother, I was badly hurt while doing my duty and I will not recover. Don't sorrow too much for me. May God bless you and father. Kiss Mary and John for me.”**

The young man was too weak to go on, so Lincoln signed the letter for him and then added this postscript: **“Written for your son by Abraham Lincoln.”** Asking to see the brief letter, the young man was astonished to discover who had shown him such kindness.

“Are you really our President?” the young man asked. “Yes I am” came Lincoln’s soft-spoken response. “Now is there anything else I can do for you young man?” The young soldier said, “Sir, will you please hold my hand” President Lincoln gently took the soldier’s hand and sat by his bedside offering prayers and words of encouragement until the young man departed from this life.
3. Brothers and sisters, don’t ever under-estimate the power of random acts of kindness. Let me offer a few ideas to stir your thinking:

* Send a card to someone who is shut-in or hospitalized.

* Pay for a soldier’s meal the next time you are in a restaraunt and thank them for their service to our country.

* Haul off the trash for an elderly person.

* Anonymously send money or a gift card to a local grocery to someone who has lost his or her job.

* Volunteer at a local hospital or volunteer to read to Children at the local library.

* Bake cookies or a cake for a neighbor.

* Share vegetables from your garden.

* Offer to take someone else’s shopping cart to the cart rack.

* Send some pocket New Testaments to local prison.

* Leave a thank you note in your mail box for your mail carrier who delivers your mail every day.

* Send a note of appreciation to someone who has been an inspiration in your life.

* Bake cupcakes or buy some donuts for your co-workers one day next week.

4. Of course these are just a few suggestions. I’m sure you can think of many more. The important thing is that we open our eyes and look around to see those in need of help, or hope, or encouragement. And when we do these “deeds of kindness” let’s not “sound the trumpets” to herald our good deeds, but rather let’s do these kind deeds for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.
5. Following the example of Jesus Himself, let’s dedicate ourselves to “going around doing one kind deed at a time to one person at a time, one day at a time.”

Let Us Be Kind In Our **WORDS**.

Let Us Be Kind In Our **DEEDS**.

And thirdly.........

**III. Let Us Be Kind In SPIRIT**

**v. 32** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, *forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

**ILLUSTRATION**

The story is told of a Spanish father and son whose relationship fell apart and the son ran away from home. The father searched for his son for many months with no success.

In desperation, the father took out an ad in the local newspaper that read, “*Dear Paco, meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon on Saturday, all is FORGIVEN, I love you. —Your Father.*”

At noon on Saturday, over 800 men named “Paco” showed up in front of the newspaper office desperately seeking forgiveness and love from their fathers.

1. The point is this: In this fallen world, forgiveness is absolutely essential to maintain close relationships.

   There’s not a one of us here this morning who doesn’t need forgiveness. Everyone of us has said things or done things to hurt someone else, whether intentional or unintentional.

   And by the same token, everyone of us has been hurt by something someone else said to us or did to us, and we need to be willing to offer them our forgiveness.
2. Notice the grounds upon which we are to FORGIVE others......

*Not because the other person deserves to be forgiven.
*Not because it makes us look like “a bigger man” or “bigger woman” than them if we forgive them.

We are to **FORGIVE OTHERS ON THE GROUNDS THAT GOD HAS FORGIVEN US!**

3. If GOD had not forgiven you and me, we would live our whole lives under the weight of guilt and shame............we would have no hope of eternal life........and we would be doomed to eternal torment in hell.

**But GOD forgave us, not because we deserved it, not on the basis of our own merits, not because there is any inherent goodness in us; He forgave us because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross.**

4. Right now I want you to get a mental picture of someone who has wronged you. Perhaps its that person who spoke some very hateful or hurtful words to you. Or maybe its a loved one or friend who broke a trust and greatly disappointed you. Or maybe its someone who failed to live up to your expectations.

What would the LORD have you to do? Would He have you hold a grudge? Would He have you to hold bitterness and resentment toward that individual? Or would He have you to forgive them?

You know the answer to that don’t you?

5. One of the KINDEST THINGS WE CAN DO FOR ANOTHER is to forgive them even as God in Christ has forgiven us.
CONCLUSION

The story is told of an old man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went.

If he passed through a door that squeaked, he squirted a little oil on the hinges. If a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch.

And so he went through life oiling all the hard places and making it easier for those who can after him.

People made fun of the man with the oil can. Some called him eccentric, others called him crazy. But undeterred by their mockery, the man went steadily on, refilling his oil can when necessary.

The moral of that little story is this: There are many lives that squeak and creak and grate every day. There are hurting people, helpless people, and hopeless people.

If we will just look around we will see all kinds of people who could desperately use the soothing oil of A KIND WORD.......A KIND DEED.......AND A KIND, FORGIVING SPIRIT.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD in CHRIST forgave you.”