

**The Kindness of the World:  
June 28, 2026**

Our bank changed hands this past week. [1 Bank]  
I know it happens... but...  
It's such an annoying process.  
All new account numbers.  
Have to change your automatic...  
Deposits and payments.

And worst of all...  
The bank tellers...  
Who are all friendly familiar faces...  
Worked there before...  
Kept their jobs...

Well... all those bank tellers...  
God bless their little hearts...  
Are in the process...  
Of learning new computer software.  
Which apparently... is difficult and unfamiliar.

But the other day...  
When I was standing in line...  
Behind about eleven other people...  
Who were just wanting to do...  
Their mundane banking tasks...  
Deposits... withdrawals... you know.

After I stood there for about a half an hour.  
And the line had not moved... one inch.  
I gave up. Decided to come back later.  
Which I did.

-----  
The second time... I stood next to a woman...  
Who works for... the Parker Task Force.  
So we had a great conversation.

I told her I was the pastor at Joy.  
She made some jokes...  
About Steve Budnack...  
The former director of the Parker Task Force...  
Who is a member of Joy.

So we had a great time... laughing...  
At his expense.  
Please tell him.  
What you've heard here today.

Then... the woman in front...  
Of the woman from the Parker Task Force...  
Said... did I overhear...  
You're the pastor at Joy.

I said yes... and she said... ok...  
Then she explained... **[2 A Good Christian]**  
How she was currently... trying to be a good Christian...  
Standing in that line... completely frustrated...

She had come back a couple times... like me...  
And really wanted to let into... and go off...  
On the innocent people who worked there...

But she decided it was better...  
To be a good Christian.  
And she wanted me to know.

---

I've heard that before...  
Right. People trying so hard...  
To be a good Christian...  
And to do the right things...  
And to make the right choices.

And then the next step... in that line of thought...  
Is... I NEED to be a good Christian...  
So that... I don't lose my reward.  
So that... God will love me.

So being good.  
Isn't about the good being done.  
Isn't about other people... at all...  
We make it all about us.  
We do good... to look good... and to benefit ourselves.

---

So that's exactly how...  
I used to interpret the gospel lesson...  
We have today.  
Just a short little verse...  
That messed me up...

During college...  
I thought this bible verse... was teaching me...  
If you really... love and follow Jesus... **[3 Cold Water]**  
Then you will give those "little ones"...  
Out there somewhere...  
A drink of cold water... in Jesus' name.

You need to do something good...  
For those people...  
Who don't understand.  
Who Jesus is.  
Who don't know.  
What it is to live a good life.  
Who don't have a chance...  
Unless we do something good... for them.

And... by the way...  
If you do the good thing... IN HIS NAME...  
You will not lose your reward.

I thought this verse...  
Was telling me...  
That we ought to be...  
Good little Christians in the world.  
And do good things...  
For those poor little ones...  
Out there somewhere.

THAT'S NOT WHAT IT SAYS.

---

This isn't about how we treat the world...  
This is going to be shocking... to y'all...  
It's about how the world treats us.

The "little ones" Jesus is talking about...  
Aren't those poor little people... out there somewhere.  
He's talking about... his own disciples. **[4 Disciples]**

Just because they were chosen to follow him...  
Doesn't mean... they knew what they were doing.

They are the "little ones"...  
They are the ones who are just learning.  
They are the ones who are trying their best to follow Jesus...  
But not doing so great...  
All the time.

They are just taking their first baby steps...  
In this whole new way of thinking...  
This new way of believing in God.

---

And the Way of Jesus... is really different.  
It's not like the old system of faith.  
It's not about what they do...  
To keep God happy all the time...  
Like offering sacrifices...  
To make sure... God doesn't... smite them.

Jesus makes religion...  
About what they believe.

Not so much... about being righteous...  
Through maintaining the rules...  
And being really good people.

But instead being righteous...  
Because of their faith in him.  
Because of their relationship with him... then the good comes later.

He loves them.  
He saves them.  
He empowers them...  
To be a good force...  
In the world.

---

So the disciples...  
Those newbies in the faith...  
The humble "little ones"...  
Are going to mess things up...  
Over and over again. Right?

They are going to say... and do...  
Things that aren't the way...  
Jesus wants his disciples to live.

And it's going to be hard...  
Because they are supposed to be... the examples.  
They are the witnesses.  
They are models of the faith.

It's going to be hard...  
For the world to believe...  
What they are offering...  
Because... they aren't perfect.

The world is going to say...  
You don't walk the walk...  
You don't talk the talk...  
You don't look very faithful... to me... **[5 Hypocrites]**

You are hypocrites.

By the way...  
You know the word hypocrite...  
People use it... to make you feel bad...  
For not doing what they want you to do.  
Or not being what they want you to be.  
It is so manipulative.

We can just say... we aren't hypocrites...  
We are sinners... we are broken people...  
Who are TRYING our best... to follow Jesus.

The disciples aren't hypocrites either...  
They just don't get it right all the time.  
They're just humans.  
They're normal people.  
Who just so happen...  
To believe in Jesus.

---

However. It is genuinely surprising...  
When the people out there...

Are kind to them...  
Receive them....  
Embrace the message they are proclaiming...  
Or even just... when they give them a glass of cold water.

Then Jesus says... **[6 Receives]**  
You know what...  
That is AWESOME!...

People who receive these little ones...  
Receive me..  
And receive the One who sent me.

There is a direct line of connection...  
Between being kind...  
And God.

---

Jesus goes on...  
Anyone who accepts his disciples...  
And cares for them...  
Even by giving them...  
A cup of cold water...  
Will not lose their reward.

And the reward he's talking about...  
Is the Kingdom of God.

Now that seems like a really good deal... to me.  
A cup of cold water...  
In exchange for the Kingdom of God.

But it implies... that Jesus values...  
Sincere kindness.

And kindness...  
Is valuable asset in the Kingdom of God.

---

Actually... kindness is an expectation...  
Of those who follow Jesus.  
We are supposed to be...  
Kind people. **[7 Colossians]**

Paul wrote in the book of Colossians... Chapter 3...  
As God's chosen ones,  
Holy and beloved,  
Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness...  
Humility, meekness, and patience.

So it's an expectation of those of us...  
Who are God's people.  
We need to be kind.  
Kindness is a kingdom value.

---

But Jesus says...  
When people from the world...  
Are kind to us...  
They are revealing...  
That there is a part of the Kingdom...  
Living inside of them too.

They may not profess Christ...  
But they are working for good.

And anyone who works for good...  
By being kind... and compassionate...  
And humble... and meek... and patient.

Anyone who is living like that.  
Will not lose their reward.

In other words.  
Jesus loves them too.  
And Jesus loves what they are doing.  
And YOU and I should love them.  
And be thankful for the good.

---

Do you know... how kind...  
The children of our church are?

So. On confirmation Sunday...  
One of the young women...  
Who was confirmed...  
Was part of a herd of confirmands...  
Who came down to my office...  
To get candy... out of my treasure chest.

It's a thing.

Anyway... this young woman... named Julie...  
Stopped and looked... **[8 Love Notes]**  
At the notes... that are taped to my door.

If you haven't seen my door...  
You should go look sometime.

I have a lot of notes...  
That were written or drawn... by young people...  
During the worship services...  
And then given to me.

It's a beautiful thing.  
That they think of me...  
And give me their art... as a gift.  
And their kind words... to give me strength.

So... I tape them all on my door...  
Into this big beautiful mess... of kindness.  
And sometimes... we all need a little kindness.

Anyway... Julie... found a note...  
That she had written me...  
Years and years ago.  
When she was just an ankle biter.

And she was actually moved...  
By her own kindness.  
Which is so cool.

---

So maybe. We can all do that too. **[9 Kindness]**  
When we see kindness...  
And when people are good to us...  
While we are doing our mission...  
Serving God... and loving people.

Maybe we could treasure...  
The kindness given to us...  
Along the way.

Maybe we could actively look...  
Seek out and focus on...  
Acts of kindness...  
Given to us.

Instead of looking for our differences...  
What if we thanked people...  
And encouraged them...  
When they are being kind.

Maybe we need to make a big deal...  
About the goodness... that people...  
Out there... are releasing into the world.

---

Maybe it's time...  
For us to be leaders...  
In this world.

And instead of being hateful and critical...  
Like the rest of the world around us...  
What if we started to uphold...  
And point out... and say out loud...

All the good things...  
That are being done...  
For us... for our neighbors...  
For our hurting world.

Because people ARE doing good.  
People are doing good.

But for some bizarre reason...  
That I will never understand...  
We choose drama... and conflict...  
And anger... and hatred... and bad.

Over all the good that happens everyday.

---

I'm telling you... as clearly as I can.  
Everyone out in the world...  
Who is working for good...

Is on the same side... as us.  
Jesus said... whoever is not against me...  
Is for me.

Those living kindness into reality...  
Are on the same side...  
As Jesus. As the church.  
As you. And as me.

And if we ever have any hope...  
Of turning ourselves away...  
From glorifying the bad... **[10 We Can Do It]**

Then WE have to be the ones...  
To make the change.

WE have to be willing... to see the good.

WE have to lay down...  
The twisted need... and desire...  
To fill our lives...  
With drama...

WE can do this.  
In our own lives.  
In our own church.  
In our own town.

WE can do this.  
WE can turn this around...  
With the help of God...  
With open eyes and open hearts...  
Given to us by the Holy Spirit.

And most of all... we can do it...  
In the name of Jesus... who is the source...  
Of all goodness... and all kindness...  
And all people... who working hard... to live out love.

Thanks be to God.  
Amen!