

Today's Sermon

Behold, God's Kindness in Action

Romans 2:4

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, February 6, 2022

Please take God's Word and open again to the book of Romans. I've spent several messages working through chapter 1, looking at several attributes or characteristics of God. Rom 2, v. 4 adds more traits of God: *do you presume on **the riches of his kindness** and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?***⁵ *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up **wrath** for yourself on the day of **wrath** when God's **righteous** judgment will be revealed.*

Last month we saw God is a righteous judge from ch 1, but in ch 2 there's a new description we haven't seen yet, today's study: God is rich in kindness.

This is my 4th message on the attributes of God in the book of Romans and you'll notice some of those other attributes from chapter 1 in what I read:

Romans 1:17 – God's Righteousness

Romans 1:18 – God's Wrath

Romans 1:20 – God's Power and Nature

Romans 2:4 – God's Kindness in Action (forbearance and patience)

Some translations have *goodness* instead of kindness, but it's **different than the word good** in 8:28 where God works all things together for good. This is a word that emphasizes goodness in kindness or gentleness. That's the main attribute forbearance and patience flow out of. v. 4 starts '*the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience,*' but then it sums it up as *kindness* that's meant to lead to repentance. So I take kindness as the main subject of v. 5, and God shows His kindness also by His forbearance and His patience.

Same root words in 1 Cor 13: *love is patient, love is kind...*

Rom 2:4 '*do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness...and patience?*

That's one translation, another '*do you show contempt for...his kindness...? Or 'how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is... Does this mean nothing to you?... see his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?'*¹

In our sin we lack kindness. Look at 3:12: '*All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good [kindness], not even one.'*

Same root word from 2:4, we're not kind or good, by God's standard, and we need God's kindness to lead us to repent of our very sin of unkindness.

Remember **kindness flows into forbearance and patience**, too. Look at 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*²⁴ *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*²⁵ *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*

This was to show God's righteousness, because **in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins**. Same word from Rom 2:4, forbearing sins. It can be translated restraint. He delays His wrath for a time to give time to repent. Don't presume on that kindness. It's amazing grace we're still breathing!

Charles Wesley: Depth of mercy! Can there be, Mercy still reserved for me?
 Can my God His wrath **forbear**? Me, the chief of sinners, spare?
 I have long withstood His grace: Long provoked Him to His face...
 There for me the Savior stands, Shows His wounds and spreads His hands
 ...Now incline me to repent! Let me now my sins lament!²

God's kindness and forbearance is **meant to lead men to repent** and to run to the open arms of the Savior. He's patiently graciously calling sinners today. Look at 9:22, where he uses that word patience again: *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has **endured with much patience** vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to make known **the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy** ... Same words from 2:4, riches and patience, there's much patience God has before bringing wrath. **Don't think lightly** of the riches of His kindness in patience, **don't presume**.*

Now look at Rom 11:22 where Paul calls us to **look at His kindness**: *Note then the kindness **and the severity** of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.* This is Paul's application: 'Consider ... the kindness of God...' (NIV, or NAS '**Behold ... the kindness ... of God**')

This is where the book of Romans goes with this, here's where we're going

OUTLINE: Behold God's kindness in ...

- 1. Common Grace**
- 2. Christ and His Church**
- 3. Calling to Repentance**

Behold your God. Behold your God's Kindness, #1, in Common Grace

Common grace or goodness means it's **common to all, saved and unsaved**. In the context of where we started this series in ch 1, Paul says God's divine nature is seen in creation. The same apostle Paul said to unbelievers in Acts 14:15 '*the living God, who made heaven and earth... has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy*' (NIV). **Jesus said God to enemies 'is kind to the ungrateful and evil...** *He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*³

Don't think lightly of God's kindness in the sunrise and the fact that you were able to rise out of bed today. **His showers of blessings rain down** on our land that deserves His fire to rain down on us. His patience and restraint are part of His kindness in common grace, grace=undeserved kindness/favor

Turn to Rom 13 and one of the ways God's common grace is shown to a sinful world is through civil servants that govern and restrain evil as they protect and serve. Don't resist the law enforcement authorities, like many in America do, God has appointed them as a great kindness and we have some of the greatest in the world.

13:2 *Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.* ³ *For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,* ⁴ *for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*

These are the real avengers and heroes. *Bear the sword*=deadly weapon, the police authorities and criminal justice are God's servant for our good. That's part of God's goodness that should lead wrongdoers to repentance. Unsaved officers as they protects and serves are, v. 4: '*God's servant for your good*' (same word translated deacon or minister, they serve by God's appointment)

The end of v. 7 says **we're to give respect and honor to all to whom it's due**. I've seen **God's kindness in our police** like never before these last 2 weeks:

- On 1/21 as we showed up as Ty's friends, they kindly ushered us in
- So **many kind officers**, family kindly invited us to be in processional
- **Kind Fire chief** who drove church guys, he came to our church 2/2
- **CBS News reporter** Saturday PM was very kind in sharing Ty's faith
- Sunday AM **Ty's Sergeant** was kind enough to join us here at GCBC
- The **officers with Ty** watched our service by livestream at mortuary
- Monday funeral planning meeting: **Sac PD and Elk Grove PD** team were some of the kindest gentlest, one in particular I talked to after
- Monday night **Fox News** was also kind enough to come out to GCB
- Tuesday AM about **40 from GCBC** showed up to support motorcade
- **Tuesday night men's group** God's kindness was on display big time
- Wednesday I found out I had a **kind invitation to speak at the funeral**
- Thursday the **police asked** if a **church friend** could speak (**Jason Hill**)
- That was all 1 week. At the funeral rehearsal the **police Chief shared** some of the **kindest words** with me ever, his **care and prayers** for us!
- The **honor and respect at that funeral** was incredible and emotional. It struck me we need to be more aware and in prayer for our police
- In God's common grace (and **amazing grace on bagpipes**) the gospel was sung and spoken to thousands of officers there and thousands of viewers on

TV or online. **KCRA broadcasted the whole thing**, even when a preacher from Shingle Springs started **talking about sin and wrath and repentance and** that there's **only one gospel**, Christ alone!

- **More than one officer** went public with “**our Lord and Savior Jesus**”
- I saw **that crowd** and thought **what kindness!** May it lead to repent

That leads us to #2. Behold God's kindness in Christ and His Church

God's common grace is all around us, but especially we see the kindness of God in Christ. Our Lord in the gospels was kind to all kinds of people:

- He's kind to the blind men who begged Him “deal kindly with us”
- He's kind to the lepers who cried “master, deal kindly with us”
- to a father of a suicidal tormented son: “deal kindly with my son”
- to the man healed of legion demons who Jesus told to tell his friends “how great things the Lord did to thee and dealt kindly with thee”⁴

Application: Pray in light of the Lord's kindness

Ps 109:21-26 ‘*Lord, **deal kindly** with me for Your name's sake; Because **Your lovingkindness is good**... For I am afflicted and needy, And my heart is wounded within me... My knees are weak ... Help me, O LORD my God; Save me according to Your lovingkindness*’ (NASB)

Ever feel a wounded heart, or weak knees, or just needy, needing help. You ever want to be saved or delivered? **Cry out to God** according to **His loving kindness**, it's good, **pray to Him to deal kindly with you** for His namesake.

Ps 119:76 ‘***I pray, Your merciful kindness** be for my comfort...*’ (NKJV)

31:21 *Blessed be the LORD, For He has shown me **His marvelous kindness***

Application: Display His Kindness as the Church

Rom 11:22 says behold God's kindness, Rom 12:10 in NKJV: ‘*Be **kindly affectionate to one another**...[look at 12:12] **rejoicing in hope, patient** [like 2:4, kindness and patience] **in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;**¹³ **distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality...**¹⁵ **Rejoice** with those who rejoice, and **weep with those who weep.** [even **Jesus wept**]*

Rom 2:4 says **don't presume the Lord's kindness**, patience/longsuffering, or forbearance. Rom 12 says **practice the Lord's kindness**, be kind, be patient.

Colossians 3 says ‘***Put on...kindness...longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...as Christ forgave you***’ (v. 12-13 KJV)

Eph 4 commands ‘*with **longsuffering, forbearing one another in love... be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...***’ (v. 2, 32).

If the Lord's kindness leads to repentance, His kindness through us can, too. In the early church, **Augustine wrote** in his *Confessions* how **the kindness of Ambrose helped lead him to the Lord**: ‘[He] received me like a father and

expressed pleasure at my coming with a **kindness most fitting**... I began to like him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth, for I had absolutely no confidence in your Church, but as a human being who was kind to me.¹⁵ The Lord's **kindness leads to salvation**, through His people, to a watching world.

Many of us know Phil 4:13. v. 14 **Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble**

Last weekend we **prayed for James Janowiak** in the ER. He felt like he was going to die, breathing issues and blood clot concerns. Many were in prayer and shared in his trouble, and he's recovering. He asked if I would read this to **thank you for your kindness as a church**: 'So many people in our body showed great care and concern, reaching out with kindness and assistance in my time of need. I am so thankful, and I praise God for all of you!!'

This week with two extra services I wasn't able to really start writing my sermon till Friday so I asked for help with illustrations of God's kindness. I asked and others helped me ask people who've been on my heart as we've walked through the valley of the shadow of death much as a church. Several last year lost a parent, a sister, a brother, a brother-in-law, an uncle. Many died from old age, but some were in very sudden and tragic circumstances.

January 2021 to January 2022 a dozen became widows or widowers.

12 in our congregation lost their spouse in the prior 12.5 months, several in the last 3: Jessica, Jerry Aarons, Sonia Pflieger, Bonnie Bachich, Merle Jones.

And in the prior months: Frances Owen, Ron Foltz, Kathie Griffin, Louise Freeman, Lorelee Baxter, Dale Cundall, and Carol White - all lost their life partner they lived with for decades and now most of them live alone in their family home. How does this doctrine work then? In the harshness of loss, is the kindness of the Lord still seen? **Is God still kind in the hardest of times?**

Paul wrote this 2,000 years ago. What about this last year?

I asked each if 'you're willing to **share an example of how God's kindness has been shown to you this past year** since losing your beloved and/or ways a person has been kind to you that was especially helpful in your grief?'

In the time I had in connecting and collecting answers. Here's **Ron's answer** to 'How have you seen God's kindness in the last year (which has been a very difficult one): "I've been thinking how easy it is to teach and to say that "the Lord is good, always" - and He is! But when the Lord may take away my life? That is the gap that I find myself struggling with.'" But Ron shared with us last week even in the midst of that serious cancer battle, even when his levels aren't getting better and his body is not well, **in Christ he can say "it is well with my soul."** I spoke with him on the phone about *kessed*. Pray.

Dale: The kindness of Jim and Carol to me was wonderful and amazing. They were only a call away, and so often Just came to visit and show their love for us. Jim regularly called and invited me to go to lunch with him, and often with others that he knew were also my friends. The **love and kindness of so many friends at GCBC** was also very special and so needed. I am so thankful to God, and to so many long-time friends at GCBC.”

Merle shared “**The Lord was very kind to me.** Shortly after Norm passed away – his retirement [income] ...stopped, and I was out of money. A friend of mine had that happened and it took more than a year to get her retirement started again. But the Lord kindly got it started right away – just in time.

One of the things that helped me from the beginning was a woman here at GCR. I could not cry [a sense of relief as he was free from his disease], and that bothered me. My friend here reminded me that I had been grieving for a year already as Norm’s health failed. That was very comforting. Especially because I knew where he was going and that he is at peace.

Also – a woman from our church - ... gave me a little bear. There is a ring in its paw that has Bible verses with my name written in every one of them. She put my name in every verse, so it applied to me personally. I read about three every morning ... Every one has been so kind. Many at GCR have been through this and remind me that it will get better.”

Frances wrote: “I am **so thankful for my church family.** Some have brought meals. Some have called to check on me regularly and even prayed with me on the phone. My Sunday School class and Bonnie’s Bible Study class have prayed for me and encouraged me. Some have even invited me out to lunch... [a deacon] visited me and asked if there was anything I needed. (I have a hard time accepting help, but do appreciate it).

One member even offered to come every week and take my garbage can down the hill (which I can't do any more). That turned out not to be necessary as my family was taking it down and a kind neighbor was bringing it back up. They did come over and share a meal and I shared my Charlie stories with their children ... It is very difficult to lose the wonderful man who has been so much a part of my life for 68 years, but it has been nice to be able to fellowship with so many others in our church who have been through this same thing this year and recent years. Thank you, church family. With a thankful heart, Frances Owen”

Another member wrote, “I am **keeping a list** ... My neighbors taking and picking up garbage cans, offering to go grocery shopping for me, having me to their homes and texting every few days. Sometimes offering help, something they have read something to share or things from their garden. Received several letters from [my

spouse's] friends telling me gracious things ... Friends inviting me to their home for a week. Single persons and families inviting me to their home for a meal. All so lovely, a huge blessing. The grief is a hard one because everyone does it differently. Carol Sagaser gave me a short pamphlet on grief. It was great because it put into words emotions and thoughts that I had experienced."

Another wrote of God's kindness: I was wanting to be in the sunshine and hear the birds sing. I had no heavy feelings. I thought something was wrong with me, that I should be sad and crying and grieving...a dear friend/mentor ...lost her husband to Alzheimer's a few years prior. I shared with her what I was/wasn't feeling. She experienced the same thing, and explained that I had been **losing [him] bit by bit by bit for five years**... a long and slow grieving process. So, when he went to be with Jesus, **my grieving process was completed**, aside from **trying to figure out who I am and what I am supposed to be doing**. I broke down in tears and thanked her for sharing that with me. And, then, I thanked my Heavenly Father

Another who lost her spouse in 2021: "I was taken by surprise at some of the mundane daily things that became very difficult now that it was just me ... in my daily life. Going to the grocery store for example was something I always kind of enjoyed, but it had turned into a task of dread and sadness so I just stopped going. I couldn't make decisions at the store for myself, and if I did go, I'd usually just leave before making it through the store before anyone saw me cry. One day a friend knocked on my door and had several bags of groceries. I didn't even recognize it as a need until I went through those bags like it was Christmas. I cried over every item and thanked God for **such a sweet act of kindness**. Then as the weeks went on they would call me now and then and say "Hey, we are at Trader Joes.... Do you need anything? We are bringing you something so don't say 'nothing'!"

I'll never forget that, and how it helped me through my struggle ... Another one that sticks with me.... **Wedding anniversaries** are not usually dates that anyone but you and your spouse anticipate. I tried not to think about ours much or try and come up with some way to get through it as the date approached... December 19.

A couple days before, I got a sweet card acknowledging my anniversary and reminding me I am not alone from someone I haven't known very long, and never would have expected to know this date... How incredibly loving, kind and thoughtful. It meant so much to me that day...should probably sit down and write out all the things like that so I can revisit and thank God over and over. Thank you for caring'

Note the kindness of God as Rom 11:22 says. Take note of His kindness and ways you can show it. Behold the kindness of God in Christ and His church.

3rdly finally briefly: Behold God's kindness in calling to repentance

Rom 2:4 says don't presume on the riches of His kindness, or think lightly of the weight and wealth of how kind He is, that should move you to repent.

Turn from your sin, and **trust Christ alone, His death for you and risen life.**

The Bible says '**rend your heart...turn back unto...your God, For gracious and merciful is He, slow to anger, and abundant in kindness**' Joel 2:13 YLT.

If you don't repent, your stubborn heart is hardening and storing up wrath. *But God can take the dead and make **alive to show riches of kindness**, Eph 2*

THINK OF LORD'S KINDNESS TO PETER IN JOHN 21, 1 PETER 2:3

DON'T DESPISE HIS KINDNESS – story of 'nice teacher' the high school boys all mocked and thought lightly of because Mr. K was always all nice and never brought consequences. Don't think of God's kindness like that.

KINDNESS LEADING TO REPENT: NAOMI, AND PRODIGAL SON

Don't be the older brother in that story who despised the father's kindness.

Don't presume God will always be kind. His patience will run out and you don't know when. His long fuse does have an end. Don't be presumptuous by keeping on in sin, pray like David in Ps 19 '**Keep back your servant ...from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!**' (v. 14).

APPLY TO COMMUNION – only for penitent, not for the presumptuous. For the repentant, think of it as a cup of kindness that can satisfy the thirsty without price, we'll take a cup of kindness yet, all glory be to Christ.⁶

¹ NAS, NIV, NLT.

² "Depth of Mercy, Can There Be?"

³ Luke 6:35, Matthew 5:45.

⁴ Matthew 9:27, 17:15; Luke 17:13; Mark 5:19 YLT.

⁵ Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2006), 45.

⁶ Kings Kaleidoscope, "All Glory Be To Christ."