

10.6.24 Do Unto Others: Red & Blue Make Purple: Kindness

Luke 6:31-36

³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them.

³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners do the same.

³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment,
what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

³⁵ Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend,
expecting nothing in return.

Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High,
for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

I had an amazing time with my granddaughter Abby this week.

I set up a paint set and we had some heavier paper to work on.

We free-formed, me making a beach scene (my next vacation in January!),

& 4 y/o Abby creating a “cubist” interpretation of our own dogs

Ruhe and Coolidge! It was fabulous!

In our creations we worked breezily, letting colors flow on the page.

I then realized I could share a cool thing about colors.

“Abby Did you know that there are pretty colors other colors make when
mixed together?” And her eyes lit up, “Show me Gigi!”

So I did yellow & red which makes orange,

and then how blue & red mixed together make purple.

Oh she loved that and used three more sheets of paper exploring colors
other colors make when mixed.

It was a fascinating and fun experiment to try together.

This week we begin our new series - Do Unto Others.

Now, in full transparency, there is some intentionality
to the placement of this series in the calendar year.

These next 5 weeks in our communities and across our nation,
will prove to be a challenge as we try to “do unto others”
in the midst of the divisions that are already so large
leading into a national election.

Now, I also want to assure you that this series,
is not going to be about politics or how people should vote
in the upcoming election.

Did you all hear that? Will this preaching series be about politics? NO!

Each week will however, challenge you & I to move a bit
Away from our red or our blue...and focus on a new color
that combines a mix of who we *all* are...

a color that represents Jesus Christ – **purple**...

Purple for his royalty as King of Kings and Lord of Lords of all!

For indeed our world far too often is consumed with division—
sometimes typified in the colors red and blue, or the color of our skin,
or our gender identity, age or economic status.

But Christ challenges us to engage in conversation and seek to create
whatever common good we can with our relatives, friends, and
neighbors who we might consider to be different,
or on the “other side” of what we may think or believe.

Anytime we attempt to come together, the idea is **not** that we are
obliterating either one or trying to change each other,
but rather we discover the beauty that can be created
when we work together to make the world a better place.

In the weeks to come, we will explore how God is calling us
to look for space and opportunities where we cultivate kindness,
compassion, humility, respect, and love for one another
and for the good of all the world, no matter what.

We all know that the news we consume sometimes consumes us
and we often find ourselves asking, “what is the really Good News?”

It can be a struggle to weed through the constant negative images,
the fake news, the need to fact-check and the astonishing levels
of hate and division that our world experiences day after day.

My hope, if even just in our little corner of the world, together,
we will find ways to tell deeply good news for all people
by filtering our interactions through the lens of **kindness**
and through the love of Jesus Christ.

Friends, did you know that over 99% of our DNA is the same
from one human to another?

Oh, this surely makes us kin.

The word *kindness* originally developed from a root word that meant
“family” or “with the feeling of relatives for each other.”

The Hebrew word for kindness, *hesed*, appears 250 times in the OT,
pointing to its critical importance for the Bible and the Jewish faith.

In fact a poll released on the Fall of 2022 found that 75% of Americans,
both conservatives and liberals (and everyone in between)

who were surveyed agreed with this statement:

To restore peace & unity, we need leaders to model
kindness & understanding. *Repeat*

To restore peace & unity, we need leaders to model kindness & understanding.

But friends, sometimes waiting for our leaders to model kindness and understanding with people they disagree... may not happen if “we the people,” the people who elect them, are not willing to do this first
Maybe they need us to model it for them, like Jesus models it for us.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is a biblical concept spoken by Jesus in Luke 6:31 and Matthew 7:12; it is commonly referred to as the "Golden Rule."

Friends, our response to God's grace should be to extend it to others; we love because he first loved us, therefore, let us love others as we are loved.

This is a simple, yet difficult to live out command.

So, let's take a deeper look at how we can live this out each day.

First, we need to remember the Great Commandment - In Mk 12:30-31, Jesus said, “*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*
The second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.
No other commandment is greater than these.”

Without doing the first part, we really don't have the ability to even try the second part - the Golden Rule.

When you strive to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, & strength, you gain the help of the HS which helps you to love other people.

Some people may say that it's in our nature to do good to others. After all, there has been a “random act of kindness” movement for a long time.

But, in general, most people only help other people when:

1. It's their friend or family.
2. It's convenient for them.
3. They're in a good mood, or
4. They expect something in return for their "help".

But the Bible doesn't say do random acts of kindness
when you're feeling good.

~It says to love others at all times.

~It even says love your enemies as well as those that persecute you.

~If we are kind only to our friends,
how are you & I any different from anyone else. Everybody does that.

Loving everyone at all times is a much tougher task to accomplish.

So it's imperative to allow the Holy Spirit to help us.

And it comes down to the Golden Rule:

Do unto others as you would like them to do to you.

In other words, treat all like you want to be treated,
and more than that...treat all as God has treated you.

If you want to be treated kindly, treat someone else kindly;
treat someone else kindly because of the grace you have been given.
So that regardless of how you feel in any given situation,
you can offer grace like the grace God extends to you and I daily.

You're probably thinking that sometimes you are nice—very nice—
and in return you get contempt from some people.

Unfortunately, this can and will happen.

People don't always treat you the way they want to be treated
or the way you want to be treated.

But that doesn't mean that you can or should stop doing the right thing.

Don't let someone pull you into their web of uncaring harshness...
or get wrapped up in the intentional division & hate
that is being spewed...even amongst those of our families,
coworkers, friends, and yes...faith communities.

I've had so many conversations with people—who I agree with—
in saying we are all so weary of reading & hearing what some people say
and post, or share on Facebook, or on the news,
or share around the dinner table...

And let me tell you, I believe Jesus is shaking his head in sorrow.
Two wrongs never make a right,
and vengeance does not belong to us.

But we all struggle, we all fall down the rabbit hole once in a while
and get caught up in the nonsense coming out of social media outlets,
and some of our own “leader’s” mouths.

These things and words that cause harm to God's people,
these actions that can threaten our everyday freedoms
that so many of you and our family and friends have fought for...
These moments can leave little space in our hearts for the purple.

But friends, there is a better way. There is a better leader.
We have all been given a new life in Christ
because of what he has done for us.

We all have been given a new chance to do better,
each and every day of our lives to understand more,
to show more compassion, to love deeper, to pray harder,
to follow closer, to vote with care for all, to listen with humility...
All because of the love and power of Jesus Christ.

Oh Jesus made it so simple by saying “love others,”
and when we truly love others...
we will be doing many, many good deeds of kindness.

The New Testament has many commands about **doing unto others**.

We are able to love, only because God first loved us.

- Live at peace and in harmony with others;
- Be patient with one another because people learn at different rates,
and people change & grow at different times.

- Bear with one another as we learn, one step at a time.
- God didn't give up on you or I, so don't give up on anyone.
- Be devoted to other people, love them deeply, care for them, and spend time with them.
- Listen to one another, give accommodation & honor where warranted be concerned for others equally, and don't favor the rich over the poor or vice versa.
- Don't judge others harshly; even if their actions are wrong, look with compassion at their whys for doing it. Accept them as a person made in God's image even in their wrongdoing.

They may or may not be convicted & see the error of their own ways when you listen to them, but when someone feels continually condemned they won't be able to see the hope that is in grace.

- Teach one another, share, encourage, and build up relationships.

Here's another Gospel Truth, when you make others feel better, you can't help but feel better yourself.

That's how God designed us: to love, to care, to build up, to share, to be kind, to be gracious and grateful.

If none of that motivates you to "Do unto others"...

Maybe this will... 1 John 4:20 says,

"If we say we love God, but hate our brothers and sisters, we are liars."

So you see...we do not need to take political sides on most anything... we need to take the side of Jesus.

And yes, often that may fall a little blue...

& then sometimes a little red...but it really is about becoming **purple**.

For those of us that call ourselves Christians...

we need to stay in the **purple** ...

No matter what or who is on the ballot,

No matter how it affects our pockets,

No matter how tired of the fight you may be...

Jesus has to be the answer...

and we have to be the ones to do the work on his behalf.

And yes, that may mean that we will need to submit to one another
out of our reverence for Christ.

After all, he didn't think of himself.

He took a humble position of coming to earth as a human being
to make a way for us to be saved, AND to show us the way to live,
AND serve a broken and hurting world.

Jesus even died on the cross to seal the deal, once and for ALL.

Jesus' way is to think of others more often than ourselves,
and he set the example for us.

What you and I **do unto others**, we do for him...and we begin...
by loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

And THAT leads you and I to love others as much as we can,
and all those acts of loving others...are also acts of loving Jesus.

It's a beautifully vibrant circle of love—

A little blue disappears, and a little red disappears...

Working together to create more purple.

And like Abby and I discovered...

it can be a fun and fascinating experiment to try together.

GO! Go **Do Unto Others**...with loving KINDNESS. Amen & amen!