Love is patient, love is kind

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[0:00] your word together and we pray that your spirit would be at work through your words and be at work in our hearts that you would speak Lord and we would be listening and we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Now as we'll be thinking about love as kindness I thought it'd be helpful for us to read from Luke chapter 10 together. A very familiar passage I'm sure for many the parable of the Good Samaritan. So Luke chapter 10 and at verse 25. On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. Teacher he asked what must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the law he replied how do you read it? He answered love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself. You have answered correctly Jesus replied do this and you will live. But he wanted to justify himself so he asked Jesus and who is my neighbor? In reply Jesus said a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road and when he saw the man he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite when he came to the place and saw him passed by on the other side.
But a Samaritan as he traveled came where the man was and when he saw him he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him he said and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? The expert in the law replied the one who had mercy on him. Jesus told him go and do likewise.
And bear that in mind as we then turn to our text for today which is from 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Now we're just going to look at the first half of verse 4 but let's read from verse 4 to verse 7.
[2:30] Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It does not dishonor others. 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. So again here is Paul showing us love as the most excellent way. Today let's think about those two little phrases. Love is patient. Love is kind. Now as we begin think for a moment of someone you admire and respect in any field. I imagine at least three things are likely as you begin to think about that person. There will be a quality or qualities that make them attractive to us.
As we think about those qualities that they have likely also we become aware of some of our own failings and shortcomings. But at the same time considering those qualities we recognize there are changes we want to make in our lives that we might better imitate those who we admire and respect.
My guess is that that will be true of these two virtues, patience and kindness. We admire them, don't we? Compare them to impatience and unkindness. But I imagine also if we reflect for just a moment there will be times where we are painfully aware of our own shortcomings in both those areas. There is a desire within us no doubt to want to change, to be more patient, to be more kind. Paul is continuing to discuss with this church love as the most excellent way. And we're going to think about these two verbs, these two actions and attitudes that are to be ongoing, that are to be ingrained within us. If you were here last week you might remember something of the church in Corinth. This is a church that's marked by power plays and power struggles, where there are divisions across various lines, where there is a strong push towards self-promotion. And so Paul is encouraging them to think about love and God's love as the driving force behind all the

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relationships within their church. And here in particular, patience and kindness, easy to understand, sometimes hard to do. So the goal for us today, in essence, is that we would use the Bible as a mirror. First of all, revealing our own hearts, revealing some of our own failings, that we might, with the Spirit's help, be honest as we think about this text, consider our own patterns and ways of dealing with others, that we might see our inability, that there might be repentance and renewal going on in our hearts, that one goal is that we would have that desire personally to be more patient and more kind. But we also want to use the Bible as a mirror to reveal to us God's heart and God's perfections. That crucial to today is that we would see God as perfectly patient, perfectly kind, Jesus our Savior as completely patient, completely kind, that that would be the beauty of the perfect image of love, that we'd be before our eyes, that we'd be thinking together about God's character and God's gospel, and seeing love there, that is patient and kind, that would attract us and lead us towards worship. So that the more that we admire God's love in His Word and His character and His gospel, and as the Spirit is at work in our hearts, the Spirit of love, that we might more and more reflect the character, the image of Christ in our lives.
[7:13] That this patience, that this patience, that it would be seen in our family, in our workplaces, be seen in our streets and communities, it would be seen with one another in our church as we are responding to God's love for us in the Lord Jesus. So four simple questions for us to ask as we go along, thinking about love is patient, love is kind. First of all, what are they? Well, a most simple question, patience. Well, the patience that's in view here is not simply, for example, our ability to be thoroughly British and good at queuing. It's not the patience that can wait serenely while our computer updates and uploads. It's not even that patience that's required when we're trying to explain a task to a child or to a colleague. Now, that patience is good, but that's not all that's involved here.

Patience is also long-suffering. This is thinking about patience when we are treated unfairly. This is patience towards another person when they attack our good name and drag our reputation through the mud. This is not lashing out when that hostile, critical email comes in, or when someone you trust begins to spread a hurtful story, or when you are overlooked despite all the help and attention that you are giving to someone else. It's at that point that this patience needs to kick in, this love that is patient. What then of kindness? Kindness, we instinctively know what that means, but let's think in two ways, especially as Christians. Kindness is absolutely doing practical good. That's why we read the Good Samaritan story. How does that Good Samaritan respond? He responds to suffering. He doesn't know, is this person a friend, is this person an enemy? He doesn't care. He gives of himself in so many ways in order to promote well-being, in order to bear the burdens of another. So, kindness is always doing practical good, but as Christians, it's also doing spiritual good. The highest kindness that we can do for someone is to tell them the gospel, is to remind them that God is their creator, that they've been made in God's image, to know and enjoy God, and to speak to them of the reality of sin, the destructive nature of sin, the way it separates from God and leads to judgment. It is kindness to speak of the person and work of Jesus, that he is the Son of God sent into the world to save us by dying on the cross, to pay the penalty for our sin, to be punished in our place so that we might be forgiven and brought back to God. That's kindness. To share God's Word with someone, to pray with and for someone, to bring the eternal warnings and promises we find in the Bible, to bear in a person's life, to show a person
Jesus. That's Christian kindness. And we need both practical and spiritual kindness as a church. We remember, too, that both of these, Paul would say in Galatians 5, are fruit of the Spirit.
That God, by His Spirit, reveals that kind of love to us, the patience and the kindness. We receive it as a gift from God, and it's as then God, by His Spirit, is at work in us, that we are to reflect it as Christians and as the church to one another and to others. So, love is patient, love is kind. Second question, why are these qualities needed? Why does Paul draw attention to these two qualities? Well, let's think for a moment about his immediate audience, this church in Corinth. If you read the letter, we encourage you to read the letter over coming days and coming weeks, they were at times excluding certain groups from their fellowship meals. So, we'll be sharing the Lord's Supper next week. They were sitting down for a similar meal, but people in one social class were excluding others.
[11:49] In a worship service, they were talking over one another to show how wonderful their spiritual gifts were. They were taking one another to court by bringing lawsuits against one another.

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Now, it'd be very easy to say, well, this is an example of how messed up Corinth was. They had all those problems, but we need to recognize that they're not unique in that every church is full of sinners who are saved by grace. Therefore, there is always this danger of a lack of love being shown in us, a lack of patience and kindness that can be so destructive to our fellowship and to our witness. So, let's remind ourselves of three reasons why for first century Corinth, 21st century church in Edinburgh, we need patience and kindness. First reason is for unity.
So, imagine if every person in our church resolved towards long-suffering patience, regardless of how another person reacted to us. Imagine if each one of us determined that we were going to show kindness to whoever was in front of us.
How quickly that would stop those cycles of anger, of unkindness, of slander, of mistrust that can so easily develop in any community, and the church is not immune. Moving towards one another, determined towards goodwill and love, not harboring bitterness and revenge in our hearts.
So powerful for promoting and protecting unity in the church, by not reacting to that critical comment in the heat of the moment. By offering to care for someone who's really struggling, even though they're completely different to us. When we do those things and so many more, we're working for unity in the church and we're working for the honor of God. Because the second reason why love as patience and kindness is needed is because of our mission. At heart, as the church, we always want people to see Jesus and to come to faith in Jesus. But we know that there are so many barriers. People are so naturally resistant, have so much baggage perhaps.
[14:34] They need to see Christ in us, Christ-likeness in us, in order to get faith a hearing. So we must put on Christ and His patience. That would be attractive and not repelling and driving people away.

We need a kindness that goes the extra mile to show that the church isn't simply self-interested, that the church has something life-giving to offer.
Remember our good Samaritan story. What a powerful, powerful witness. To see this man showing mercy, not knowing who he was, using all his resources for the sake of someone else.
And remember how that applies to Jesus Himself. Jesus has come to us in our distress, our misery, our need. We're dying in our sins. And Jesus came, and He paid the ultimate price to restore us, to heal us, to forgive us by dying on the cross. And as we, as the church, as we experience that saving love, that redeeming love, that undeserved love, that's what transforms hearts. That's what transforms churches. And it's that kind of patience and kindness and love that we need to display to one another that's going to make a difference to a watching world. We need to show that kind of love to the world. Love that is patient, love that is kind. We need it for our unity. We need it for our mission. We also need it to drive our worship. What happens when we look into God's Word? What happens as we look into the gospel? What do we discover there? Don't we discover a God who is patient?
Think about the Old Testament. Think about Israel. How often they turned their back on God. How often they rejected God in favor of false gods. How quick they were to claim credit for what God had done for them. And yet, God was patient.
[16:49] God was faithful to His covenant promise. Think about Jesus with His disciples. How patient. Think of Jesus with His enemies. How patient. Long-suffering. Read the Bible, and you discover a God who is full of kindness. His mercies to us are new every morning, that we have life as a gift, that we have food and clothing and shelter. They're all gifts that come from God the Creator. When we think about Jesus in the pages of the gospels, don't we meet the most kind man who ever lived? Kindness to all kinds of people in all kinds of ways. We have in our God and Savior the masterpiece of what perfectly patient and kind love looks like. Now, I don't know if some of us are art enthusiasts or enthusiasts about the arts, but if you are one, then you'll know what I'm talking about. Or if you've ever spoken to one, the kind of person that could spend hours in an art gallery gazing at a single picture to appreciate every small detail. Or the kind of person that will go and watch obscure European films in black and white and marvel. What happens to an art enthusiast in the face of a masterpiece? It grabs their heart, doesn't it? It grabs the imagination. It transforms life. It controls and dominates conversation.

Friends, that should be true of us as Christians. We have in God and Jesus the masterpiece of what love is. We have in the gospel this perfect picture of patience and kindness that we would admire our God and our Savior above all. That we would gaze on his beauty, that we might become increasingly what we behold as we're captivated by our God and his love.

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love is patient. Love is kind. That takes us to our third question. How does God show these qualities? Let's think together about that because it's so important. You can turn with me in your Bibles back to 1 Timothy, if you wish, where Paul began to share his story. Remember Paul as one who is describing himself here in verse 13 as a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man. The story of Paul recorded in Acts and he gives his own testimony here. Someone who hated and attacked Jesus, Jesus' church, who thought Jesus was a liar and a fraud, who was imprisoning, happy to see Christians be killed.
And yet, verse 15, here's a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason, I was shown mercy, so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. He knew the immense patience of Jesus as he was given the gift of faith, receiving the love of God, though he had turned his back on God and turned in his hate towards Jesus and his church. Paul becomes, as it were, a poster boy of the wonder of God's patience and kindness towards undeserving sinners. Paul puts himself up there so that nobody could say, well, there's no way God could love me. Look at Paul, someone happy to see Christians be killed, someone who hated Jesus with all his energy. There's no way our life was as bad as Paul's, and even if it was, the Bible says, God's overflow of amazing grace would still be for us. So Paul uses his own life to show the patience and the kindness of God in saving sinners. He's still the same God, and he's still the same Savior. Peter looks at it in a different way. 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 9,
God is patient with you. There's our words, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. What's Peter saying there? He's saying the only reason that we are not instantly condemned for breaking God's law and breaking God's heart is because of God's patience, and that God is showing patience is a gift to us because it gives opportunity to repent and to believe in the Lord Jesus.
[22:06] If you're here today and you're not a Christian, then this moment is an exercise of God's patience, giving you an opportunity to repent and to find and to enjoy his mercy and his love.

So we see it in God and in salvation, then we see the patience and the kindness of Jesus when he lived on earth. Think about what we discover in the Gospels. Jesus faced hate, didn't he? False accusation, lies. He was misrepresented. Jesus was accused of being a drunk, accused of being possessed by demons, accused of working on behalf of the devil, accused of being a blasphemer. People conspired to kill Jesus. And even as that mob came to arrest him, what was his response? As his disciples would pick up arms to defend him, Jesus said, put your swords away. As he was falsely accused, he was silent before his accusers. As his enemies nailed him to a cross, he prayed, Father, forgive them.
They don't know what they were doing. There is no one like Jesus in his patience and his kindness. And as we receive that in our own lives, and as we see it in his example, he teaches us to say no to revenge when we are unjustly treated, rather to pursue calmness and quietness.
Jesus teaches us to say no to the blood boiling and to the rage, and also to say no to losing sleep and losing joy as we play over and over in our heads conversations of those who perhaps speak badly of us.
And he says yes to suffering for the sake of peace. Really interesting, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, as Paul is talking to one group that's taking out lawsuits against other believers, in chapter 6 and verse 7, he says to them, the very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you've been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Long-suffering that promotes unity, that promotes peace. It's the way of the Christian. It's the way of Jesus.
[24:43] We need to remind ourselves as we look into the gospel, use it as a mirror to remind ourselves of our true identity, that we have been loved, welcomed, accepted by a patient and kind Father, by a patient and kind Savior. The truth of salvation is something we never are to lose sight of, that God shows his patience and his kindness to us when we didn't deserve it, when we don't deserve it.

So that the next time that we are hurt by another's words or actions, or when we find ourselves just simply being tired of being kind to others, that's when we need to remember how much more patient is God with us than we are ever asked to be towards someone else. How much more kind is God to us than we will ever be asked to be kind to someone else? Let our gratitude for the gospel fuel our patience, our kindness. Because we worship an admirable, a beautiful God and Savior, one who is

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full of that patient and kind love that is constantly pouring out on us. Last question then, as we think about love that is patient and love that is kind, how will we as the church show them? How will we show patience?
How will we show kindness? I imagine that all of us, if we have jobs around the house, and I'm sure we all have different tasks, we have some that we enjoy, we have some that we enjoy not so much. My least favorite job in the house is probably clearing the drains. I know I have some sympathy with others who feel likewise. Dealing with the gunk to get the water flowing freely, it's not a pretty job, is it?
The Bible says to us over and over, church, we should be overflowing with kindness. That as we receive, as it were, a Niagara Falls worth of patience and kindness from our God, that love should flow freely to one another. But as we use the Bible as a mirror to look into our own heart, what do we find it reveals? Don't we often find that it reveals hard hearts, apathy, tendencies towards disunity? All of that is the gunk that blocks that flow of God's love. It stands as a reminder that there are limits to our abilities. We cannot, by ourselves, love as we would like, love as we are called to. So, when Paul draws attention to the Corinthians, to love that is patient, love that is kind, he doesn't want them, he doesn't want us to go away with a simple, do better, try harder, fix yourself kind of religion. No, he wants us to recognize that our failure, our inability, shows us again and again our need of a Savior.
So, when we think about how will you and I, how will this church, how will we show patience and kindness? It begins with, first of all, receiving it and receiving it from God. We cannot create this in ourselves. We cannot sustain this of ourselves. We must ask the Spirit of God to stir up love in us.
[28:25] So, our starting point is always to believe in Jesus as Savior. If you're not a Christian, don't go away thinking, oh, what I need to do is to work really hard to be more patient and to be more kind, to be a better person. No, you need a better Savior. You need Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

And then we're called to stay close to the gospel every day, to never lose sight of it, to never become apathetic or cold towards it. See, a problem in Corinth seems to be that they've been disconnected from the power source, that they are fighting and dividing because they've become disconnected, unplugged from God and His love. So, Paul gives them this wonderful picture of love that they might be plugged back in to enjoy, to receive the love of God, that that might then flow from them to others.
As Christians, we must always be plugged in to God's love in the gospel. We must be daily enjoying God's word and God's love to us. We must be enjoying fellowship with Him and with His church, that our love would be warm and not cold. And as we receive it, then we are to reflect it to others. Think back to what we were talking about at the beginning, those people that we admire and respect. The goal for a Christian is that Jesus would always be who we admire the most, that we would see and admire His beauty, that we'd be drawn in particular today to His qualities of patience and kindness towards us. And then, as we see, as we admire, we would seek to imitate, we would seek by God's grace to put into practice in our stories, in our situations, that same patience and kindness towards others.
That that love that we'd be transforming how we live in our family, in our workplace, our place of studies, in our street, and in our church.
[30:47] As we remember that we've been given the Spirit of love in our hearts, and that Spirit is conforming us to the perfect image of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that the love of God might be known and felt, and admired and received, by others in the church, and in our world.

Let's pray together. Lord, our God, we are so thankful that You are a God who is full of patience and kindness.
We see it all through the pages of the Bible, and we have come to know it in our lives in so many ways. It may each one of us today be plugged in to the love of God that is revealed in the sending of Jesus to be the Savior of the world.
Lord, for Your people, may You build us up in our love as we are receiving and considering that love every day.
And Lord, for those who are here or listening in who are not yet Christians, may You draw them to that great saving love, that they would come to taste and see that You are good.
[32:10] And Lord, we pray that the way we live together would present an attractive picture of the difference that Jesus makes in people's lives.

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Lord, so often people won't read their Bibles, but they will read our lives and our stories. Lord, by Your grace, may our stories be full of patience and kindness, because we want people to know a God who is patient and kind, a Jesus who is patient and kind.
So we pray for our good and for Your glory. Amen. Now, we will finish our closing hymn.
Again, we will listen. Folks at home, you can sing. It's, Oh, How Good It Is. Oh, How Good It Is When the family of God Well together in spirit In faith and unity Where the bonds of peace Of acceptance and love Are the fruits of His presence Here among us So with one voice We'll sing to the Lord And with one heart
We'll lift out His word Till the whole world sees The Redeemer has come For He dwells in the presence Of His people Oh, how good it is On this journey we share To rejoice with the happy And weep with those who mourn For the weeks For the weak For the heavy The afflicted The afflicted What do we want For the weak When we Christ When we offer For the wise For the ye [35:04] We'll live out His Word Till the whole world sees The Redeemer has come For He dwells in the presence of His people Oh, how good it is To embrace His command To prefer one another Forgive as He forgives When we live as one We all share in the love Of the Son With the Father and the Spirit So with one voice

We all sing to the Lord And with one heart We all lay out His Word Till the whole world sees The Redeemer has come For He dwells in the presence Of His people We stand together I'm going to read the benediction That comes from the end of 2 Corinthians 13 But I want to read a verse Just a couple Before that Speaks to our theme Finally Brothers and sisters Rejoice Strive for full restoration Encourage one another
Be of one mind Live in peace And the God of love and peace Will be with you And now May the grace Of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Amen Amen

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