

The Kindness of God

Last week, I dealt with Romans 2:4, but only partly. Verse four is a very impactful statement from Paul about God. It is an eloquent expression of God's character.

As Herman said: “To me, verse four is one of the most beautiful passages in all the Bible. I absolutely love verse four of Romans 2. It deals with His love, His compassion, His mercy, the solution to judgment. This to me is one of the most beautiful passages.¹”

And again Herman said, “This morning we come to one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible, as far as I am concerned. One of my favorite verses. I dealt with it in Spiritual Love and in different journeys. To me it is just so powerful in dealing with God. That is Romans 2:4.²”

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

So, this week, I will review some information about verse 4 from Herman's notes. Then I will take the word “kindness” and study it from the perspective of the Hebrew word that is sometimes translated by the Greek word Paul uses in this verse for “kindness.”

Many people throughout history use the term that they “stand on the shoulders of giants.” It does not mean we agree with the “giants.” In fact, by standing on the shoulders of giants people can see farther than the giants. But it is because of what the giants did that others are able to follow and expand upon what the giants gave us. So before I expand on

1 <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/m3u/20080921Romans54.m3u> (comment by Herman apart from his notes) as transcribed by Kit Sheehan

2 <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/m3u/20081005Romans55.m3u> (as transcribed by Kit Sheehan)

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what Herman taught, let me provide you with an edited version of Herman's notes on "the riches of His kindness" from this verse.

The word "kindness" is in a phrase, "the riches of His kindness." So first I provide Herman's notes on riches and then his notes on kindness. Subsequently, I expand on "kindness." The more I study this verse, the more I see what Herman sees in this verse.

First, "the riches."

"The riches ploutos riches, wealth –

This word refers to all the blessings God has in store for the one who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior starting with Eternal-Life Salvation.

God has so many rich blessings to give to every believer and even more to those believers who live a Spirit Filled Life.

It refers not necessarily to material riches but riches in soul! Riches is status: In Christ.³"

Riches of His kindness

1. A parallel passage on the riches of the Glory of God associated with Salvation instead of judgment: Read Romans 9:22-24
2. You can choose to receive the judgment of God or you can choose by faith to receive the riches of God. And receiving the riches of God began at Salvation. Romans 10:11-13 I am not reading these passages. Herman already covered this material. If you want to get his complete comments, listen to Romans lessons 54 and 55.
3. In Romans 2:4 we will note the riches of His Kindness, in Romans 9:23 riches of His Glory. Now let's look at riches of His Grace also associated with choosing His grace at Salvation rather than His

³ <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/notes/20081005Romans55.htm>

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judgment. Read Ephesians 1:7; 1:18 associated with Salvation 1 blessings Ephesians 2:7—Riches of His grace in Eternity-Future.

4. Riches of Christ also related to salvation 1. Ephesians 3:8
5. Riches of Glory are also related to Salvation 2: Spirit Filled Life Ephesians 3:16-17 Philippians 4:19-20
6. Riches of His Glory in Gentiles...Colossians 1:27
7. Riches defined: Colossians 2:2
8. Riches of world contrasted with Riches of God 1 Timothy 6:17 & Hebrews 11:26”

Now what Herman said on Kindness:

“Kindness is so important to God, that He declares it to be one of the effects of Spiritual Love. 1 Corinthians 13:4 ...love. Spiritual Love is kind. The Greek word in Colossians 3:12 is the noun *chrestotes*, while in 1 Corinthians 13:4 in describing the impact of Spiritual Love the verb is *chresteuomai*. Both the noun and the verb come from the root *chrestos* which simply means to furnish what is needed. And there, my friends, is the simple understanding of kindness: First, Spiritual Love sees a need. Then, the kindness of Spiritual Love meets that need in the best way to fulfill or satisfy that observed need.”

The Riches of His Kindness⁴

1. God’s kindness is expressed to escape the judgment of the wrath of God.

But people reject the kindness of His love at a Salvation that comes from the kindness of His Grace by faith alone and prefer to deal with His judgments. They will try to escape His judgment by

⁴ <http://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/notes/20081005Romans55.htm> (transcribed and edited by Kit Sheehan)

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judging others, to make themselves look better rather than escape the wrath of His judgment by responding to His kindness.

2. Note that kindness is expressed to totally helpless and hopeless mankind who are under the wrath of His judgment.

Here we begin to learn about kindness. Kindness is what is given to those in some need. It is right here that most people have contempt for His Kindness. They do not see themselves as hopeless and helpless, they can earn or do something to be righteous before God. They can even judge others and by comparison they can earn blessings like Salvation from God.

3. But Kindness is expressed, offered to those who do not deserve kindness nor can they earn Kindness of God.
4. Kindness works in co-operation with other impacts or effects of Love.

Here in Romans 2:4 kindness, forbearance and longsuffering we will note each of these individually but we will not miss the dynamics of all three working together here as manifestation of His divine love.

5. Here is the major point of kindness of God

Kindness has a desired result, stated at the end of verse 4. Not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance! What you do not know about kindness will hurt you in your life! Hurt you in marriage, family, social, local church all relationships in life

People are so ignorant about kindness; they think that kindness is weakness or that one who is kind is a sucker to be taken advantage of. Many ladies have refused a man who was kind—they took it as a sign of weakness, a weak male.

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We often have contempt for kindness until we are in need of it!

Ignorance of Kindness, refusal of kindness means that you are without one of the grandest, most marvelous of all impacts in dealing with others in your life: family, friends, social, church and of course romance.

Your children learn kindness from you, as you learn of kindness from God.

Ignorance of kindness or refusal to be kind, or refusal to accept kindness is one of the greatest flaws in life.

You will be an unkind and arrogant, not knowing of the kindness of God.

6. People will refuse your kindness.

This is one of those things that it is so difficult to understand; why? Why would they refuse, reject your kindness?

But ask your self why do so many reject the kindness of God?

But so many do reject His kindness, so don't be alarmed when your kindness is refused-rejected, even contempt for your kindness

Many reject God's kindness: when anyone says no to Salvation or Spirituality by grace through faith they are refusing the Kindness of God and when you refuse the kindness of God you receive the condemnation of God.

When you reject Jesus Christ as the only means of Sal. you are rejecting the Kindest act ever extended to you.

So in your life, you will discover that people will reject, refuse your kindness, walk away from it, but do not react by withdrawing your

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kindness. Don't take their rejection of your kindness personally remember multitudes walk away from the Kindness of God."

Now, let me elaborate on kindness.

We often think of God's character as a static unchanging list of superlatives:

Sovereignty
Righteousness
Justice
Love
Eternal Life
Omniscience
Omnipresence
Omnipotence
Immutability
Veracity

OK. But God's essence, His character does not just sit around and do nothing. I understand the word for "kindness" is something dynamic and powerful. His character does things. God acts in history.

So let us shift our attention to God's characters as expressed in the word "kindness."

The LXX has done a great favor for us in relating Hebrew words to Greek words that are used in the New Testament.

The word for kindness in this passage in the New Testament maps back to a Hebrew word that can mean good or kind or useful. We know that the New Testament writers of Scripture were were readers of the Septuagint, the LXX. As such, they were very much aware of the mappings of Hebrew words to Greek words.

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So let us look at this Hebrew word (*towb*) for “kindness” and see the background that we have from it to the New Testament word. I am only looking at this word as it applies to God. It can refer to man and also to objects. But what does it say about God?

Look at Genesis chapter 1 and see how it is used in the creation narrative. At each stage at each day, God uses this word to describe his creation. It is often translated into English as it was good, but it is more than that. It is not status quo. He created the heavens in the Earth in operating order. Not only were they good but they operated perfectly because God made them.

Genesis 1:3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Genesis 1:4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

This statement that it was “good” is repeated several times in Genesis chapter 1. God created. It resulted in something “good.” But that something was dynamic. It did something. Creation is alive and operational.

Now look at some of the passages that describe the land the promised land. Take for instance exodus 3:8.

Exodus 3:8 So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the

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Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

The land is described with this Hebrew word that means good and it is good. But again it's more than just a status quote good. God provided them a land that was good in the sense that it was operational, that it would produce milk and honey. Something useful, something beneficial, something that would be a blessing from God.

Let me quickly add, that in the Septuagint, the Hebrew word is not translated with our word for kindness in Romans 2:4. It is simply the word for "good" (*toub*). But I wanted you to see the extent of the Hebrew word.

So now in Romans, chapter 2, this word is used of God, but it is not just status quo good. God is doing something because he is good.

The Hebrew word is more than just "good." That would indicate a status quo "good." This Hebrew word has a dynamic to it. Yes it is good, but it is useful, it is operational, it produces something.

So, kindness is not a bad translation for the Greek word in this context. Just understand that this kindness from God has a dynamic to it. He is kind for a purpose and He applies this kindness to history... to you. But you have a choice to make. Will you grab hold of God's kindness or will you languish in God's judgment? Your choice. For me and my family, I know what I will choose. I will choose God's kindness.

Let us peruse some of the uses of the Hebrew word for good that is translated with our Greek word for kindness in Romans 2:4. Observe the repeated intertangling of the word for "good" (our word for kindness) and the Hebrew word for "lovingkindness." Herman has previously taken an hour or two on this powerful word for God's character.

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Psalm 25:7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; According to Your lovingkindness remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord.

Psalm 25:8 Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.

Hebrew poetry is not like English poetry. The emphasis is not on words that rhyme. Instead there will be two concepts or ideas compared and/or contrasted in each of two lines. Or sometimes as in Psalm 25:8 you see that there is a result expressed. Because God is good (kind) and upright, therefore he instructs the sinner. His character is not static. It does something. As a result of God's goodness or kindness, he provides instruction to those that need it.

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Those that take refuge in the One who is good/kind is blessed.

Psalm 52:9 I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones.

Waiting for God is often associated with faith. It is here an expression of the writer's faith. The writer observes that God is good/kind. As a result God is someone we trust.

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Psalm 69:16 Answer me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; According to the greatness of Your compassion, turn to me,

Here is a direct link between lovingkindness (Hebrew chesed) and good/kind. Good is obviously a word here that expresses the perfection of God.

Psalm 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.

Another link between good/kind and lovingkindness. God's character causes Him to respond to those who call upon Him.

Psalm 100:5 For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.

Another link between good/kind and lovingkindness.

Psalm 106:1 Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Yet another link between good/kind and lovingkindness. Herman has somewhere taught on lovingkindness/chesed. It is perhaps the strongest word for God's love. It is often translated in the LXX as "agape."

Psalm 109:21 But You, O God, the Lord, deal kindly with me for Your name's sake; Because Your lovingkindness is good, deliver me;

Another description of lovingkindness as good/kind.

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Psalm 119:39 Turn away my reproach which I dread, For Your ordinances are good.

Psalm 119:68 You are good (adjective) and do good (verb); Teach me Your statutes.

Here the writer says God is good and also does good (the verb). God's goodness doesn't just sit in heaven to be admired. It does something; it acts in history.

Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 145:9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

In each of these passages from the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for "good" or "kindness" is translated by the Greek word for kindness that we find in Romans 2:4

Paul says God, in His kindness, from His perfect character, has given the human race choices:

For the unsaved, a person can reject the kindness, the provision of God and receive judgment continuing eternally in the Lake of Fire.

For the saved, a believer can reject the kindness of God in time in life and receive discipline which if unheeded can end in the sin of death but not loss of salvation.

Your choice.

What more do I need to say!