

Summary

In this sermon from Ephesians 4:25-5:2, the pastor explores the difference between being 'nice' and being truly 'kind' as followers of Christ. He emphasizes that while niceness simply seeks to keep the peace and avoid conflict, kindness actively seeks to bless others at the deepest level of their souls. The message challenges believers to move beyond superficial politeness to genuine Christ-like kindness in all aspects of life.

Paul's instructions in this passage call Christians to put away falsehood, handle anger properly, stop stealing, use words that build up rather than tear down, and ultimately imitate God through kindness. The pastor explains that our words and actions serve as a seal or mark that identifies us as belonging to God, and when we fail to live kindly, we compromise our witness to the world. The sermon concludes with a challenge to intentionally examine every situation and ask, 'Was I kind?' recognizing that small acts of kindness are actually the big things that matter to God.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today to discuss Your Word, we ask that You open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be honest with ourselves about areas where we need to grow in kindness and Christ-likeness. Give us the courage to examine our words, actions, and attitudes, and show us how to truly imitate You in our daily lives. May Your Holy Spirit guide our conversation and help us encourage one another toward greater love and good deeds. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one act of unexpected kindness that someone showed you recently, or that you witnessed someone else receive?

Key Verses

1. Ephesians 4:25
2. Ephesians 4:26-27
3. Ephesians 4:29
4. Ephesians 4:30
5. Ephesians 4:32
6. Ephesians 5:1-2

Questions

1. What's the difference between being 'nice' and being 'kind' according to the sermon? Can you think of examples from your own life?
2. Paul says to 'be angry but do not sin.' How can we handle anger in a Christ-like way rather than letting it fester or explode inappropriately?
3. The pastor mentioned that being late is a form of stealing someone's time. What are some other subtle ways we might 'steal' from others without realizing it?
4. How do our words either 'give grace to those who hear' or cause harm? Share about a time when someone's words either built you up or tore you down.
5. What does it mean that we are 'sealed' by the Holy Spirit, and how does our behavior affect that seal or mark?
6. The sermon suggests that if you have to explain 'it was just a joke' or 'I was just playing,' it probably wasn't kind. Why do you think we often justify hurtful words this way?
7. Paul calls us to be 'imitators of God.' What specific aspects of God's character should we be imitating in our daily interactions?
8. How can we practically 'work through' our anger instead of just 'letting it go' or burying it deep down?

Life Application

This week, in every situation you encounter, pause and ask yourself: 'Was I kind in that situation?' When you realize you weren't kind, speak truth to yourself, acknowledge it, and commit to doing better next time. Keep a mental or written note of these moments and how you can respond more kindly in similar future situations.

Key Takeaways

1. Kindness seeks to bless others at the deepest level, while niceness merely seeks to keep the peace
2. Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and our behavior either honors or compromises that seal
3. We must learn both to give and receive criticism with kindness, working through anger rather than letting it fester
4. Our words have the power to either give grace or cause deep harm to others
5. Being truly Christ-like means imitating God through intentional acts of kindness in everyday situations

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of discussion and reflection on what it means to live with true kindness. We confess that too often we settle for being merely 'nice' when You've called us to so much more. Help us to be imitators of You in all our relationships and interactions. When we fail to be kind, give us the humility to acknowledge it and the strength to do better. May our lives be a fragrant offering to You, marked by the seal of Your Holy Spirit and characterized by genuine love and kindness toward others. Transform our hearts so that kindness becomes our natural response, not just our good intention. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.