Devotion #257

**Unmerited Kindness**

**Isaiah 55:1 (NASB)** “*Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost*.”

A friend of mine and I were talking about the love of God one day when he used a word that has stuck with me ever since, or should I say described God for me in a way that still amazes me. He simply said, “Bruce, God is kind”. That may not hit you like it did me. But ever since then I think about God’s kindness. You know what kindness is. It is the willingness to give to someone just because you desire to do so. Not because they deserve it but simply because you want to do something good for them, something special that will lift them up and brighten their day.

And maybe the reason the thought of God being kind was so impactful to me is because people are often so unkind - so unwilling to give or support or simply care for others who are hurting. People can be very cruel and thoughtless and could we say, heartless? But God is not that way. God, being the manifestation of love, is also kind. He delights to give to those who recognize their inability to provide for themselves what they need.

Israel was a nation who had been chosen by God to be a special people to him - not because they deserved it but simply because he chose them. He did so to display his love and grace to all the other people of the world. Yet they would reject him many times throughout their history. But amazingly, because God is kind, he remained so to Israel even when they had gone after other gods, even when they had forsaken him and all he had done for them.

To help Israel remember him, God told Isaiah to speak the words for today. The meaning of the verse is to show Israel that because of Christ’s work, who they didn’t know, that God would give to them what they needed, and give to them freely, with no cost to them because their debt had been paid. What is more amazing is that not only did God freely give his Son for them, but he also offers all of his riches to them if they will simply turn to him and accept the kind and generous offer.

Too often we are quick to turn people away who have hurt us or caused us pain. That is because we don’t want to deal with them. We just want to be done with them and move on with life. But God is not like us. In fact, Isaiah will say in verse eight of this same chapter these words for God, **Isaiah 55:8 (NASB)** "’*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways’, declares the LORD*.” God has the ability to do what we would not think to do or act in ways that we would not think to act. Specifically, he opens his heart to all people who will turn to him, where you and I would rather turn from those people and run the other direction.

Is there someone in your life who has hurt you? Someone you trusted or cared for, only to have them hurt you in return? The easiest response is to let them go and reject them like they did you. But to be a follower of Christ is to be like him. Not that we can be him perfectly, but with his power working in us and by remembering how kind he has been to us, we are to return that kindness to others.

Many people have been turned away from God, because Christians often don’t respond to people any differently than the world does. So let’s hear the word of the Lord and remember that because of Christ’s work to save us and his kindness to us, we are to exemplify that same heart - even to the undeserving. And maybe God will open their hearts to see their need of him. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?