

Kelsey Herndon: 9/3/19

Be Kind to Everyone

"Be kind to everyone"...I say to our kids as they leave the house. I sometimes forget or they get out of the house before I get up (marching band), but I try. Raising children is hard. Many of you know this, and you have travelled rough roads I do not know. Raising children brings joy as well. Lisa and I sent our senior, sophomore and 5th grader off to their first day of school recently. The emotions of joy and fear were raw. The desire to help them be the best they can be is strong and at the same time difficult to communicate.

The word kindness rolls off the tongue with great ease and conjures up thoughts of weakness and feelings that make us think it is an easy thing to do, but as Michael Hanegan reminded us this summer in his sermon on kindness, it is not politeness or niceness, and it is certainly not easy. Sometimes it seems hardest to be truly kind to our own children as they reveal many of the insecurities and weaknesses we see in ourselves.

Actions that communicate genuine embrace, coming from a place of acceptance for self and others, are not easy. Faith, rooted in a deep belief and trust that God has enough love and resources for all of creation, is lacking in all of us. Do we worship and seek to be like the God of abundance, or do we actually prefer a god of scarcity? Do we believe that God is truly always for us and with us and offering us refreshing, endless mercy? If so, we must believe this for all.

I need to wrestle with this question daily. My tendency to believe in a god of scarcity is often the root of why I choose to be unkind and unwelcoming. I exclude others because I don't trust in the God of abundance who is the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all of life.

The embrace of the other (everyone) is truly the narrow path that Jesus calls us to walk.

Lord Jesus, may we see the value of each person and respect them enough to live out the kindness God's Kingdom inhabits. Amen