

KIND PEOPLE NEEDED

I had a doctor's appointment last Thursday for the first time in several years. It was nothing serious, just my annual physical which has not been so yearly of late due to COVID. When I arrived at 3:30 p.m. the receptionist questioned me immediately if I had come on the right day for my appointment. These are not the words one wants to hear when they arrive at the doctor's office. I assured the receptionist this was the date and time they had given me when I made the appointment. She looked at her computer screen and could see that the appointment had been originally booked for this time and day. She then looked up at me and said, "Didn't we call you to reschedule your appointment?" I replied, "Your office called my wife and rescheduled her appointment this month, but she wasn't told that mine had been changed."

I could see the receptionist becoming more and more anxious, so I said to her, "If you have to reschedule, I will not be mad or angry." She replied, "You are sure we did not tell your wife on that phone call we were changing your appointment?" I once again reiterated no, then said to her, "You need to remember it is usually husbands who fail to pass on messages not wives!"

Right after I said it, the whole waiting room and the two receptionists burst out laughing. I did not realize the other patients waiting for their appointments were listening to what was transpiring. After I said this the receptionist smiled and said, "You do not know how stressful my day has been. Thank you for being so understanding." With that she said, "Normally we are booking three weeks in advance, but because you have been so kind and understanding I am going to get you in early next week." I walked out of the doctor's office about 5 minutes after arriving with a new appointment in hand.

I showed kindness that afternoon at the doctor's office instead of frustration and anger. As I was driving home, I began to reflect on the impact a little kindness had at that moment. First, by being kind I took away some of the anxiety the receptionist was having at that moment. By telling her I would not be mad or upset if she had to reschedule the appointment, I could see her anxiety ease up. By being kind, I did not add to the stress of her already chaotic and hectic day. By being kind, she did not make me wait three more weeks for my appointment but rather fit me in as soon as possible. By being

kind and using humour it helped put a smile on the other patients' faces who might have been experiencing some anxiety of their own in regard to whatever health issue brought them there that day. Finally, by being kind I think I provided a positive witness to the others there about what a little kindness can do. The reason why I say this is as I was walking out, I noticed a lot of the patients looked up from their phones and gave me a nod, appreciating the kindness that was displayed.

I try to be kind when situations like this happen. Unfortunately, not everyone does. A couple of weeks ago we were at a restaurant we go to frequently and our waitress got our order wrong. When the food came out to our table we were presented with a western sandwich, despite ordering a western omelette. We were okay with the mistake, and the waitress said, "I am so glad it was your table I made this mistake with. You would not believe how angry customers get at me if I make a mistake with their order." Obviously, this waitress does not experience much kindness at her restaurant if a mistake happens.

The reason why I try to be consistent in these situations by showing kindness is because I realize people know who and whose I am. I never hide the fact that I am a Christian pastor. I do not boast or brag about this, but just live my life this way in my interaction with others. Because I am conscious of this awareness people have of me being a pastor, I am quick not to become angry in situations like what happened at the restaurant or doctor's office. Before any feelings of anger can arise in me, I just remind myself that as a Christian I am called to respond in kindness in these situations. I can't help but wonder if we all need to remind ourselves of this whenever we begin to sense anger rising within us. Jesus encouraged us to take this approach when He taught about loving our enemies. In Luke 6:35-36 Jesus said:

Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will be truly acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as Your Father is compassionate.

I think it is important for us to be reminded by Jesus' words that we are children of the Most High. Hopefully this reminder will prompt us, as it does me, to be **kind and compassionate toward others just as our Father is toward us.** Right now in this world, people need more acts of kindness than anger. There is too much anger to go around. As children of God, may we truly show kindness and compassion rather than respond with anger. This is the kind of children God expects us to be.

I have been given another reminder around our house recently to act in this way. It was my wife's birthday last week and she was given a teacup by her best friend that says, "**Kind people are my kinda people.**" Whenever I reach into my cupboard to get a coffee cup, it is a good reminder to live this way. I think it can also be said, "**Kind people are God's kinda people.**" May we all strive to be these "kinda" people.

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean