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## Ebb Tide by Sandy Simpson



Missionary Sandy Simpson is an evangelist and editor of Pacific Waves Newsletter.

I want to thank the many people who have written to me thanking me for the Pacific Waves Newsletter. It has been a difficult task financially to continue to send out this newsletter since 1998, but Lord willing we will be able to continue to provide information to pastors and Christian workers on issues that affect the Church. In 1997 I established a website called "Deception In The Church"

to inform Micronesian pastors of false teaching and practice being introduced to the islands. Since that time an organization of apologists from all over the world has come together under the ministry called "Apologetics Coordination Team" in order to provide materials and seminars for churches all over the world. I encourage you to visit the DITC website, whose URL address is listed above, if you have access to the Internet. My web site started as a ministry targeting the islands, but has grown to serve churches from virtually every country of the world. I receive email from hundreds of people all over the world each week. Many of you know that I am doing Bible studies for islanders here in HI two times a week and am involved in other ministries, yet I try my best to help every person who writes to me looking for answers. The DITC web site is a result of my own research into false

teachings in the churches and I am actively sharing that information freely with any Christian who has discernment. The Lord calls every believer to "test everything, hold on to the good". It is my prayer for the island churches that more and more Christians will learn to be Bereans, testing what is taught and done against the "word and the testimony" on a daily basis. This is becoming a necessity daily as the world, the flesh and the devil influence churches more each day. As John and Jude both warned the Church toward the end of the first century, our greatest challenge is to stand firm in the truths of Word of God. "Many deceivers have gone out" and our duty to the Lord Jesus Christ is to test them and avoid those who teach false doctrines.

Address Correction Requested

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## Outrigger Productions



## Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Kindness by Sandy Simpson

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### Biblical Examples Of Kindness

Everyone knows the story of the good Samaritan.

*Luke 10:30 -37 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse*

*you for any extra expense you may have."* "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

A very clear point in this story is what Jesus said at the end. "Go and DO likewise". Not go and think likewise, or go and understand likewise. We need to put kindness and mercy into action or else it is nothing but pity which leads to pride. Kindness without action is useless. It does no good for the person that needs the kindness. The priest and the Levite knew all about kindness, but they did nothing about it. Because they did nothing about it the man continued to suffer and would have most likely died if not for the Samaritan. Anyone can be kind. Samaritans were the lowest class of people around Israel. As Christians we are to help the less fortunate, no



matter how rich or poor we are. We can always be of some help, even if it is just to be a friend.

Mark Twain once wrote, "Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can read." He was right, of course. Everyone can understand the language of love. It can be spoken in any dialect and still be comprehended by a person of any nationality, by the rich and the poor, by the old and the young, by both male and female. Kindness is a universal language for it does not speak to the intellect, but directly to the heart.

### Examples Of Kindness

*Many times we are blind to*

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## The Vanishing Gospel by Dave Hunt

One of the greatest sorrows for lovers of God is the fact that the vast majority of mankind selfishly and ungratefully live day after day without even thinking of the Creator to whom they owe their existence and who holds their eternal destiny in His hands. So it is even with many who claim to know Him. How often do you tell God you love Him, and thank Him for His love and grace and the salvation He has given you in Christ? When was the last time?

The miracle of our bodies, with their trillions of

unfathomable cells and chance-defying organs such as the eye and brain, the ingenious design displayed in nature, and the mystery of soul and spirit loudly declare: [I]n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gn 1:1) and He made man in His image (1:26-28). Yet most people embrace the outrageous fraud of evolution. This world's contemptuous disregard of its Creator makes me weep for His sake; and, as the old song says, "causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble" for the judgment that is coming

upon mankind! *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Ps 9:17).* And forget God they surely have.

Paul declared: *even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind [to] all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness... [They are] haters of God... inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...without natural affection...who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are*

## Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Kindness *cont.*

the needs of others around us. A contemporary mother of five lost her vision through illness. She struggled with her blindness. She had always been self-sufficient, doing things for herself. Now she had to depend on other people to do the things she once did for herself. Through this experience she realized how much she needed other people.

After losing her sight she began to notice things around her that she had never noticed before. There was a young man who had been born blind who stood on the street corner. When she had her sight she never paid any attention to him, but now that she could not see she spoke to him and eventually became his friend. She discovered that he'd never had a birthday party. "So I baked him a cake and organized a party," she said. "He blew out the candles he couldn't see." He was delirious with joy. She describes her experience in most interesting terms. She says, "I felt so happy. I had come from that blind person on the corner to someone who had seen a need and done something about it." You see what she was saying? It was she who was blind -- blind to the needs of others, but now she could see.

I've told people something that sounds a little cruel," she says now. "Everyone should experience temporary blindness, to see how our vision can give us such hangups, how we judge and condemn, and what that does to us all." She was able to help that young blind man on the street corner with love and kindness.

She gave him a birthday party. He met a blind girl and was beginning to fall in love with her when someone with sight told him that she was unattractive. As a result he stopped seeing her. "It brought tears to my eyes," the woman said. "He'd been seeing fine." Yes, he had been seeing fine -- until some so-called seeing person misguided him. There are two kinds of blindness -- of the eyes and of the heart. That is the first thing we need to see.

We need to be careful with our words.

[A Personal Experience Told By An Old Doctor](#)

One day--a long hot day it

had been too--I met my father on the road to town. "I wish you would take this package to the village for me Jim," he said hesitating. "Now I was a boy of twelve, not fond of work and was just out of the hayfield where I had been at work since day-break. I was tired dusty and hungry. It was two miles into town. I wanted to get my supper and to wash and dress for singing school. My first impulse was to refuse, and to do it harshly, for I was vexed that he should ask after my long days work. If I did refuse he would go himself. He was a gentle, patient old man. But something stopped me, one of God's good angels I think.

"Of course father I'll take it," I said heartily, giving my scythe to one of the men. He gave me the package. "Thank you, Jim," he said, "I was going myself but somehow I don't feel very strong today." He walked with me to the road that turned off to the town. As he left, he put his hand on my arm saying again, "Thank you my son; you've always been a good boy to me, Jim." I hurried into the town and home again. When I came near the house, I saw a crowd of farm hands at the door. One of them came to me, the tears rolling down his face: "Your father, " he said, "fell dead just as he reached the house. The last words he spoke were to you." I'm an old man now, but I have thanked God over and over again in all the years that have passed since that hour that those last words were: "You've always been a good boy to me."

Sometimes acts of kindness may be the last acts we do for someone. We never know when someone's life will end. We should be living in such a way that kindness is a way of life, and as if it were going to be the last time we have the chance to be kind.

### [A Hardened Heart Softened](#)

A gentleman saw a boy thief in his flower garden. He went forth quietly in a roundabout way to meet the boy and, coming up behind him, laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, saying: "Now, my boy, answer me one question: Which is the best flower in my garden?" The boy, finding no escape, looked around and after a few minutes'

pause, said, "That rose is best," as he pointed to a beautiful moss rose. The gentleman, still keeping one hand on the boy's shoulder, reached out his other hand and, plucking the rose in all its beauty, gave it to the boy. As he released him he said, "There, take it, my boy." The boy was amazed. Looking into the face of his strange benefactor, he said, "Ain't you going to have me punished, sir?" "No," was the reply; "but as I am going to give you the best flower in my garden, you will never steal from my flower beds again, will you?" "Never, sir, as long as I live," was the emphatic reply; "but, please, sir, ain't there some little errand I can do for you?" Free forgiveness and a token of love had won the hardened boy's heart, and from that hour he was the willing servant of his friend.

Remember that a kind word turns away wrath. It can also change other people's attitudes.

Being kind in a world that has lost the virtue of kindness is hard enough. Being kind to our brothers and sisters in the Lord is sometimes even harder.

Because we are around Christians most often that is where our battlefield of kindness is most often put to the test. I want to share a teaching with you on taking up the towel. Remember when Jesus washed the disciple's feet? That was a very important act that teaches us many important things. It is not just about being humble, but about being kind and forgiving of our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

### [Taking Up The Towel](#)

There is a traditional service that some churches in the States have and it is called a foot washing service. It is a church service where people wash one another's feet. The origin of this service they have taken from a passage from John 13 where Jesus washed the disciples feet. John 13:14

He told them "if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet." Unfortunately these types of services sometimes become a tradition and the true meaning of foot washing is lost. After Jesus washed the disciples feet he asked them, "Do you know

what I've just done for you?" In other words, do you know the SPIRITUAL significance of what I have done in washing your feet? I don't think that Jesus was starting an ordinance that must be observed by the church such as communion or baptism when He did this. Otherwise I believe that He would have submitted to a foot washing Himself, as He did when He was baptized and ate communion with His disciples. All the commentaries I have seen comment on this scene by saying that Jesus was trying to teach His disciples humility by His example to them. But I believe that this is only part of the truth of what Jesus was trying to teach His disciples, and us.

I believe that what Jesus is trying to teach us in this passage is that He wants us to "take up the towel". Many times we read Scripture and do not search hard enough for it's deep meanings. All Scripture is inspired by God and has layer upon layer of deep meaning. For example, Scripture tells us "... by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13) and "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord" (Eph. 5:21) It may be easier to picture how we can submit to one another for instance in marriage between a wife and husband or for children to submit to their parents. But how can we submit to each other as the body of Christ? I believe that we can understand this better by looking at this how Jesus taught us to "take up the towel". Submitting to each other in love and godly fear is much more than just obeying a higher authority. There are three words that give us some idea of how to "take up the towel". The words are "dirt", "comfort" and "unity".

The disciples were 12 men beloved of God and who loved Him. But they also had dirt on their feet. Jesus was showing them that maybe their hands were clean but not their feet. It's like walking on the hills in the islands to go to a garden. We can walk all the way there and our hands can remain clean but our feet are going to get dirty. Jesus says that you, as a born again Christian, may not need your whole body washed, just your feet. This is not your literal feet He is talking about but your spiritual feet. When you walk

## The Vanishing Gospel *end*

word of God (Lk 4:4), and are born again...by the word of God...which by the gospel is preached... (1 Pt 1:23-25). Yet The Message, like other paraphrases, substitutes man's words for God's words! Peterson says that The Message is *not...a word-for-word conversion* of God's Holy Word into modern language but what he thinks God's Word means -- not a translation but an interpretation (Introduction). What audacity to rewrite the Bible! Yet such shameless perversions of God's Word are Warren's major support for his thesis.

Paraphrases based upon "dynamic equivalency" partake of two destructive errors: 1) instead of translating the words of Scripture, they interpret in modern language what they believe are the ideas presented; and 2) they dumb down the language to make it "understandable."

Interpretation is proper in sermons and commentaries, which listeners/readers can compare to the Word of God. The Message, however, is offered as *This version of the New Testament...* (p. 7), misleading readers into thinking they have the Scriptures in their hands. Even J.I. Packer and Warren W. Wiersbe praise The Message as Scripture (back cover) -- which it is not. John

## Bible Study *end*

we can't come into the kingdom without it. And we need to have the brokenness of repentance every day of our Christian lives. It takes brokenness to produce fruit just as the land has to be plowed up to make the seed grow. But if we refuse to be broken, we will be crushed when the stone falls on us at the judgment. The Stone is still here in our midst. Our eternal destiny depends on our decision. Will we fall on Him or will He fall on us, crushing us eternally? The men there listening to Jesus would die in the destruction of Jerusalem 37 years later, and the Holy City would be trampled and divided for 2000 years. God may decide to take from us the blessings

3:17, for example, *that the world through him might be saved*, reads, *He came to help, to put the world right again*. "Saved" means redeemed from the judgment we deserve for our sins, and fitted for heaven -- but "to help" merely assists our efforts. And "to put the world right again" sounds like social or political reform! Such flagrant perversion of God's Word permeates The Message -- and Warren turns to it for support.

Such paraphrases rewrite Scripture in simple language to make the ideas understandable. But there is much depth in God's Word that even the most mature Christian finds difficult. The "deep things of God" are revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10), not by simplifying God's words. Peter said that in Paul's epistles were *some things hard to be understood...* (2 Pt 3:16). Obviously the depth of Scripture is lost in simplifying it.

The Purpose Driven Life never presents the biblical gospel, which alone saves. Readers are told to *learn to love and trust God's Son, Jesus* (p. 37); that if they have a *relationship with God through Jesus*, they needn't fear death (p. 40); that *your identity is in eternity, and your homeland is heaven* (p. 48); and that *Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not*

*sure you have done this, all you need to do is receive and believe* (p. 58).

None of the essential elements of the gospel -- that man is a sinner under God's judgment, that Christ is God and man through a virgin birth, that He paid the penalty for our sins, that He resurrected the third day -- is given (1 Cor 15:1-4). Readers are offered "friendship" with God through believing in a "Christ" who went to the cross because He *would rather die than live without us* (p. 79)! That is not the gospel!

The reader is told that his genetic makeup, physical features, talents, personality, the details of his daily life, etc., are exactly what God has foreordained: *God prescribed every single detail of your body....He planned it all for his purpose...* (pp. 22, 23). "You're just what he wanted to make" (p. 25). Not so. The cumulative effects of man's rebellion have created a pool of genetic distortions in humanity resulting in a deformed world with distorted beings that God never intended.

Warren justifies this fatalistic view from The Living Bible: *You [God]...scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe* (Ps 139:16) -- not even close to what that verse actually says! Is every sinful thought and

He has given and give them to someone else who will use them to produce fruit.

It's interesting that the chief priests and Pharisees knew very well that Jesus was talking about them, but it didn't make them turn to Him to be saved. Faced with the truth, they further hardened their hearts. Instead it made them very angry. **Matt. 21:45-46** When we hear God's clear message to us from His Word as in the parables, it can bring us back to God or send us farther away. It depends on our reaction. Are we angry or repentant?

These men decided that the best thing to do to solve their problem was to get rid of Jesus. So they looked for a way to

arrest Him, but secretly, so the people wouldn't oppose them. This is why Jesus was arrested and tried at night. How do we try to get rid of Jesus when we don't like what He says to us? Do we quit reading our Bibles and praying? Do we stop going to church or Bible Study or stop listening when we're there? Isn't it better to fall on the Rock and be broken than to have it fall on us and we be crushed eternally?



*Juanita Simpson is a retired missionary still serving the Lord in Micronesia after 38 years of ministry.*

## The Vanishing Gospel *cont.*

worthy of death...do the same, [and] have pleasure in them that do them (Rom 1:28-32). The connection is undeniable between the evil foretold for the last days (2 Tm 3:1-7) and the godless "lifestyles" popularized on trendy TV shows.

Hollywood has long glorified and exported all manner of ungodliness. The marketing of evil provides billions of dollars in profits through promoting youth rebellion; sexual "freedom" and wanton perversion; mutilation of the body; obscene, suicidal, and murderous lyrics; and gangland and satanic clothing. Could Sodom and Gomorrah have been much worse?

Homes are invaded and families destroyed by immoral, corrupting media, leaving consciences seared with a hot iron (1 Tm 4:2). Many Christians enjoy what would have shamed and embarrassed them a few years ago. An estimated 50 percent of professing Christians have been attracted to internet pornography.

And to attract those thus corrupted, many of the largest and fastest-growing churches mimic the world in "seeker-friendly" and "youth-oriented" services that exploit sensuality and compromise the truth. The Christian Science Monitor (12/30/03) reported that megachurches are good at reaching young people raised in an entertainment-saturated culture....Many have...a rock-concert feel to them....[At the largest congregation in the United States, with more than 25,000 attendants each weekend...Victoria Osteen steps to the podium in front of 16,000 cheering Sunday worshipers and proclaims: 'We're going to rock today!' Worship Leader (Nov-Dec '03) reported, "...the Jesus People erected [a] worship ritual...from the preeminent communal ceremony of their generation -- the rock concert.

Through "contemporary Christian music" and "contemporary worship," the church has been converted to the "religion" of the world! Some of the largest presumably evangelical churches have designed their Sunday morning services based upon what the ungodly want. Missing are the fear of a holy God's wrath against sin, trembling repentance, and grateful faith in

Christ, the eternal God who became man through the virgin birth to suffer the full penalty of God's judgment in our place. Seeker-friendly churches must not "offend" with the Truth, but pamper with the flattering "gospel" of self-esteem, self-love, and positive thinking -- a "gospel" that cannot save. As Paul foretold, they will not endure sound doctrine... (2 Tm 4:3).

Creating large, rich churches is not new. In A Woman Rides the Beast (see offering list), we show that the Roman Catholic Church -- the world's largest and wealthiest -- grew out of a marriage between the Roman world and the church, making "Christianity" the state religion. Historian Will Durant explains, ...the world converted Christianity....[Paganism] passed like maternal blood into the new religion, and captive Rome captured her conqueror (Caesar and Christ, 657, 672).

Roman Catholicism grew by wed-ding itself to the dominant pagan religion in Italy, Spain, Latin America, Africa, the Philippines, etc. Haiti is said to be 85 percent Catholic and 110 percent Vodoun. New Orleans, the most Catholic city in America, (Our Sunday Visitor, 10/15/95) is its voodoo capital.

And now, "Protestantism" is creating megachurches by merging with the "new paganism" in today's culture -- a culture that is becoming ever more anti-Christian and anti-Israel.

In blatant defiance of God and His Word, the nations have robbed Israel of most of the land God gave His chosen people as an everlasting possession (Gn 17:8). In further insolence, and sadly under the leadership of America's Christian president, the world is determined to give more of Israel's land to Arabs/Muslims as a reward for their hatred of Christ and religious vows to exterminate the Jews. And Islam intends to take all.

Today's world doesn't need more entertainment and "positive" messages assuring the "hurting" that God loves, forgives, "accepts them as they are," heals their "inner child," and has an exciting plan for their lives. Mankind needs the changeless convicting truth that leads sinners to repentance and salvation. God's holy character

has not changed; the separation between man and God caused by sin -- and the judgment to come -- have not changed; nor has God's remedy in Christ been outdated and revised. On these basic facts the Bible is clear and uncompromising.

Like the father with the "prodigal son" (Lk 15:11-32), a gracious God is ever eager to embrace repentant sinners. But His holiness and justice allow pardon only for those who accept the blood of Christ poured out upon the Cross on their behalf.

We must preach the gospel everywhere to everyone (Mk 16:15). It must be believed for anyone to be saved from eternal separation from God: the gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom 1:16); there is none other name...whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12); what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ... (Acts 16:30,31). The warning is solemn and clear: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (Jn 3:36).

Yet Robert Schuller (whose Hour of Power reaches 20 million viewers weekly) declares, We have to find God in our own way... (Larry King Live, 12/19/98).

Rewriting the Bible, Schuller turns God's solemn warning, Thou shalt have no other gods before me, into Believe in the God Who Believes in You (Thomas Nelson Publishers). Paul had no confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:3) -- but God believes in us?

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tm 1:15). Yet Schuller, self-proclaimed "founder of the church growth movement" (his annual Institute for Successful Church Leadership has attracted tens of thousands of pastors from around the world), claims that attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition is an "unchristian strategy" which is "destructive [and] counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise..." (Christianity Today, 10/5/84)!

David F. Wells writes, In another age, Robert Schuller's ministry...might well have been viewed...as comedy....Sin, he says with a cherubic smile, is not what shatters our relationship to

God [but] that we do not esteem ourselves enough. In the Crystal Cathedral, therefore, let the word sin be banished....Christ was not drawing a profound moral compass in the Sermon on the Mount; he was just giving us a set of 'be (happy) attitudes'... (No Place for Truth, p. 175).

We are commanded to preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long--suffering and doctrine (2 Tm 4:2). God's Word is the foundation of our faith -- yet that foundation is being undermined. "Christian psychology" takes the theories of atheists such as Freud, Jung, Rogers, Maslow, et al., and repackages their lies as truth that improves God's holy and perfect Word.

Bruce Narramore, following in his uncle Clyde's footsteps, admits, Under the influence of humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, many of us Christians have begun to see our need for self-love and self-esteem. This is a good and necessary focus (You're Someone Special, Zondervan, p. 22). Yet Paul warned against thinking too highly of oneself (Rom 12:3) and urged, let each esteem other better than themselves (Phil 2:3). But that was before today's church surrendered to the surrounding culture.

Attempting to build large and successful churches, many of today's pastors draw upon secular motivational speakers' advice designed to foster worldly success. Tragically, this is the basis of much that is offered by Rick Warren (a graduate of Schuller's Institute), the most popular and influential "church growth" guru today, whose methods and example are being followed by literally tens of thousands of fellow pastors worldwide -- and by millions of lay readers of his books.

Warren does offer much sound advice in The Purpose Driven Church and The Purpose Driven Life. Commendably, he attempts to support most points with nearly a thousand quotations from Scripture (Life, p. 325). But the "scriptures" he quotes are speculative paraphrases such as The Message (see TBC Q&A Oct. '95) by Eugene H. Peterson (NavPress).

Every word of God is pure (Prv 30:5), we live...by every

## Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Kindness *cont.*

through life as a Christian, you are saved and God has already washed you with his blood and saved your soul, but because there are temptations in this life, your soul (like the sole of your shoes) still needs to be washed from time to time.

Let me tell you that no matter how dusty and dirty the roads in Jerusalem were at that time, the roads of our day are much more filthy! I am not talking about actual dirt roads, but the roads of worldly temptation and immorality. Perhaps you can see this in the life of a brother or sister in Christ. Perhaps you have gotten your own feet dirty this week. This doesn't necessarily mean you have turned your back on God, unless you are unwilling to repent of your sin. You need someone to wash your feet. You fell, you hurt yourself, and you need your dirty feet washed.

Scripture says in Galatians 6:1 "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also are tempted." We are commanded as Christians to restore every other Christian who falls into sin, if there is a repentant heart. What do you do when you are face to face with another brother or sister who has fallen into a sin? What you do has everything to do with what your Christianity and walk with Christ is all about! Do you serve others in love and kindness and submit to them in the fear of God? Or do you talk about them behind their back and pull them down while boosting yourself up? People who call themselves Christians can be very cruel sometimes. Sometimes these so-called Christians even delight in seeing dirt on others. But let me tell you, when they spread the dirt around that is the dirtiest sin of all! There have been many pastors I have seen or heard of who have resigned from churches because of a sin they fell into and the people of the church were simply unwilling to restore him, even when he repented and changed his ways. I have been to a number of places where, when I arrive there, all I hear is destructive talk about others in ministry. This really makes me sick sometimes, and I want to tell

those people "Don't say another word! Let's stop right now and pray for that brother or sister, then go talk to them and clear this up." Isn't that what the Bible tells us to do? Taking up the towel takes commitment and courage. It means -- I am committed to helping him or her clean off the dirt -- I will get down on my hands and knees and do it myself through prayer and humbleness, if that is what it takes. I will work to restore their reputation, their family, to do everything I can to keep them alive in Christ!

We must take up the towel of God's mercy and go to that hurting one. We should not just stand around and spread the dirt. We should not just judge that person for personal sins when we have our own sins and faults before God. We need to go directly to that person in the special love of Jesus when they have been living in personal sin but have repented of that sin. We need to submit all of our human inclinations to ignore him, judge him, expose him, lecture him or find fault with him. Instead we are to commit ourselves to being his deepest friend. We are told to wash away his sins by sharing the correcting, healing, washing, comforting Word of God.

We are not talking about Christians here who are not repentant or who are living in continual sin. We are not talking about false teachers who are teaching destructive heresies and leading other Christians to shipwreck their faith. We should pray for them that God will work in their lives through our prayers, but we are not to associate with them until they repent and stop teaching heresy or making false prophecies.

I'm afraid that showing kindness to people who have sinned in the past but who have repented of that sin is not practiced too much in Micronesia today because it conflicts with culture. But where culture conflicts with God's Word, it is wrong. If a brother is not repentant they are to be warned two or three times. They are to be confronted with the sin with one, then two or three witnesses. If they are still unrepentant, the Bible says they should be disfellowshipped from the church and given over to Satan for a season. There is

good reason for this. If someone is unrepentant or living in habitual sin, if they are allowed to just continue to fellowship with those who are following Christ, they will believe that what they are doing is really okay. They may also infect others with their sin. It is better for them to find out what it is like to live in darkness for awhile, because chances are that they will come to their

**We must take up the towel of mercy and go to the hurting one.**

senses through tragedy and really come back to the Lord.

But when a brother or sister in the Lord are repentant and in need of live and kindness we must "take up the towel" of kindness and mercy! I know a man who was in need of being disfellowshipped from a church. I feared for his soul. He was living in sin and unrepentant. Yet the church was just ignoring him and talking behind his back. The church should have been up front with him. Either put him out of the church entirely for being an unrepentant sinner -- or if he is repentant WASH HIS FEET!

I heard a story about an associate pastor of a big church in the US whose teenage daughter became pregnant outside of marriage. The senior pastor of the church demanded that the associate pastor go before the whole church and tell them what his daughter had done. Because he was being obedient to the senior pastor, he did it, but this devastated his daughter. It broke the family's heart. The congregation wallowed (like a pig who rolls around in the mud) in all the details of the poor teenage girl's sin. A year later the senior pastor's daughter also became pregnant out of wedlock. But the senior pastor did not follow his own advice and did everything in his power to cover it. It seems very easy to throw dirt into the wind but when some of it gets

on you, you begin to understand what it is like to need love and mercy. Jesus also taught the concept of comfort -- in this case comfort of sins removed. In 1 Cor. 5 we read the story of a man in the church who fell into the terrible sin of incest. Evidently the man was unrepentant because Paul directed the church to turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh (and hopefully to the saving of his spirit). Paul did not say the man was lost and going to hell. No, he wanted him isolated from fellowship and given over to Satan's devices so that he would remember what it was like to live in darkness and perhaps come to the end of his rope, to his wit's end, and be driven back to repentance. Later, in 2 Cor. 2, Paul found the same man had become repentant and that the church had forgiven him. Satan had, indeed, brought him to despair. The lust of his flesh had been broken and he had come back repentant. And now Paul writes to the Corinthian church "... you ought rather to forgive him, lest such a one as this be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I ask you that you would confirm your love toward him". (2 Cor. 2:7-8) The church came together and comforted this man. The world gives us just the opposite picture and teaches us the wrong way to deal with these issues.

Look at how when a politician announces he is running for office, the press turns into a swarm of mosquitoes, trying to bother him and dig up anything from his past life that looks a little bit dirty. When they find it they print it in all the headlines for all to see. Even politicians and political parties do this to each other. You especially see this during election time. This world has gone crazy with slander! TV is full of talk shows featuring gossip, exposure, mockery. The wicked seem to get a thrill from destroying people, families and reputations. The more dirty the dirt, the more people like it.

This kind of thing has NO PLACE in God's church! The church ought to be different. It ought to be a house of cleansing. I suggest that if you want to restore a brother or sister -- you don't need to know all the details of how that person

## Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Kindness *cont.*

got dirty. Jesus didn't ask his disciples "How did you get such dirty feet?" He wanted only to clean their feet. His love for them was unconditional -- in other words, He did not love them because they had or had not committed certain sins against Him or others. We should not be asking about the dirt, we should be cleaning it off!

Often Christians want to delve into all the gory details. They come to a Christian who has dirty feet and say "I want to wash your feet but first tell me what happened. How'd they get so dirty?" This is called voyeurism in English, a need to feast on the sins of someone else. Sometimes as the person begins to tell their story the Christian will realize "Oh my, this is worse than I thought. I can't get involved in this! I can't handle it." After a few minutes of details the Christian comes to the end of the tiny bit of mercy and kindness he started out with and begins to judge the person as too evil, beyond help. Many Christians then just drop the towel and walk away. Let me tell you now -- you can't wash someone else's feet while wearing judges robes! You have to take off your self-righteous garments -- your holier-than-thou attitude -- your Pharisaical mind set -before you can do any cleansing. Like Jesus did in the passage where he washed the disciples feet, you must lay aside your garment and put on love. Off with self-righteousness, pride, thoughts that you could never stoop so low as that other person. A true Christian will have the attitude of "I don't care what you did. If you are repentant and want to hear

God's Word, I'll be kind to you. I will stick by you!

Let me remind you that Jesus even washed Judas feet. Christ stooped and washed his feet with the rest of the disciples, knowing full well that Satan had already begun to put betrayal in his heart. Even a modern-day Judas can come to repentance. Such habitual sins, sins that people choose to live in day after day, such as homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery we think of sometimes as sins that have people hopelessly hooked. But Paul says of them in 1 Cor. 6:9-11: "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (homosexuals), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such WERE SOME OF YOU: but you were WASHED, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." Such were some of us -- but we had our whole bodies washed by Jesus. Everyday Jesus continues to wash out feet. If Jesus is willing to forgive, why not us?

2 Tim. 2:24-26 "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"

We must be tenderhearted with everyone, because God may have mercy on them yet.

Finally, we come to the word "unity". Jesus was trying to teach us a lesson about unity. As Jesus approached Peter, the disciple drew back and said "... Lord, will you wash my feet?" Jesus answered "If I do not wash your feet, you have no part with me." Peter, if I don't wash your feet we have very little ground for fellowship or unity. Unity in a church does not come from great preaching, good programs, buildings -- it comes from taking up the towel! Think back on what Jesus did for you when he washed your feet? He wiped away your guilt, your fault, He cleansed the remnants of sin, you were made whole, clean. He put gratitude back into your heart, thankfulness, joy in your soul. He filled you with so much love that you would follow Him anywhere and do anything for Him. All you wanted to do was to be in communion and communication with Him because of all He did for you. This is the secret of unity!

When you take up the towel of mercy for a fallen, hurting brother, you encourage him by embracing him in his hurt -- by submitting in godly fear, washing away his feelings of worthlessness, anguish and despair, and by loving and caring for him. What will happen by your doing this for him? You have built a bridge. You have constructed a firm foundation for true unity and a lasting and glorious relationship between you and him. You are now one by your common experience, that is you have both acknowledged that you are

washed in the water of the Word. You have not seen gratitude and friendship until you have done this. That Christian will be your friend for LIFE! He will defend you, do anything for you. He will now stand by you in your hard times just like you stood by him. Can you imagine a church full of such caring people, who refuse to repeat a single dirty word about a brother, who hurt when their brother hurts, who rally around every despairing, fault-ridden brother or sister with a word of love and hope?

You may ask, "How do I find people whose feet need washing? My answer to you is: the same way you found them when you gossiped about them! Now, whenever you hear anything negative about someone, merely ask, "Who are you talking about? Name only, please!" Then go to that hurting person quickly with your mercy towel -- and start washing his feet. Tell that person, "I care about you, Jesus cares about you, and I want to pray for you - - but I don't need to know any details. I just want you to know I still love you - and if you are repentant before the Lord, I'm going to stand with you!" Jesus said "if I then, as your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet ... If you know these things, happy are you if you DO them." (Jn. 13:14, 17) Now that we "know these things" as Jesus said, we can DO THEM. I ask you -- are you willing to DO THEM? Are you ready to take up your towel of kindness in love? ♡

elders of the people.

Let us listen to the dialogue between Jesus and these religious leaders. They asked Jesus, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?" Their question was very confrontational, rude and insulting. Because they were the **chief priests** and **elders** they believed that all authority was in their hands. What foolish

men they were to be challenging the Ultimate Authority! They had not given Jesus authority to do the things He had been doing. What things had He been doing? **21:1-8** - He made a triumphal entry into the city; **21:9-11** - He received praise from the people; **21:12-13** - He cleared out the temple ("their" place of authority!); **21:14-16** - He healed the blind and lame in

## Bible Study *cont.*

the temple. Jesus had been doing things as if He were in authority - the Messiah, the Christ. Did Jesus have authority? YES! Where did He get it? From the source of all authority - the Father!

How did Jesus answer their question? **Matt. 21:24, 25a** He answered by asking them a question. He referred back to the baptism of John the Baptist who had been beheaded by Herod. Jesus' question was: "Was John's baptism from heaven or from men?" He was asking whether John got his authority from them or some other person. Jesus caught them at their own game. This gave them a big problem. They did not believe John or his baptism was from God, but they didn't dare say so because they were afraid of the people who did believe that John was a prophet from God. But if they said what the people wanted to hear, Jesus could ask them, "Then why didn't you believe him if his baptism was from God?"

When they answered, like the hypocrites they were, "We don't know", Jesus said that He would therefore not tell them by what authority He had been doing things. John had baptized **with God's authority** because he had been **sent by God**. Jesus did His work **with God's authority** because He had also been **sent by God**. In fact, **He was God's Son**. If we are sent/called by God, He will give us the authority to speak for Him. **Matt. 28:18-19** This exchange with the chief priests only proved that they did not actually believe God or anyone He sent. They actually thought that they had the authority in God's house over God's Son! Jesus then told 2 parables to teach them and others listening what their real condition was.

The first parable was about a man who had 2 sons. **Matt. 21:28-30** What did he ask his first son to do? "Son, go and work today in the vineyard." What was his son's answer? "I will not!" Did he finally obey - do the will of his father? Yes, he repented of his rebellion and did his father's will. What happened when he asked the second son the same thing? He sounded polite and obedient when he said he would go, but

then he did not go. He appeared agreeable and polite but in actuality he was rebellious and disobedient as seen by his works. He ended up not doing the father's will though hypocritically claiming to do it. Jesus made the chief priests & elders answer his question: "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" **Matt. 21:31a** It was obvious. The first repented of his disobedience to do his father's will. The second seemed to be more obedient, but actually he refused to do his father's will. **Matt. 7:21-23** All the good talk and appearances will not satisfy God who is looking for repentant and obedient hearts. All the talk in the world does not impress God. He is waiting to see what we will do!!

Jesus now applied His parable by speaking some very straightforward words to His audience. "I tell you the truth" means something important will follow. What followed? **Matt. 21:31b** Which of the 2 sons represent the tax collectors and prostitutes? It was the first son who disobeyed and then repented and did his father's will. Whom does the other son represent? Jesus says, looking at the religious leaders, "He represents you!" Notice the use of "you" in verses 31-32. How do you think the important religious leaders liked to hear that the tax collectors & prostitutes would enter the kingdom ahead of them? How would our church leaders like to hear today that the people in prison and the adulterers will enter the kingdom ahead of them?

Why would the despised people enter the kingdom ahead of the so-called holy people? Jesus again referred back to John. John showed them the way of righteousness but they didn't believe him. **Matt. 21:32a** The despised people did! And when the religious leaders saw the miracle of despised sinners believing and being changed to saints, did it make a difference to them? **Matt. 21:32b** No! They still didn't repent and believe John - and here they were, accusing Jesus instead of believing Him! Besides that, Jesus saw into their hearts and knew that in a few days those

same chief priests would have Him crucified.

Jesus next told a parable about a landowner. **Matt. 21:33** Who is the owner of everything? Of course, it's God. This land owner took a lot of trouble to have a nice vineyard. If he were looking for only beauty he would have planted a flower garden. He was looking for fruit! What do you think this vineyard represents? It could represent Israel or the church or each of us individually. God has created our bodies and given us all we need to be a fruitful tree or vineyard. What did the owner do? He planted it; built a wall of protection from animals; dug a winepress to produce wine from the grapes; built a watchtower to keep watch for enemies who might destroy the vineyard. Since he owned this vineyard and worked hard to make it productive, what did he expect from it? He expected fruit! **Matt. 21:34** He rented it out to tenants to take care of it while he went on a journey. At harvest time he sent his servants to collect his fruit. Was this fair and just? Yes, he had every right to collect his fruit from his land.

Because the tenants didn't want to acknowledge their responsibility and accountability to the Owner, but wanted to use the fruit in their own way to profit themselves, they wouldn't listen to the servants. In fact, their resentment against the owner was evident in the way they treated his beloved servants. What did the tenants do to the owner's servants? **Matt. 21:35-37** They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. How patient was the owner? He could have had them put in jail or executed for killing his servants. Instead he sent more servants. They did the same thing. Finally, he sent his own son, feeling that they would respect his son. Instead, what did they do? **Matt. 21:38-39** They took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. This is exactly what they did to Jesus. They took and beat Him, led Him out to Calvary and killed Him on a cross. Can we grasp the enormity of this sin, rebellion and violence? These Jews had been mistreating God's

servants for many years. Now they showed the full extent of their rebellion by killing God's own Son. Do we grieve today over the way God's servants and His Son are being treated?

Jesus asked the listeners to judge what the owner should do after the terrible things the tenants had done to the owner's servants and his son. **Matt. 21:40-41** They answered correctly. What was their answer? "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and rent the vineyard to other tenants." God had greatly blessed the people of Israel, rescuing them from Egypt, and giving them a wonderful land. But it was only borrowed. He still owned it! But God's people did not bring forth the good fruit that He was expecting. He sent His servants, the prophets, to remind them and bring them back to Him, but they only persecuted and killed them. So God in His patience sent others, and they did the same. Finally, He sent His own Son - **the One who was telling them this parable!!!** And they were about to kill Him! They had rightly judged themselves that they were "wretches who would come to a wretched end!"

Now it was time for Jesus to apply His parable. He reminded them of the scripture in **Psalms 118:22-23**. He was the stone that had been rejected by the builders - His own people. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven would be taken away from them and given to a people who would produce fruit. **Matt. 21:43** Who are they? The prostitutes and tax collectors, Gentiles and aliens who believe and do the will of God! We are like the 2 sons and the tenants. This life is our test. Will we only say, "Yes" to the Father without living that "yes" every day in every way? What are we doing with the vineyard God has placed us in (home, work, school, church)? Are we faithfully tending it so that it can produce fruit which will bring joy to the Owner - our Lord?

This Stone or Rock, which is Jesus, can either get us ready for the kingdom or keep us out of it. **Matt. 21:44** If we fall on the stone for mercy and forgiveness, we will be broken. Repentance is brokenness, and

## Bible Study by Juanita Simpson

### The Parables of Jesus Part 9 The Two Sons and the Tenants Matthew 21:23-4

Jesus had many confrontations with the religious leaders of His time. They thought that they were the experts in the Law and everything that pertained to God. Because they thought they

already knew everything and were already righteous, they were blind and deaf to the things Jesus tried to teach them. We have to look at **Matt. 21:23-27** to understand the background of these 2 parables and who the audience was. Where was Jesus? He was in the temple courts. What was He doing? Teaching. Who were listening besides the common people? The chief priests and