

**Sermon V- Jonathan Edwards**  
***“Charity Dispose Us to Do Good”***

**Love is patient, love is kind - I Corinthians 13:4**

**DOCTRINE: That charity, or a truly Christian spirit, will dispose us freely to do good to others.**

I. The nature of the duty of doing good to others –includes consideration of the *act* – doing good; the *objects*, or those to whom we should be doing good; and the *manner* in which it should be done – freely.

A. The act

1. Persons may do good to the souls of others

Men may be, and oftentimes are, the instruments of spiritual and eternal good to others; and wherein any are so, they are the instruments of greater good to them than if they had given them the riches of the universe. And we may do good to the souls of others, by taking pains to instruct the ignorant, and to lead them to the knowledge of the great things of religion; and by counseling and warning others, and stirring them up to their duty, and to a seasonable and thorough care for their souls' welfare; and so again, by Christian reproof of those that may be out of the way of duty; and by setting them good examples, which is a thing most needful of all, and the commonly most effectual of all for the promotion of the good of their souls.

Men may do good to the souls of vicious persons, by being the means of reclaiming them from their vicious courses; or to the souls of neglecters of the sanctuary, by persuading them to go to the house of God; or to the souls of secure and careless sinners, by putting them in mind of their misery and danger; and so may be the instruments of awakening them, and the means of their conversion, and of bringing them home to Christ... Saints, too, may be the instruments of comforting and establishing one another, and of strengthening one another in faith and obedience; of quickening, and animating, and edifying one another; of raising one another out of dull and dead frames, and helping one another out of temptations, and onward in the divine life;

of directing one another in doubtful and difficult cases; of encouraging one another under darkness or trial; and generally, of promoting each other's spiritual joy and strength, and thus being mutually fellow-helpers on their way to glory. (p. 97-98)

*How could this type of “doing good to the souls of others” look as we interact with our co-workers, our neighbors, our communities?*

*How could this type of “doing good to the souls of others” look as we interact with one another in the church?*

2. Persons may do good to others in outward things, and for this world

We may do good to others, by furthering their outward estate or substance; or in aiding their good name, and thus promoting their esteem and acceptance among men; or by anything that may truly add to their comfort or happiness in the world, whether it be in the kind word or the considerate and benevolent deed. And by endeavoring thus to do good to them externally, we are under the greater advantage to do good to their souls; for, when our instructions, counsels, warnings, and good examples are accompanied with such outward kindness, the latter tends to open the way for the better effect of the former, and to give them their full force, and to lead such persons to appreciate our efforts when we seek their spiritual good. And we may thus contribute to the good of others, in three ways: by giving to them of those things that they need, and we possess; by doing for them, and taking pains to help them, and promote their welfare; and by suffering for them, and aiding them to bear their burdens, and doing all in our power to make those burdens light. **In each of these ways, Christianity requires us to do good to others.**

*How does the description of this kind of love tie in to CPC's desire to be missional?*

B. The objects – those to whom we should do good

1. To both the good and the bad (Romans 12:17, 21; 1 Peter 3:9)
2. To both friends and enemies (Matthew 5:44-45)

3. To both the thankful and unthankful (Luke 6:32-35)

C. The manner - *freely*

1. not to be done in a mercenary spirit (Luke 6:27-36)

We are not to do it for the sake of any reward or expected from the one to whom we do the good...that our doing good be free, and not mercenary, it is necessary that what we do, be done, not for the sake of any temporal good, or to promote our temporal interest, or honour, or profit, but from the spirit of love. (p. 102)

2. it is requisite that we do it *cheerfully* or *heartily*, and with real good-will to the one we would benefit (1 Peter 4:9-11, Deuteronomy 15:7-11)

What is done heartily, is done from love; and what is done from love, is done with delight, and not grudgingly or with backwardness and reluctance of spirit (p. 102)

3. we do it liberally and bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:8)

We are not be scant and sparing in our gifts or efforts , but to be open-hearted and open - handed. (p. 103)

*What are the things that hold us back from being free in doing good to others?*

II. A Christian spirit will dispose us thus to do good to others

- A. The main thing in that love which is the sum of the Christian spirit, is benevolence, or good-will to others

Love of benevolence is that disposition which leads us to have a desire for, or delight in, the good of another; and that is the main thing in Christian love, yea, the most essential thing in it, and that whereby our love is most of an imitation of the eternal love and grace of God, and of the dying love of Christ, which consists in benevolence or good-will to men, as was sung by the angels at his birth (Luke 2:14). So that the main thing in Christian love is good-will, or a spirit to delight in and seek the good of those who are the objects of that love. (p. 104)

- B. The most proper and conclusive evidence that such a principle is real and sincere, is, its being effectual (1 John 3:16-19, James 2:14-16)

**The proper and conclusive evidence of our wishing or willing to do good to another, is to do it.** In every case nothing can be plainer, than that the proper and conclusive evidence of the will, is the act; and the act always follows the

will, where there is power to act. The proper and conclusive evidence of a man's sincerely desiring the good of another, is his seeking it in his practice – for whatever we truly desire, we do thus seek. **The Scriptures therefore speak of doing good, as the proper and full evidence of love; and they often speak of loving in the deed or practice; as being the same thing as loving in truth and reality.** (p. 104)

1. In the way of reproof

If a truly Christian spirit disposes persons freely to do good to others, then all those that are of a contrary spirit and practice may by it be reproofed. (p.105)

2. Exhorts all to the duty of freely doing good to others

Let our benevolence and beneficence be universal, constant, free, habitual, and according to our opportunities and ability; for this is essential to true piety, and required by the commands of God. (p.106)

- a. What a *great honour* it is to be made an instrument of good in the world
- b. Thus freely to do good to others, is but *to do to them as we would have them do to us*.
- c. Let us consider *how kind God and Christ have been to us*, and how much good we have received from them.

Their kindness in things pertaining to this world has been very great. The divine mercies are new to us every morning and fresh every evening: they are as ceaseless as our being. And still greater good things has God bestowed for our spiritual and eternal good. He has given us what is of more value than all the kingdoms of the earth. He has given His only-begotten and well-beloved Son – the greatest gift He could bestow. And Christ has not only done, but he has suffered, great things, and given himself to die for us; and all freely, and without grudging, or hope of reward. “Though he was rich” with all the riches of the universe, “yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). And what great things hath God done for those of us who are converted, and have been brought home to Christ; delivering us from sin, justifying and sanctifying us, making us kings and priests unto God and giving us a title “to an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4). And all this, when we are not

good, but evil and unthankful, and in ourselves deserving only of wrath. (p. 107-108)

- d. Let us consider what great rewards are promised to those that freely do good to others.

And when Christ shall come to judgment, and all people shall be gathered before him, then to those who were kind and benevolent, in the true spirit of Christian love, to the suffering and the poor, he shall say (Matthew 25:34–35, 40), “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me....Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (p. 110)

*How can we pray for and encourage one another to increase our ability to give, do and suffer for the good of others in way that shows love to Christ?*