

Explore the Bible: Loved

February 1, 2021

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for Feb. 21 focuses on Luke 7:40-50.*

One of my personal pastoral heroes of the faith is the late, great John Bisagno (1934-2018). I was a college freshman at Rice University in 1971, just a year after Bisagno became pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church. I had the privilege of being baptized by Brother John, introduced by him to the Baptist faith, and mentored by one of our most outstanding Baptist pastors and pulpiteers. What an exhilarating time it was to be a part of those early years of his dynamic ministry in Houston. Bisagno eventually led the church to grow to about 22,000 members during his 30-year tenure as pastor.

One of my favorite books he wrote is titled *Love is Something You Do*. Drawing from his years of counseling married couples, the basic premise of the book is that love is not something you think or feel; love is something you do. It's an action that demonstrates what you think and feel. And this active, doing nature of love isn't just confined to marriage relationships.

The sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee didn't want to just *say* she loved Jesus. She didn't want to just *think* about loving Jesus or *feeling* some loving *feelings* toward Jesus. No, as verse 47 says, she wanted to *show* her *great love* for Jesus. For her, love for Jesus was something you *do*.

Four types of love

There are at least four Greek words that are used for "love," although not all of them are found in the New Testament.

The first Greek word is *eros*, which refers to romantic or sexual love. From

it we get the word *erotic*. This specific word is not found in the New Testament.

The second Greek word is *storge*, which refers to familial love like the love of a brother and sister. It, too, is not used in the New Testament.

The third Greek word for love is *philia*, which refers to a friendship kind of love. We get the word Philadelphia (“city of brotherly love”) from this Greek word. A New Testament example is found in Romans 12:10, “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” (ESV)

The fourth Greek word for love is *agape*. This word is used to describe God’s love and the kind of love we as Christians are to emulate. This is a godly, selfless, sacrificial, unconditional kind of love. Interestingly, it is the most common word for love found in the New Testament, used over a hundred times. It is perhaps best represented in the famous “love chapter” of 1 Corinthians 13: “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (vv. 4-7, NIV)

The ‘doing’ nature of love

A quick look at the verbs used in this passage demonstrates the active, “doing” nature of *agape* love.

And so, it’s no coincidence that the word used to describe the sinful woman’s love for Jesus in Luke 7:47, is the word *agape*. (“...as her great *love* has *shown*.”) Her love for Jesus was something to be shown, demonstrated, done. For her, love was *agape*; love is something you do.

It's easy for those of us who claim to be Christ followers to *say* we love Jesus. It's easy for us to *think* we love Jesus. It's easy for us to *feel* a little love for Jesus. But is love really something we *do* for Jesus? I like how Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, puts it in a [sermon](#) on Luke 7:

"Yes, we think, talk and sing about love, though it is quite obvious to any honest observer, we don't really understand it all that well. People are looking for love, but they are not always finding it. In Luke 7:36-50 we will not only find it, we will find it on display in a lavish and incredible display. We will learn that one who is forgiven much will love much, especially when the one who is doing the forgiving is the Son of God."

Love is something you do...lavishly, like the sinful woman in Luke 7 did as she anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume, and even her own tears. Is lavish love, *agape* love, something you are *doing* for Jesus today?

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