

Faith Calls...

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Pastor's Thoughts

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Love

Since February is the month of Valentine's Day, I thought I'd give some time to the subject of love.

It is said that the root of the Christian belief system is love. But what kind of love are we talking about? The Greek language identifies four types: phileo, agape, eros and storge. Of these, the Bible uses three: phileo, agape and eros.

God's love for his creation is *agape* love. It is giving and sacrificial. It is also called unconditional. Clearly, it is almost unnatural to humans. We must grow into agape love. We are to strive to give God agape love in return. The best example I can cite is, "Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That proves God's love for us" (Romans 5:7-8).

Part of that "going on to perfection" Methodists talk about, is not just learning and striving to return agape love to God, but to our fellow humans. We should strive to find a God-like unconditional and unselfish quality in our love of others. Jesus knew little or nothing about any one he healed or saved. Yet he offered himself to everyone. No prerequisite, no condition.

The love we have for one another is known as *phileo*, or "brotherly love." Think, "Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love." This is a love considered deeper than eros, and goes straight to the connection between two human beings, going beyond sexual attraction. It exists between best friends to the extent they would make sacrifices for the other, even literally dying for one another.

The love between persons in committed relationships is called *eros*. This is erotic love inspired by an emotional connection and the desire of sexual expression. It is, without doubt, a gift of God, intended for pleasure and procreation. It is intended to complete a relationship, not be its foundation or sole element.

Eros is also subject to great abuse when forced from a place of advantage or between those who do not consider themselves equal in a relationship. Assaultive behavior is never an act of love or sex, it is just abuse.

It was very purposeful that Jesus expressed the greatest commandments in the framework of love. To instruct that you are to love God with all of your entire being and then to love one another as you love yourself is a strong statement of what Christ's ministry was all about. In consideration of Christ's words, I am reminded, "God is first, others are second, and I am third."

Shalom,
David



Scripture: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

—1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Lenten Study

This Lent, experience a season of spiritual growth and renewal in Adam Hamilton's six-week, DVD-based study, *John: The Gospel of Light and Life*. Sundays at 9:45 in the Fellowship Hall, 3/5-4/9. ALL are welcome! You may sign up at the FYI table or with a Sunday School teacher. See Teresa Cozart for further details.

Valentine Banquet

Plan to attend the Annual Valentine Banquet hosted by Seekers SS, at Faith UMC on Sat., Feb. 11th, at 5:30pm. Enjoy a delicious meal, along with the greatest love songs of all times sung by Dave McLeod. Donations accepted. Please sign up at the FYI table.

Will You Be My Valentine?

My days are filled with yearning;
My nights are full of dreams.
I'm always thinking of you;
I'm in a trance, it seems.

You're all I ever wanted;
I wish you could be mine;
And so I have to ask you:
Will you be my Valentine?

By Joanna Fuchs

Deadline for Mar. newsletter is Feb.15, 2017