



# Agape

- Not a command to feel affection or to like others
- Command to offer compassion....to help....to pray for others
- **ACTIVE** concern—helping and hoping that another will live into their full created self
- Compassion: “feel with”
- Speaks compassion when compassion hurts
- Risks initiating **reconciliation** whether it expects positive response or not
- Always seeking reconciliation—shalom—wholeness—harmony—looking toward coming kingdom

# CAREFUL.....

- Often viewed as impossible so shrug it off or feel guilt
- Room for self-concern and self-protective boundary setting, martyr complex
- Never oppressive or used to keep people in their place
- “I know what is best for you” self-focused
- Individuality maintained—love doesn’t absorb persons into each other
- Love changes us—the attitudes/actions of others changes us
- Love-forgiveness-reconciliation go hand in hand

“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Luke 7:47

## Christian love flows from the drama of Jesus Christ

Jesus acted with mercy toward outcasts, fed the hungry, healed the blind, taught the way, forgave the guilty, set his face toward Jerusalem and died.

He did this not for the sake of self-sacrifice but to **actively deliver** humanity into the community of reconciliation, of shalom, of wholeness, of salvation

We are called to do the same NOW

Love is not just a single principle but a complex drama with different dramatic actions, layers, and characters that change and grow.

Reducing love to one theme or type screens out other Scriptural meanings that need to confront us

**Luke 10:25-37**

# **Love sees with compassion**

## **Enters into the situation of persons in bondage**

Samaritan had strong emotional response and entered into the situation of the victimized

Compassion moves toward need not “to the other side of the road”

Compassion for those vulnerable, in bondage, oppressed, powerless

# Love does deeds of deliverance

The deeds done by the Samaritan were expensive, life risking, burdensome...  
HOWEVER that is not Jesus' emphasis

Each of the deeds is precisely what is needed to deliver the man from his helplessness  
He needs his wounds washed and dressed, he needs taken to a safe place, he needs  
someone to monitor him, he needs money for further care

Jesus taught delivering love, love that delivers people into a better place

Delivering love is ACTIVE but not condescending doesn't make people dependent

It involves deeds not just feelings

28, 37 Do this, go and do

# **Love invites into community**

## **Freedom, justice, future responsibility**

Not only free/liberate/help but also deliver into new reconciling community

God liberated Hebrews from Egypt, delivered through wilderness to covenant community

The Samaritan liberates the man from near death and helplessness.

Brought into community of the inn, care of the innkeeper. Arranges future community paying innkeeper to continue care AND by promising to return

The law of the time allowed a person with an unpaid debt to be enslaved until debt paid.

Samaritan assures the man's freedom by preventing this.

# Love confronts those who exclude

Excluded: orphans, widows, lepers, poor, prostitutes, lame, Samaritans, blind, women, pagans, children.....anyone considered unclean, unworthy by the establishment

Who do we exclude.....

Parables example a common theme...one of surprising reversal

Kingdom offers surprising reversal of society---all will share in abundance of God's love—justice and equality will reign and all will be able to live into the fullness of who God created them to be in shalom with all creation

**We are called to work toward this kingdom life NOW not just wait for it to come!**



[God's] divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him...for this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness

and to goodness, knowledge;  
and to knowledge, self-control;  
and to self-control, perseverance;  
and to perseverance, godliness;  
and to godliness, ...kindness;  
and to ...kindness, **LOVE**

for if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of Jesus.

2 Peter 1:3-9