

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

So Loved

John 3:16 - "...For God **so loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

I recently preached a sermon on the word "love." You may know that in the Greek language there are four words for "love." Only two of these words are used in the Bible. The word for "love" that is most often used to describe Christian love is "agape." This love is a thoughtful, discerning, service-oriented, giving type of love. It is typically less passionate and emotional than the word "love" we popularly use in English.

It's important to note that Jesus' use of the word "so" emphasizes that even agape-type love – which is typically cerebral and stoic -- can have a passionate tone. In fact, when we read John 3:16, we should think of "The Passion."

For me, there are similarities between agape love and the love that we have for either our children or spouses. This love involves a natural feeling of affection, but more often than not, it involves a lot of thought, discernment, and commitment. Of course, there are times when we "so love" those around us that we are brought to either great joy or sometimes profound heartbreak and tears.

In the moments after my daughter Jennifer died, the flood of pain and love poured out from each of us in the family. We happened to all be home that night, a fairly rare occurrence for us. I can't speak for the rest of the family, but as I looked upon her face, when it was clear that she had stepped into the throne room of the Almighty, I had a whirlwind of joy and pain spiraling in my heart. For me, that was a "so love" experience.

Now, take a moment to think about that same kind of devoted and passionate love directed toward you from God. The love of our Heavenly Father fervently wanting to give us life, to bring us back from the dead - and having the power to do so, but only through the commitment to sacrifice His own Son - this a love that borders on being incomprehensible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we know that You love us as Your children. When we look at the cross, we understand a bit how You loved us, soooo much. Help us remember that love. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

--Pastor Foote

