

409 Looking for love?

After finding Rachel's comments about truth and love so helpful,^[408] I decided to pursue 'love' a little more. I knew that John's first epistle focused on love, so first I soaked on that for a couple of days, but then my thoughts went to Jesus' final (thus especially important?) words to his disciples: John 13–17.

But I decided to read the *whole* of John's Gospel to get a global ('aerial') view – I found this a really fruitful method when studying Romans in 2019. What first struck me was not 'love' but, if you like, Rachel's 'truth'. Those first 12 chapters felt totally focused on the truth of exactly *who Jesus is*, and on our need to *believe* in this person. And this resonated with Rachel's insistence on truth *and* love. This was then reinforced over Christmas by repeated hearings of John 1: the word (Jesus) was full of grace *and* truth.

Next came thinking of the truth (the word) as a person, and maybe love as a person. Then, today I thought of 'the' love passage, 1 Cor 13. Preachers sometimes suggest exchanging 'love' for 'Jesus'. So maybe 'truth' is a relationship, too? Pause for thought?

Now, one reader is worried by my toying with 'liberal' (or Rachel's 'progressive'), but note that the kind of love I'm emphasising is not a wishy-washy 'nice loving feeling' but a lay-down-your-life love. And John 13 starts with ³*Jesus knew [who and what he was]*
⁴*So he got up from the supper-table, took off his clothes, and wrapped himself in a towel...*"
That's Love in action.

My friend is also worried about 'truth': are there 'truths' that I'm going soft on? Well, I hadn't heard the term 'progressive', so I AI-ed it. Most of it seemed OK, but I was nervous of its line on the resurrection, hinting at a 'spiritual' interpretation. (I don't like that term; practical everyday foot-washing is just as 'spiritual' as anything.)

Close to the love passage comes 1 Cor 15, with resurrection being as solid and real and physical as you can get, and the continuous 2000-year testimony of the church is that we believe in the resurrection of the body, *not* we believe in a 'nice resurrection feeling'.

We, as a church (in the broadest sense), need to work with God to rescue people, right? So I think we need to work *together*. We've spent far too much time and energy arguing over our particular interpretations of the Bible. (The image that sprang to mind was of our building very different edifices from the Lego bricks of Bible verses. Is that unfair?)

Can we not just hold on to the credal essentials of 'what happened' + 'who Jesus is', and then agree to disagree about some of the other things?!

I really think the key
is how we *dis*agree
Be less concerned with 'me'
and focus more on 'we'
And might the world then see
how great it all could be
with *Jesus* as the key?!

Paul Bev. 8.1.26