

Sunday 02/09/25 – Panama Methodist Church

Sermon Title: “What’s Love Got To Do With It: The Four Loves”

Series: Part 2 – “Friendship” Romans 12:10, John 11:1-3, 35-36

(Slides 1-17 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)

This month of February is a month of many things, as we discussed last Sunday. Of the many things that the month of February is, many often think of Valentine’s Day when they think of February. Even further, for many, February is the month of love. Yet, Biblically speaking, in the original Greek language of the Christian New Testament there were as many as eight different words for love. This means in the ancient Greek, and maybe even the modern-day Greek, as I said last Sunday, different types of love had entirely different words and different meanings. This morning, we will be talking about the type of Biblical love often known as “Friendship.” In the original Greek language of the Christian New Testament, this type of love in the Greek is called “Philia”

This morning in Part 2 of 4 of our “What’s Love Got To Do With It: The 4 Loves” sermon series, we will be discussing “Friendship” or “Philia”. Here is our opening slide:

Slide 1 – (“What’s Love Got To Do With It: The 4 Loves” Series: Part 2 of 4)



Before jumping in to discussing “Friendship” or “Philia” love let us look briefly at what we discussed last week. Specifically, last week we talked about the Biblical type of love of “Affection,” or “Storge.” Once again, this is what “Affection” or “Storge” love is:

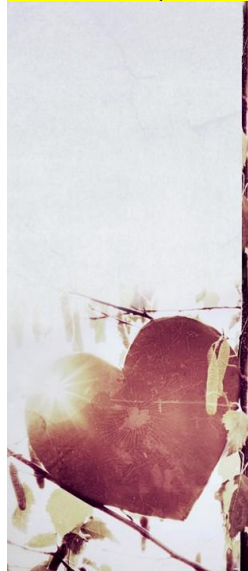
Slide 2 – (“What is the Biblical Definition of Love?)

**Review from Part 1:
“Affection” or “Storge” Love**

- One of the Four Biblical forms of love is “Affection” or “Storge” in Greek.
- Refers to natural or instinctual affection, such as the love of a parent towards offspring and vice versa.
- Who do you give and show “Storge” love to?

Here is also a brief review of the definition of Biblical love, and four of the characteristics of Biblical love:

Slide 3 – (“What is the Biblical Definition of Love?”)



What is the Biblical Definition of Love?

- The Bible defines love as a way of relating to others, and it has a deeper meaning than just a feeling. It is a commandment to love God and others, and it is a way to show that you are a follower of Christ.

Slide 4 – (“What are the Characteristics of the Biblical Def. of Love? # 1)



What are the Characteristics of the Biblical Definition of Love?

- **Patient and kind:** Love is not easily angered, and it does not rejoice in evil.
- **Trusting and hopeful:** Love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

Slide 5 – (“What are the Characteristics of the Biblical Def. of Love? # 2)




What are the Characteristics of the Biblical Definition of Love?

- **Self-sacrificing:** Love is not self-seeking, and it does not dishonor others.
- **Unconditional:** Love is a loyal and persistent love that is based on covenant commitment.

With this said, let us discuss the second of the four types of Biblical loves, “Friendship” or “Philia.” Here are a couple of slides of the definition of this type of Biblical love:

Slide 6 – (“Part 2: “Friendship” or “Philia” # 1)

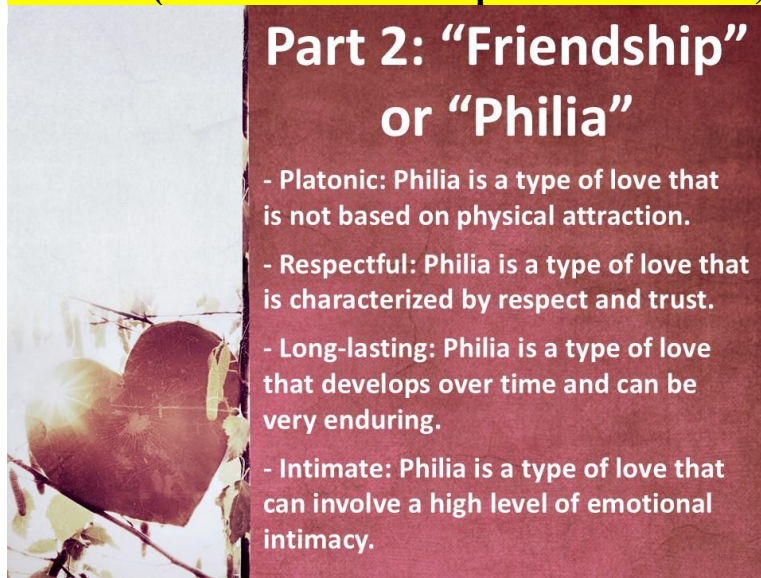


Part 2: “Friendship” or “Philia”

- What is a “Philia” love?

“Philia”. Original Greek: φιλία (philia) Philia is affectionate love. Philia is the type of love that involves friendship. Philia is the kind of love that strong friends feel toward each other.

Slide 7 – (“Part 2: “Friendship” or “Philia” # 2)



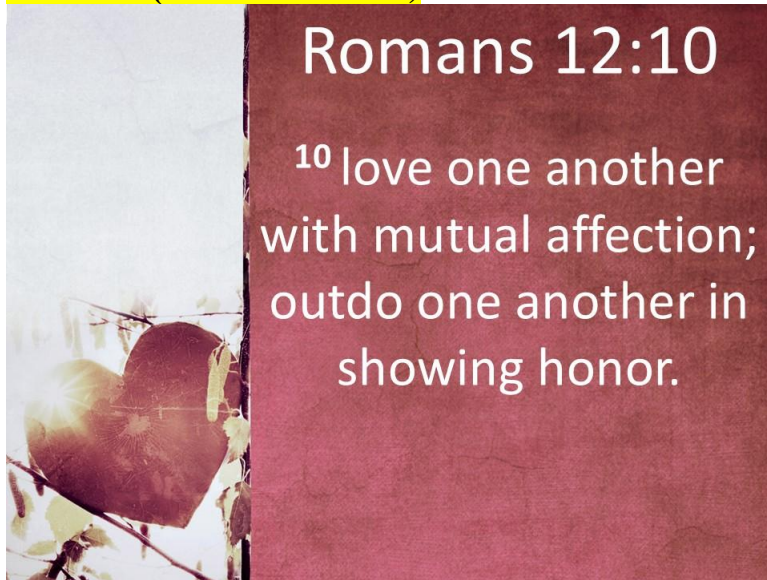
**Part 2: “Friendship”
or “Philia”**

- Platonic: Philia is a type of love that is not based on physical attraction.
- Respectful: Philia is a type of love that is characterized by respect and trust.
- Long-lasting: Philia is a type of love that develops over time and can be very enduring.
- Intimate: Philia is a type of love that can involve a high level of emotional intimacy.

As we heard all of this all being read, here is a question that I have for us to think about this morning, do you have a best friend? Or do you have some close friends that you have known for years that you love dearly? What is different about the love and the relationships that you have with your best and or close friends and other people? I have a best friend from high school, who lives in Hawaii, and we have not seen each other in years. I really need to go to Hawaii to see my friend Scott. So once again, do you have a best friend? Do you have good and close friends? What is the difference between the relationships and love you have them, versus other people in your lives?

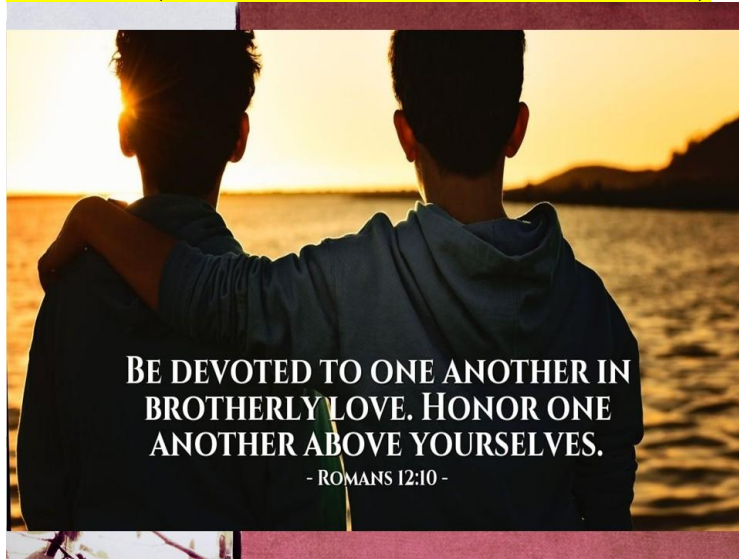
A good verse of scripture that speaks in part of about “Friendship” love or “Philia,” is Romans 12:10 that says:

Slide 8 – (“Romans 12:10)



This is a really high bar, and God is calling us to love each other extravagantly and to love each other boldly. It is not a competition but may we all truly love each other deeply and with great compassion. May we seek to love each other more, and more deeply. If you have a best friend, or really good friends, I encourage us all to reach out to them today. Remind them of how much they mean to us, and why we it is great to share “Philia” love with them. In fact, here is a picture of a good example of the Biblical love of “Affection,” or “Philia.”

Slide 9 – (Picture of “Affection” or “Philia”)



Of all the examples that I can think of friendship, the one that I think of the most is from the movie Forrest Gump with Tom Hanks. For those of us that have never seen this movie, actor Tom Hanks plays the character “Forrest Gump.” At one point in this movie, “Forrest Gump” played by Tom Hanks enlists in the United States Army, and heads to basic training. Another new recruit named Benjamin Buford "Bubba" Blue, or just “Bubba,” befriends “Forrest Gump” or Tom Hanks in basic training, when no one else will. It is hard for me to believe that this movie came out thirty-one years ago, but in this movie, Bubba talks Forrest Gump into going into the shrimping business with him after they are out of the army.

Forrest Gump, Bubba, and other soldiers then get sent to fight in the Vietnam War. In one battle scene in the movie Forrest Gump runs out of the forest from the enemy army, and he soon realizes that he is running alone. Yet, he needs to go back for his best friend “Bubba.” Every time that he runs back in the forest

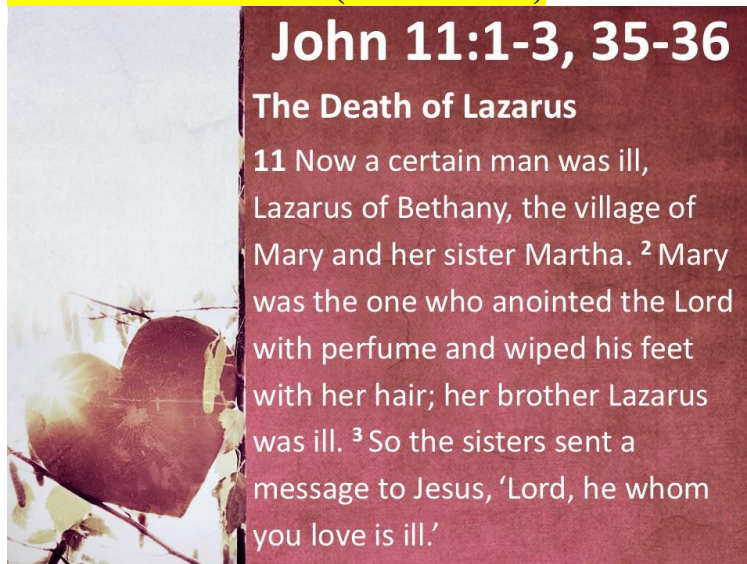
though, he finds one then another wounded US soldier. He is finally told that the whole area of the forest that they were fighting in will be bombed with napalm that will burn up all the vegetation. The problem though, is that Forrest Gump has not found his best friend Bubba. So, he runs back in, gets Bubba, and runs out as the whole forest is ignited in fire behind him. Bubba then dies. After the war, in order to honor his friend Bubba, Forrest Gump then starts a shrimping business. This business gets wealthy, and then Forrest Gump even gives Bubba's mother a fifty percent share of the profits of the shrimping business. Why? Well because "Bubba" was "Forrest Gump's" best friend, and they had a strong bond of "Philia" love. This example, if you never seen the movie Forest Gump, is a strong example of "Philia" love.

"Philia" is an amazing type of Biblical love, and if you have a best friend, then you are truly blessed. If you have five really good friends, then you are blessed indeed. Has a best friend or a good friend ever been there for you when you really needed them? Has a best friend or a good friend ever helped even in the middle of the night if you needed it?

My main preaching scripture for this morning is from the gospel of John 11:1-3, 35, 36. If you have your bible or your bible apps, I invite you to open them to the gospel of John 11. What we are looking at today is one of Jesus's good friends. This friend is Lazarus, or Lazarus of Bethany as he is sometimes called.

Lazarus was very ill in John 11, but by the time Jesus got to him, Lazarus had died. Not only had Lazarus died, but he was dead for four days when Jesus got there. Jesus knew Lazarus had died, and he waited two more day before returning to where Lazarus was. Jesus did this, so that when he raised Lazarus from the dead others would believe in Him. Let us read John 11:1-3 together. This is what it says:

Slide 10 – Slide 11 – (John 11:1-3)



So, Lazarus was very ill, and by the time that Jesus was told of this, Jesus knew that Lazarus had already died. In fact, when the messenger got to Jesus and told him 'Lord, he whom you live is ill' Jesus then says in John 1:4-6 this:

⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was (Jn. 1:4-6, NRSV).

After this, Jesus, and his disciples head to Judea, to so that Jesus can raise Lazarus from the dead. Bethany, where Lazarus died was about two miles from

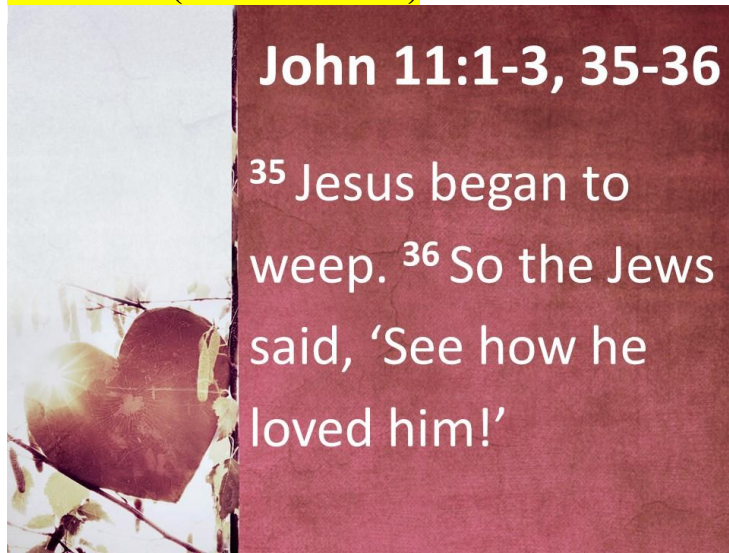
Judea. Jesus tells the disciples though, that Lazarus has fallen asleep, but he will “awaken” him in John 11:11. When Jesus and his disciples arrive, they find out that Lazarus has died, which Jesus already knew. First Lazarus’s sister Martha comes to him, tells Jesus that if He had come sooner that Lazarus would still be alive (Jn. 11:21, NRSV). Jesus then tells Martha that her brother Lazarus will rise again (Jn. 11:23, NRSV). Martha thinks that Jesus is talking about the resurrection from the dead at the end of time, but Jesus is talking about resurrecting Lazarus from the dead on that very day. Jesus then tells Martha in 11:25-26:

“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ” (Jn. 11:25-26, NRSV).

Martha then returns, and tells her sister Mary, and that Jesus wants to see her. Mary goes to Jesus, here is where we build up to a great example of “Philia” or “Friendship” love. Mary falls at Jesus’ feet and tells Jesus that if He had been there then her brother Lazarus would not have died. Mary was weeping and so were others that had come to mourn. Jesus was moved or as the scripture says, “greatly disturbed in spirit” at Mary and other’s tears. Let us stay in the gospel of John but read that last two versus that we will read together for this morning.

These two verses are John 11:35-36 that say this:

Slide 11 – (John 11:35-36)

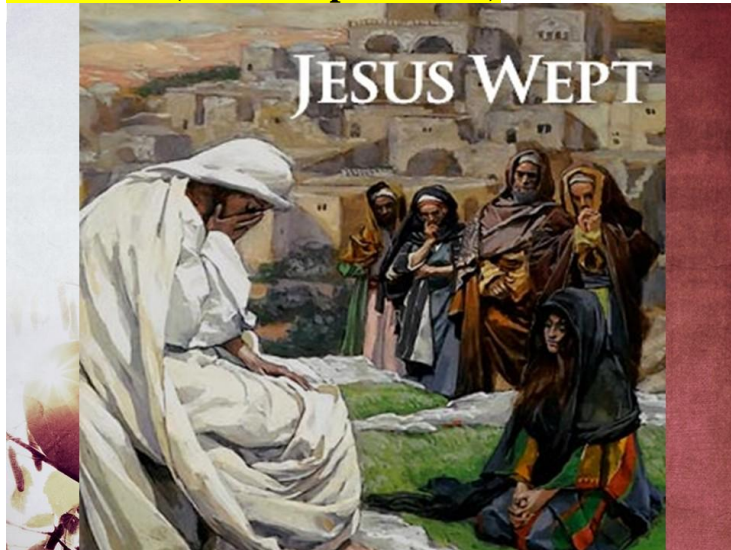


In some Bible translations John 11:35 is just “Jesus wept,” and it is the shortest verse in the Bible. Not only this, the Jews that were crying, along with Lazarus’ sisters Mary and Martha, and the other who came and were also upset. In this moment, Jesus cried. For some of us, the idea of Jesus shedding tears and weeping is not something that we often think of when we think of Jesus. Yet he cried. Jesus knew that once again that Lazarus had died, and that he we would raise him from the dead, but the emotion moved him. In response to Jesus weeping once again, John 11:36 says:

36 So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ (Jn. 11:36, NRSV).

While there is a lot in the story of the death and resurrection of Lazarus in John 11, there is also “Friendship” or “Philia” love. For Jesus’ friend “Lazarus,” who he loved, had died. So moved by the tears and the emotion of the situation, Jesus himself wept. Here is a depiction of this scene of Jesus weeping:

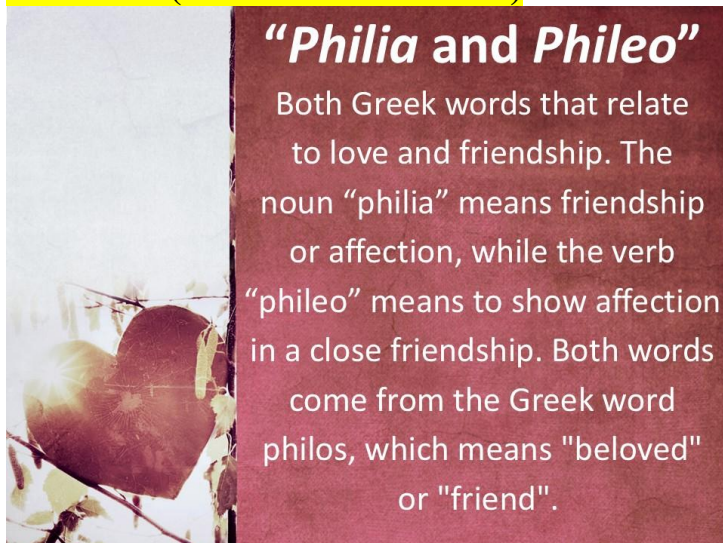
Slide 12 – (Jesus Wept Picture)



After this, in John 11:38-44, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, and many believed in Jesus. To have friends that you really love, a best friend, or close friend is “Philia” love or “Friendship” love. In doing a little bit of research I also read that this type of love can be called “Philia,” or “Phileo”

In the Greek. Here is a comparison of “Philia,” or “Phileo” love:

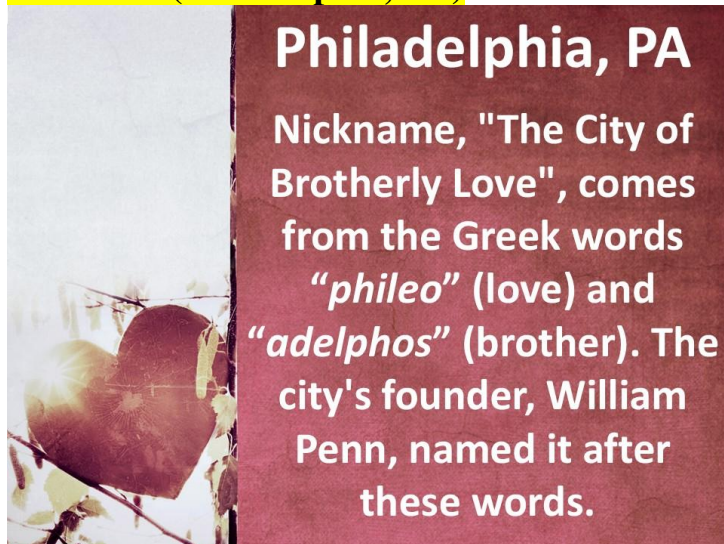
Slide 13 – (“Philia” vs. “Phileo”)



“Philia” is a noun that means “friendship or affection,” but “Phileo” is a verb that means “to show affection in a close friendship.” Jesus loved Lazarus as a friend with “Philia,” but I believe that Jesus’ tears and raising Lazarus from the dead showed “Phileo.”

There is also a connection to “Philia” or “Phileo” and the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Since the Philadelphia Eagles are playing in the Super Bowl today, this is perfect timing. Here is the connection to what we are discussing this morning to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

Slide 14 – (Philadelphia, PA)



Not knowing that the Philadelphia Eagles would be playing in the Super Bowl weeks ago when I planned this sermon series, I think it is pretty cool that we are talking about “Friendship” or “Philia,” or “Phileo” love this morning.

So how does this all apply to our lives today? I have a few slides for us to look at on how this applies to our lives today:

Slide 15 – (“Application To Our Lives:” # 1)



Application To Our Lives:

Characteristics of philia:

- **Mutual fondness:** Philia is based on a mutual fondness that goes beyond liking someone.
- **Trustworthy and long-lasting:** Philia is a type of love that's usually trustworthy and long-lasting.

Slide 16 – (“Application To Our Lives:” # 2)



Application To Our Lives:

Characteristics of philia:

- **Emotional intimacy:** People who experience philia for each other may have a high level of emotional intimacy.
- **Support through good and bad:** Philia is a bond that involves sticking together through

Slide 17 – (“Application To Our Lives:” # 3)



Application To Our Lives:

- How do you show philia love?

1. Philia — Affectionate Love
1. Engage in deep conversation with a friend.
2. Be open and trustworthy.
3. Be supportive in hard times.
4. Bonus: Gift a gratitude card to a friend.

On this day brothers and sisters, may we all celebrate the love of God, through Jesus Christ, and power of the Holy Spirit, but let us also celebrate “Friendship,” or “Philia” love. Amen.