

Episode 184 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 36 - Chapter 14 - The New Virtues 07

Post by "Don" of July 28, 2023 at 8:04 AM

Another enjoyable episode!

One thing that stuck out to me was Joshua's passing remark of his reaction to "Greek has different words for love." I couldn't resist providing some context.

The "ancient Greeks have different words for love" is analogous to "the Inuit have hundreds of words for snow." English can express just as many snow conditions as the Inuit just like English can express different conditions of love. However, translations of ἀγαπῶ, φιλῶ, etc. that all use English "love" completely mask the meaning of the Greek.

I'm especially aware of this after listening yesterday to an [episode of the Data over Dogma podcast](#) (start 38:10). They talked about John 21:15-17 and the different words translated as love in English. A Christian website, Got Questions?, summarizes the importance of the Greek words:

Quote from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Peter-do-you-love-me.html>

There is also an interesting contrast when you look at the Greek words for "love" used in John 21:15-17. When Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" in John 21:15-16, He used the Greek word agape, which refers to unconditional love. Both times, Peter responded with "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you," using the Greek word phileo, which refers more to a brotherly/friendship type of love. It seems that Jesus is trying to get Peter to understand that he must love Jesus unconditionally in order to be the leader God is calling him to be. The third time Jesus asks, "Do you love me?" in John 21:17, He uses the word phileo, and Peter again responds with "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you," again using phileo. The point in the different Greek words for "love" seems to be that Jesus was stretching Peter to move him from phileo love to agape love.

Just another example of how translation can either elucidate or obfuscate.