

ARE YOU A FRIEND OF JESUS?

John 15:12-15

On the night of His betrayal, as Jesus was gathered together with His apostles, He taught them many things preparing them for what was ahead both immediately and as they began the work He had been preparing for them. As He taught them, Jesus wants them to know about His relationship with them. In our text we noted that Jesus calls them friends. No longer would they be considered merely servants, but they are His friends.

TRUE friendship is something to be cherished. Proverbs 18:24 in the NKJV says, *A man who has friends must himself be friendly. But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.* Later translations, based on mss variants, translate this differently, *A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.* BUT, what both translations have in common is describing the value of a true friend. He is there at all times. Proverbs 17:17, *A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.*

We all need true friends (not just those professing friendship for some self-serving reason). AND we all need Jesus. So is Jesus your friend? In this lesson I would like to talk about what it means if Jesus is your friend.

I. We will seek to be like Him

- a. Friends usually have similar values and interests. It is what bonds them together.
- b. It is interesting the warnings we have about choosing the wrong types of friends. Proverbs 22:24, *Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go.* 1 Corinthians 15:33, warns that evil company corrupts good habits.
- c. Proverbs 12:26, *The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.* (NKJV).
- d. In our recent study on discipleship, the emphasis was on how we seek to be like our Lord. Romans 8:29 speaks of being conformed to His image. 1 Peter 2:21 – He leaves us an example (of suffering) that we should follow in His steps. 2 Corinthians 3:18 notes *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*
- e. In doing this, we will also seek and prefer others who also have similar interests. 2 Peter 1:1 speaks of those who have “like precious faith” (the same kind of faith as ours – LSB).
- f. Are we trying to be like Jesus? 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul noted that we are to imitate Christ. And as our friend, He has given us an example worthy of imitating (cf. Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21, etc.)

II. We will abide in His word

- a. Friends show due respect to one another. We will do what is necessary to maintain that relationship.
- b. John 8:31 – we will abide in His word.
- c. John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” This is about obedience. John 15:14 Jesus declared, *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*
- d. 1 John 5:2-3 – obeying Him is based on our love for Him. Thus we keep His commandments.
- e. James 2:23 – what made Abraham “the friend of God”? He believed and did what he was told.
- f. Luke 6:46, “*But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?*”
- g. Our relationship with Jesus is based on following His instructions. If He is our friend we WANT to obey Him. 1 John 2:6, if we abide in Him we will walk as he walked.
- h. As our friend, when we abide in Him, He abides in us. John 14:23, *Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

III. We will not be ashamed of Him

- a. A true friend is not ashamed to let others know about their friendship. And especially in troubling times, when needed, he will NOT deny his/her friends (cf. Proverbs 17:17).

- b. Furthermore, a true friend will not act in such a way as to betray or cause them to be ashamed. If you value friendship, you will protect it.
- c. The Bible speaks of not being ashamed of Him or His gospel.
 - i. Romans 1:16 – Paul was not ashamed of the gospel.
 - ii. 2 Timothy 1:8 – Paul encourages Timothy to not be ashamed of him, even in chains, or of the testimony of the Lord or Him;
 - iii. 1 Peter 4:16 – if anyone suffers as a Christian...
- d. We should NEVER be ashamed of our friend Jesus.
 - i. Sadly, many professed believers in Him were - John 12:42-43 – speaks of believers in Jesus who would not confess Him because of fear.
 - ii. And if we are ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of us - Mark 8:38.
 - iii. Hebrews 2:11, *For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, We will tell others about Him*

IV. **We will tell others about Him**

- a. Not only will a friend be there, they will also openly tell others about their friends. They will highlight their strengths and recommend them where they can be of help. True friends praise each other.
- b. IF Jesus is our friend, we want to tell others about Him. As His followers discovered Jesus they did not keep it to themselves. Consider:
 - i. John 1:40-42 – Andrew finds Peter and tells him about Jesus.
 - ii. Acts 8:4 – even when persecuted, they took the message of Jesus with them.
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 2:2 – wherever Paul went he took the message of Jesus with him.
 - iv. Acts 26 – even before Agrippa in chains, he made the case for his friend.
- c. If we confess Him, He will confess us – Matthew 10:32-33.

V. **We will anticipate being with Him**

- a. When friends are apart, they miss each other and desire to be together (again).
- b. Are we looking forward to our Lord's return so that we can spend eternity with Him?
 - i. Titus 2:11-13 – looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Philippians 1:23- Paul had a desire to depart and be with the Lord.
 - iii. Philippians 3:20-21 Paul addressed our citizenship in heaven and how we eagerly wait for our Savior so that we can be with Him.
 - iv. Hebrews 9:28, *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*
- c. We speak of anticipating to be with Him, but He also anticipates our being with Him as well – John 14:3 – He is coming again to receive us to Himself.

VI. **We will maintain that friendship at all costs**

- a. True friends are always there. They treasure their friendship and will WORK to maintain it. They would even sacrifice for one another, including limb and life. They value that friendship above their personal desires and pursuits.
- b. Considering our friendship with Jesus, FIRST consider what He has done for us. He lived a sinless life, suffered before and on the cross because of His love – John 15:13, Romans 5:8, etc. And as this friendship grows, we will NEVER outdo what He has done for us.
- c. BUT, we must cherish our bond with Him because our eternity depends on it. Acts 21:13 – Paul was willing to die for Jesus; Revelation 2:10 – we are called to be faithful unto death (both ways). Hebrews 10:38 notes that we live by faith and cannot draw back.

We sometimes sing the song, "What a friend we have in Jesus." In spiritual matters, you will not find one greater than Him. He wants to be your friend. He stands at the door and knocks – Revelation 3:20. Will you let Him in so that you can develop that friendship that will last for all eternity? Think about it.