

Friends

8-25-24

John 15:15 (ESV) O/H

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

When I look at Jesus, I am moved by HIS love for me, HIS indwelling power, HIS majesty, HIS self-sacrificing death on the cross to pay for my sins, HIS powerful future return, and the awe of spending eternity with HIM in heaven. However, I am a little rattled/uneasy with HIM calling me HIS friend. In verse 11, Jesus speaks to us as a friend.

John 15:11 (ESV)

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

We are joyful because of our relationship with HIM. Our joy should be full. In the original “full” literally means “crammed full” or perfect. Jesus wants us crammed full of joy.

Jesus calling us friends should not be that surprising. The OT even tells us God looks at us as friends.

James 2:23 (ESV)

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness—and he was called a friend of God.

Jesus is interested in us as friends. Jesus and believers as friends have a unique bond. Jesus considers our relationship with HIM personal, intimate, and friendly.

There is an old hymn titled “What a Friend we have in Jesus” written 1855. This hymn powerfully expresses insight about being a friend of Jesus.

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

With Jesus as our friend, full of HIS joy, we are to love Jesus’ other friends.

John 15:12 (ESV) O/H

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Understanding Jesus’ love for us, enables us to love one another. Jesus loves us without reservation and without limit and expects us to do the same.

John 15:13 (ESV) O/H

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus loved us as friends. Jesus is our example of true love.

1 John 3:16 (ESV) O/H

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Because love has its origin in God, those who belong to God should demonstrate love in their relations with one another. It is the proof of our own divine origin. Whoever truly loves “his brother” not only is born of God but also “knows God.” Jesus pronounces HIS own love for us and calls on us to love like HE loves.

1 John 4:7 (ESV) O/H

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

The “demand” for love thus arises from Jesus’ command, and the “meaning” of love is found in Jesus’ example. From HIS love for us we learn what love is. Realizing the love of Christ for us gives us the ability to love, whereby Christ calls us friends.

John 15:14 (ESV) O/H

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Not legalism or self-discipline, it is a loving relationship just like Jesus had with HIS Father.

Jesus had revealed to the disciples all that the Father had given to him. Therefore, they knew what to do and that God would ultimately bring it to a successful conclusion.

Friendship is a partnership of mutual esteem and affection! We are not tools but partners. God is looking for friends.

Jesus closes this section to HIS friends repeating what HE has already said.

John 15:17 (ESV) O/H

These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

No doubt HE wants us to pay close attention to what HE just said. The word “so” is important to understand what Jesus is telling us. “So” means: for a purpose, to explain something, to show intent as “so that” we can grasp the purpose.

Unfortunately, the NIV omits this word.

Jesus is telling us that HE is our friend “with the intent” or so that we as HIS friends will love one another. Jesus wants us to love each other as HE loved us. HE wants us all to be friends.

Look at what Christ has done ‘so that’ we all can be friends.

John 3:16 (ESV) O/H

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.