**Jesus Sticks Closer Than a Brother**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Proverbs 18:24**

**Sunday Morning**

**November 13, 2022**

**Proverbs 18:24**

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”

**No matter how great a friend is, there will always be misunderstandings and disappointments**

That’s just the nature of human relationships. But believers have a friend Who’s superior to all others, and that’s the Lord Jesus Christ.

He’s not only our Creator, Sovereign Ruler, Savior, and Lord, but our intimate friend as well. He will never leave, and nothing can ever separate us from His love.

Saints, because of His awesome greatness, the idea of Jesus being our friend may be difficult to imagine, but He has no problem seeing us as His friends.

When He lived as a man on earth, He referred to many people as a “friend.”

**Luke 5:19-20**

19 But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. 20 Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

**Luke 7:33-34**

33 "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

**Luke 12:4**

"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do”

**John 11:11**

“These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

**Matthew 26:49-50**

49 Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 50 But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

**How Jesus Expresses His Friendship**

Saints, John 15:12-17 is a wonderful description of how Christ demonstrates His friendship with us.

**1. Jesus’ Sacrificial Love**

**John 15:13**

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends”

Saints, there have always been people who’ve given their lives to save others, but Jesus’ sacrifice is much greater.

**How Jesus Expresses His Friendship >**

When someone lays down his life to save another, it’s usually a spontaneous act in a moment of great danger. In contrast, Jesus Christ planned to give His life for us before the foundation of the world.

He loved us before we were born and died on the cross to rescue us from sin while we were still His enemies.

**Romans 5:10**

“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”

Saints, unlike a person who dies to save a person physically, Jesus’ death on the cross rescues us from eternal punishment and gives us eternal life.

**2. By Taking the Initiative in the Relationship**

**John 15:16**

“You did not choose Me but I chose you”

Saints, no one can choose to be Christ’s friend; He alone takes the initiative. He didn’t choose us as His friends because of anything worthy in us or because of our good works.

The only reason we can have a relationship with the Lord is because of what He did for us. Our only role was to respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction of our sin and cry out for mercy and salvation.

**3. By the Revolutionary Effect on Our Lives**

**How Jesus Expresses His Friendship >**

**John 15:12**

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

**John 15:14-15**

14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Saints, when we were saved, our lives were completely changed. We were given a new heart and spirit. Now we relate to Christ in an entirely different fashion—as His intimate friends.

This transformation is characterized by a life of obedience to His commands and Christlike love for one another.

**4. By Revealing Divine Truth**

**John 15:15**

“I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you”

Saints, while Jesus was with His disciples, He revealed divine truths from His Father that couldn’t have been known any other way.

These revelations weren’t given to everyone, but only to those He called friends. After Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit brought to mind all that Jesus had told His disciples, and now they are recorded in the Bible for all of us to know.

**How Jesus Expresses His Friendship >**

**5. By Challenging Us**

**John 15:16**

“but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you”

Saints, the fruit Christ wants us to bear as His friends are internal qualities of the fruit of the Spirit

**Galatians 5:22-25**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Saints, in other words, He challenges us to become who He desires us to be and accomplish what He’s planned for us to do.

**The Kind of Friend Jesus Is**

**He accepts us** as we are but doesn’t leave us that way

**He has time for us** and is never too busy

**He talks to us** through His written Word

**He listens to us** when we pray

**1 John 5:15**

"And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."

**He forgives us** and grants us His perfect record of righteousness

**He understands us** in our struggles and weaknesses

**He walks with us** through our trials

**Hebrews 13:5**

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

**He’s available** to meet our needs in every circumstance

**He’s open** and doesn’t try to hide Himself

**He’s revealed His ways** and thoughts in His Word

**He’s sensitive** and knows us better than we know ourselves

**He encourages us** throughout life

**He’s patient and longsuffering with us** in our personal battles and frailties, and guides us in our spiritual growth

**Numbers 14:18**

'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

**He’s a giver** Everything we have is from Him, including life itself

**He touches us** in our times of need through the hands of His people and His presence with us

**He’s always truthful** and will never deceive us

**He’s always faithful** Whatever He says, He will do. He’s committed to us and will keep His promises

**He confronts us when we sin** because He loves us

**He desires the best for us** Sometimes that means He must rearrange our plans in order to make them like His

**He loves us unconditionally** There’s nothing we have to do to earn or merit His love.

**He gave His life for us**

**1 John 3:16**

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”

**1 Timothy 2:6**

who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

**John 10:11**

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

**John 10:15**

even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

**He’s prepared a place in heaven for us**

**John 14:1-3**

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

**He’s going to spend eternity with us**

**Revelation 21:1-8**

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

**1. Do you have a difficult time seeing Jesus Christ as your friend?**

**2. What misconceptions keep you from enjoying the intimate relationship that He died to give you?**

**3. What aspects of His friendship bring you encouragement and strength during this season of your life?**

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**