

**RELATIONSHIP SERIES
SERMON: FRIENDSHIP IN GOD'S HOUSE
2-26-23**

OPENER:

John 15:12-15 (NLT) ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

In our Christian verbiage words like “sin,” “redemption,” “sanctification” “repentance,” and “born again” are at the center of conversations about what it means to live out salvation. “Friendship” is not part of our conversation. Yet from these words of Jesus, nothing could be farther from the truth.

BECAUSE FOR JESUS, FRIENDSHIP IS THE ULTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER.

ILLUSTRATION:

Jesus' definition of friendship of *laying down one's life for one's friend*—is unheard of!

When we talk about friendship we don't speak in terms of life and death. We celebrate our friends, we eat and drink with friends, we take vacations with friends, we are there when a friend is in need; but the idea of friendship is not someone who lays down his or her life on behalf of another. We don't talk about dying for our friends.

Jesus' words asks us to reexamine the sometimes casual way we refer to others as our friend.....

- > Do we have superficial friends and relationships?
- > Or are friendships true and authentic?
- > Do we have friendships that are based solely on what we have in common, or activities that we like to do together, or how much fun we have hangin out?
- > Or do we have deep, life giving friendships echoing the one like we have with Jesus.

THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE AS JESUS HAS LOVED MAY BE THE MOST RADICAL WORDS OF THE BIBLE .

BECAUSE IT CLAIMS THAT THE LOVE THAT ENABLED JESUS TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS IS NOT UNIQUE JUST TO HIM.

THIS LOVE IS SUPPOSE TO BE REPLICATED AND EMBODIED OVER AND OVER AGAIN BY US.

JESUS IS THE MODEL AND THE SOURCE OF FRIENDSHIP.

- 1) As the model of friendship, he commands us to love as he has loved.**
- 2) As the source of friendship, he makes that possible by His friendship with us.**

SO WHAT KIND OF FRIEND IS JESUS? If we are to love like him and he commands us to be a friend to others like he is us to us, then what does that mean? Let's look at how some key passages that show how Jesus' entire life and death was an act of friendship.....

1. A TRUE FRIEND LAYS DOWN THEIR LIFE

Jesus says.... Vs. 2 *There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

Let's look at another passage in John where Jesus talks about laying down his life.....

John 10:3-14 (NLT) "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

In this parable Jesus identifies himself as the gate. This is in striking contrast to the hired hand who would put the sheep in jeopardy rather than risk his own life.

**THE SHEPHERD AND THE HIRED HAND IS LIKE THAT
BETWEEN A TRUE AND THE FALSE FRIEND.**

**THE FALSE FRIEND WILL NOT BE AROUND IN A TIME OF
CRISIS - BUT THE TRUE FRIEND WILL BE.**

ARE YOU THE GATE FOR A FRIEND?

- > Do you stand between them and the enemy? Do you defend and protect them? Do you say, no, you have to get pass me?
- >Do we smile and tell our friends how much we love them, but then as soon as they turn their back, we talk about them? We gossip to others about them?
- >Do we turn our back on others when they falter or fail?
- >When our friends are attacked by the enemy and instead of helping them fight, do we become their attacker too with our judgment, and our words.
- >Do we harbor resentment and unforgiveness when others fail us or do we continue to love them?
- > Do we mark someone off when they wrong us or do we continue to stand beside them and remain their friend?

**JUST LIKE JESUS DID, DO WE LAY DOWN OUR LIFE
FOR OUR FRIENDS?**

**A TRUE FRIEND PROTECTS AND DEFENDS.
A TRUE FRIEND BECOMES A SHEILD OF SAFETY AND A GATE OF PROTECTION
AGAINST THE ENEMY.**

2. A TRUE FRIEND IS HONEST AND OPEN

John 15:15 Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

Jesus, spoke plainly and honestly with his disciples. He made known to them everything that he has heard from the Father.

**A TRUE FRIEND DOES NOT HIDE THINGS.
HE POURS FORTH HIS HEART,
JUST AS JESUS Poured FORTH THE MYSTERIES
OF HIS FATHER.**

ILLUSTRATION:

DO YOU WANT FANS OR FRIENDS?

Fans only applaud. If you only want people to approve or praise you, or agree with you then you are only surrounding yourself with fans. If you only want to be in a relationship with those who approve of your choices and actions then you only want a fan club. Do you want honesty in your relationships? Or do you

only want others to say what you want to hear? If you only want their approval? You don't want true friends. You only want fans.

Ephesians 4:14-16 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

HONESTY BETWEEN FRIENDS BRINGS TRUST AND TRANSFORMATION.

**WE ARE CHANGED BY JESUS BEING HONEST WITH US AND WE
ARE CHANGED BY OUR HONESTY AND OPENNESS
WITH EACH OTHER.**

THIS TRANSFORMATION LIES AT THE HEART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

We must speak the truth in love. If we don't, our hearts can become hard. We'll create distance between ourselves and our Heavenly Father. We'll create widening chasms in our relationships. And ultimately we create distrust for each other.

John 8:32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Note:

This kind of plain speaking is different from what we normally mean when we "tell people what they need to hear" or "speak one's mind." Those instances of plain speaking are the opposite of friendship the speaker positions himself or herself over against the listener.

CLOSING:

Proverbs 18:24 (NLT) There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.

The true authentic friend is someone who sticks closer than a brother. In other words, he or she can be counted on. This friend is steadfast; he or she will be there for you even more so than a family member. Brotherhood is one of the strongest relationships we know.

But there is a love that is stronger than death. A friendship like the one we have with Jesus is stronger than even a family relationship.

EXAMPLE OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP - JONATHAN AND DAVID

A great biblical example of this type of closer-than-a-brother friendship is what existed between David and Jonathan. They became friends following the battle in which David killed Goliath. Despite the many hardships both men faced, they remained faithful to one another as friends and protected one another from harm. Jonathan even risked his life interceding for David before King Saul, who sought to kill David.

1 Samuel 18:1-3 (NLT) After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

> They made a covenant to protect, defend, help and stand by one another no matter what.

>Jonathan's friendship with David was part of Jonathan's relationship with God.

>Jonathan considered himself responsible to God.

Questions???

1 Samuel 19:1-6 (NLT) Saul now urged his servants and his son Jonathan to assassinate David. But Jonathan, because of his strong affection for David, ² told him what his father was planning. "Tomorrow morning," he warned him, "you must find a hiding place out in the fields. ³ I'll ask my father to go out there with me, and I'll talk to him about you. Then I'll tell you everything I can find out."

⁴ The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David, saying many good things about him. "The king must not sin against his servant David," Jonathan said. "He's never done anything to harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could. ⁵ Have you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill the Philistine giant and how the Lord brought a great victory to all Israel as a result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you murder an innocent man like David? There is no reason for it at all!"

⁶ So Saul listened to Jonathan and vowed, "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be killed."

> Johnathan defended David even with his father.

> Johnathan's very life was threatened because of his loyalty to David.

>Their friendship was not just something that they had chosen to do. God had made them friends, so that David could become Israel's king.

> That was why Jonathan said in.....

1 Samuel 20:13 But if he is angry and wants you killed, may the Lord strike me and even kill me if I don't warn you so you can escape and live. May the Lord be with you as he used to be with my father.

> Most men in Johnathan's shoes would have felt jealous and threatened.

>But he asked God to be with David as God had been with his father, Saul. God had supported Saul's rule over Israel while Saul remained loyal to him. Now Jonathan was asking God to support David so that David could rule as king.

>Their friendship was stronger than David's relationship with any of his own brothers. David needed Johnathan to fulfill the calling God had on his life.

>Do you promote and help others in this house?

>Do you pray that God's will come to pass in their life?

>Do you realize that your relationship is God ordained?

>Do you realize that God has placed you in their life to help and support them in the calling the God has for them?

>Or are you jealous of them? Are you in competition of them?

> Do you defend them when they are talked about or do you join in the conversation?