

## Sermon Discussion Guide

### John 15:9-20

#### **Passage Summary**

We live in a world that is increasingly connected and yet deeply lonely. Many people are surrounded by constant communication but still feel unseen, unknown, and disconnected. Into that reality, Jesus speaks a different word. Continuing on in what is known as the “farewell discourse,” Jesus tells His disciples to *abide* in His love. This is not shallow sentiment or temporary affection. Jesus loves His people with the very love He has received from the Father. And He invites them to remain there, to make their home in His love.

Then Jesus says something remarkable: *“I have called you friends.”* The Creator of all things does not merely tolerate His people or use them for a task. He draws near to them. He shares Himself with them. He wants them with Him.

And this friendship is not earned. Jesus reminds them, *“You did not choose me, but I chose you.”* Their relationship with Him rests not on their performance, worthiness, or spiritual strength, but on His gracious initiative. From that foundation of love flows a new way of living. Jesus says, *“Love one another as I have loved you.”* And then He defines that love: *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

Jesus is not merely giving a principle, but He is describing what He Himself is about to do. The love of Christ always moves outward. Those who are deeply loved by Him begin to love others differently. They take the low place. They move toward others sacrificially. They seek the good of others even at cost to themselves.

Yet Jesus is also honest. The world will not always welcome this kind of life. Just as the world rejected Him, His followers should not be surprised when faithfulness to Christ creates tension, misunderstanding, or opposition. Still, Jesus’ words are filled with hope. We were made for relationship with God and with one another. And in Christ, we are not left alone.

#### **Theological Highlights**

- We were created for relationship  
From the beginning, God declared it was “not good” for man to be alone. Humanity was made for communion with God and with others.
- Our friendship with Jesus is grounded in grace  
Jesus chooses and loves His people before they ever respond to Him.
- Love leads to sacrificial living  
The love of Christ reshapes how we treat others. Real love moves toward sacrifice and service.

- Joy is found in abiding in Christ  
Deep joy is not found in isolation or self-focus, but in remaining connected to Jesus.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Loneliness, Relationship, and Abiding**

1. Many people today feel deeply lonely, even while constantly connected.
  - Why do you think loneliness is so widespread in our culture?
  - In what ways have you personally experienced loneliness or disconnection?
2. Jesus calls His disciples “friends.”
  - What stands out to you about that description?
  - Do you tend to relate to God more as distant authority or as One who genuinely desires relationship with you?
3. Jesus says, “*Abide in my love.*”
  - What helps you remain aware of Christ’s love in everyday life?
  - What tends to pull your heart away from resting in Him?

### **Grace and Identity**

4. Jesus says, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you.*”
  - How does that truth challenge the way you think about your worth or identity?
5. Why is it difficult to believe that God’s love for us is based on grace rather than performance?

### **Loving Others Like Christ**

6. Jesus defines love through sacrifice.
  - Can you think of a time someone took the low place so that you might benefit?
  - How did that shape or impact your life?
7. The sermon described how “the righteous disadvantage themselves for the benefit of others.”
  - What might that look like in your relationships, home, workplace, or church?
8. Healthy relationships require initiative and vulnerability.
  - What keeps you from being fully known by others?
  - When do you feel the most freedom to be vulnerable?
  - Where might God be inviting you into deeper community?

## **Closing Prayer Points**

### **1. Abiding in the Love of Christ**

- Thank Jesus for calling us friends and drawing us near.
- Ask for a deeper awareness of His love throughout the week.

- Pray for hearts that remain rooted in Him rather than searching for identity elsewhere.

## **2. Healing Loneliness and Isolation**

- Bring before God any places of loneliness, disconnection, or feeling unseen.
- Thank Him that we are not abandoned or forgotten.
- Ask for courage to pursue meaningful relationships and deeper community.

## **3. Growing in Sacrificial Love**

- Ask God to shape your heart to love others like Christ has loved you.
- Pray for willingness to take the low place and serve without seeking recognition.
- Lift up specific relationships where you need greater patience, compassion, or humility.

## **4. Resting in Grace**

- Thank Jesus that His love is not based on your performance.
- Confess areas where you are striving to earn what He freely gives.
- Ask for freedom to rest in His grace and acceptance.

## **5. Becoming People Who Pursue Others**

- Ask God to help you notice people who feel isolated or overlooked.
- Pray for wisdom and intentionality in building relationships.
- Ask for boldness to initiate conversations, encouragement, and care.

## **6. Remaining Faithful in the World**

- Pray for strength to follow Jesus even when it is difficult or costly.
- Ask for courage to live openly as His disciple.
- Thank Him that His presence remains with His people in every circumstance.

## **Closing Reflection**

Jesus does not merely save His people from sin, He brings them into friendship.

He knows us fully.

He loves us deeply.

And He calls us to remain close to Him.

In a lonely world, that is very good news.