

XVI. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“The Last Sermon from the Last Supper—Our Friend and Our Enemy”

John 15:12–25

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June 19, 2016 – Morning sermon

We are in John 15 and the sermon of Jesus actually starts in John 13 and goes through John 17. Happy Father’s Day to all the fathers and I praise the Lord for the opportunity to be a father in today’s world for Christ. Let’s look at John 15 for this is God’s Word and it’s the Truth. John 15:12–25 says [12] *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command you. [15] 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. [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. [17] These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

[18] “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. [21] But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. [22] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [23] Whoever hates me hates my Father also. [24] If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

As I was preparing for this sermon I remembered a time I was away at Christ Covenant and in between the services I went to the bathroom and two ten year old boys had just gotten out of Sunday school who were in there also. I said to them “Hey boys, I’m glad to see you” and one of them looked at me and said “Pastor Reeder, we’ve missed you” and the other one said “Where you been Harry?” I began to wonder at what point in time did I give him permission to call me Harry. When does that happen today?

Not to be too ancient in my memories, but the privilege to call someone by their Christian name used to be granted and never assumed. I run into this all time as a pastor. When people finish the pastor’s class they will ask me ‘what do we call you?’ I say “When we’re together call me your friend, Harry and when we’re out together and you introduce me to someone observe the relationship we have say ‘this is my pastor Harry Reeder.’” I am a pastor teacher so I have a multi-faceted relationship with God’s people here. To a lady in this church I am a ‘ptbf’ – pastor, teacher, brother, friend. You have multi-faceted relationships with other people and others have a multi-faceted relationship with you. By the way, you have one with Jesus and we’ll look at two of them in this study.

Have you ever noticed how many metaphors are used in the Bible to talk about the church? Sometimes the church is just called the church, sometimes it's called a family, other times it's called an army or a temple, sometimes it's called a building or a field and sometimes it's called a marriage. It's interesting because all those metaphors give us multiple ways we see our relationship with the Lord. In fact when the Lord talks to us He uses multiple names. Sometimes we're a soldier or a servant or a brother or the redeemed. Today He calls you friend. Have you ever noticed how hungry we are for this?

We get television programs that are titled 'Friends' and the facade of the program is inspirational but not lasting. The program we had when I was growing up went like this; 'making your way in the world today takes everything you got, taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot, wouldn't you like to get a way, all those nights when you got no lights, the check is in the mail, the little cat hung its tail and your third fiancé didn't show, sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came. You want to be where you can see our troubles are all the same. You want to be where everybody knows your name.' What program was that? That was the theme song to the show Cheers which was another façade. Showing up at a bar with all your troubles isn't friendship. It may be an aspect of friendship but it's not friendship.

Also being on the list of someone's Facebook page doesn't really make you a friend either. I'm not trying to be negative about social media but what is interesting is how we call that being friends indicating both our desire and hunger but never really accomplished it. So today I want to share with you that Jesus is not only a friend for sinners to the end but you will find out who your enemy is if Jesus is your friend. In fact your enemy is your enemy because He is your friend and you find out who else Jesus expects you to friend.

There are six words for the word love in the Greek. Phileo is one which means Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. The word friend comes from the root word that means love. The way to say friend is to say 'beloved.' What kind of love is friendship? I want to give you seven things about friendship that Christ gives to you and that then calls us to give to each other even as we are a friend to Him who is our Friend to the end, Jesus Christ. To do that I want to take an overview of what I just read.

The text in John 15 falls into two categories. Category number one is who is your friend and category two is who is your enemy. Your friend is found in John 15:12–17 and your enemy is in John 15:18–25. This year we have a theme verse and theme focus called 'led by the Spirit.' Those who are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God. In this series we are going to key text to understand the Person of the Holy Spirit, who He is and what He does in the life of a believer. He is not a force or an it but a Person. To get started we went to the greatest text in the Bible on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and that was Romans 8.

Now we have gone to what I believe is the second greatest text in the Bible and that is the last sermon that Jesus preaches from the Upper Room. It starts in John 13 and goes through John 17. In it He displays the Spirit-filled life as He grabs a towel and a basin and washes the feet of His Disciples. In it He tells us who the Holy Spirit is, that the Holy Spirit calls us, fills us, changes us, seals us and will go with us. The same Spirit that was with Jesus from the womb out of the tomb into glory is the same Spirit He has poured out into us – the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Because of what Jesus did at the cross He has the right to send the Spirit to sinners to change them and because of that we now know that same Spirit is with us from our new birth all the way to glory. He is the One who keeps us in Christ, grows us in Christ, makes us more like Christ and will one day present us to Christ.

We have been looking at this abiding in Christ where Christ abides in us by the Holy Spirit and we abide in Him and He gave this beautiful picture of a vine. The Vine is Jesus, the true Vine. We abide in Him and He abides in us so that we will bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit for by this the Father is glorified and by this we manifest ourselves as His disciples. To bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit you have to be in the Vine, abiding in the Vine. Then God the Father does two more things. God the Father does two kinds of pruning. He prunes out those who claim to be with Christ but aren't truly in Christ. In other words, He prunes out those in the visible church who do not belong to the invisible church, to those who associate themselves with Christ and the church but don't have a relationship with Him. They are cast away into judgment.

Those who are believers are pruned by the Father by cutting them back so that the fruit bearers bear more fruit and then much fruit. When people look at all the stuff that has been cut away it seems like it won't grow but then boom there comes this picture that is evidently glorious because it had to be pruned. People see the adversity, difficulties, sickness and a loss of this or that, that believers go through who are holding on to Romans 8:28 knowing God is refining us and the world looks at us pitying us because the branches are being cut way back but we know the Lord is getting us ready for more fruit and much fruit. Now we come to the text in this study talking about your Friend and your enemy because of who your Friend is.

I was jogging the other day listening to a sermon and the man said 'we have set up your iphone with a twitter account and you can tweet me whatever comes to your mind during my sermon.' People thought that was ingenious. It is happening right here while Jesus is preaching. As He is preaching Philip tweets 'how do we know where You're going?' Thomas tweets 'how can we know the way if we don't know where You are going?' It's one of those sermons that they keep interrupting Him and He keeps bringing them back on track to teach them the majesty of the work of the Holy Spirit. He didn't even have to buy an iphone to get this done.

John 15:12 says [12] *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.* He calls this a new commandment so why is this new? Loving one another is not new but what is new is loving one another as I have loved you. So it's not just love your neighbor as yourself but now we see how we love as Christ loved us. The love of Christ becomes the foundation and the formation of our love for one another and that is what makes it new. Then He says in John 15:13 [13] *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

How many times have we quoted that verse on Memorial Day or Veteran's Day or July 4th? Jesus is actually pointing to Himself but what we know is He laid down His life for His friends, not because they were His friends but because He wanted them to be His friends for actually we were His enemies. Romans 5:8 says [8] *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* When we were helpless Christ died for us. While we were enemies Christ died for us. Now we are His friends because of His atoning death for the sins of His enemies to make them His friends. He lays down His life for them. The love of Christ is seen and that's what is new about this. We are to have that love for one another where we lay down our life for one another in light of the fact that He laid down His life for us. Who are His friends?

John 15:14 says [14] *You are my friends if you do what I command you.* This is not if you do everything Jesus commands you He'll be your friend. That is not what He is saying. He is not giving the ground of friendship with Him but He is giving the evidence of friendship with

Him. The doing of His commands is not what makes you His friends but the doing of His commands is the evidence that you're His friend. It is the mark of His friends.

John 15:15 says *[15] 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.* That does not mean that no longer are we His servants and His is our Master. He is saying that no longer do you just see yourself as Him as Master and you as servant but now you are going to another level which is built on that. I'm your Friend and you are My friend. He will define this friendship for you. The master servant relationship will continue where those who love and obey Him are His servants. That remains in place. You're not just His servant and He just your Master but now we're going beyond master servant to friend to friend. Servants only know so much but one of the evidences of the friend to friend is that friends know everything they need to know. He has made known to you more than what a servant needs. He makes known to you from the Father what His friends need. Then He gives even more evidence of this friendship.

John 15:16a says *[16a] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide...* You became His friend because He chose you and not because you chose Him. How many of you believe Peter and all of Jesus' Disciples chose Him to be Lord, Savior and Friend? They all did choose Him but Jesus is giving them the backstory. If they hadn't chosen Him why would He have even made the comment 'you did not choose me but I chose you'? It is obvious that they chose Him but they chose Him because He chose them. You're His friend because He chose you out of love to be His friend. The result will be that you will have fruit that will abide in you.

Then He says in John 15:16b *[16b] so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.* That is not a blank check where you ask whatever you want when you want but it's a cashier's check. Put it in context. If you are His friend and He chose you and His Words abide in you then you ask what you wish and it will be done. Your asking is framed by your relationship with Him. It is not the world that is your friend but He is your Friend and when He is your friend the prayers of His people are to Christ and what they need to know Him, make Him known and now all you need is framed out of this friendship, with an effective prayer life that is framed out of the Word of God.

So here's the bottom line. His friends will become your friends. John 15:17 says *[17] These things I command you, so that you will love one another.* Now you will find out that if Jesus is your friend because of His redeeming work then not only will His friends be your friends, that is other believers but His enemy will become your enemy because you are His friend. That enemy will hate you. Let's go to the next section.

John 15:18–19 says *[18] If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.* When you see the word world don't think of people but think of a system of rebellion against God – the world, the flesh and the devil. Jesus took you out of the world but I left you in the world for you are no longer of the world. I chose you by My love to set you free to come to Me so now you are in My and I am in you. I leave you in the world but I'm getting the world out of you and the world now hates you not because of what you do but because of what I did to make you My friend.

The world hates Me and therefore it will hate you. Not only does our Friend define our friends but our Friend defines our enemy. We have friends whom we love that we may never

have chosen but they are our friends because they belong to Christ. We love one another and there is an enemy out there called the world that stands against the Lord. That world that brought persecution against Him will bring persecution against us and it's not because we're so perfect but because we have a Friend and whoever is a friend to Jesus becomes an enemy of the world. You'll notice we still have the servant master relationship but we just have friend built on top of it.

John 15:20 says [20] *Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.* Some out of the world will be converted through My Word and when you share My Word some will get converted but the system will persecute you and be against you. In the world you have tribulation but in Me you have peace so take courage because I have overcome the world.

John 15:21–22 says [21] *But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.* [22] *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.* He is not saying no one was a sinner before the Incarnation but since the Incarnation there is a sin that stands before all who know of Him and that is the rejection of Him that they are now guilty of. The Bible calls this the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit – when we stand against the Christ who came to save us from our sins and reject Him. Now we stand guilty of the sin of rejecting not the promises of His grace from the Old Testament but the Promised One who fulfilled all those promises explained in the New Testament.

John 15:23–25 says [23] *Whoever hates me hates my Father also.* [24] *If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.* [25] *But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'* To reject and hate Jesus is to reject and hate the Father also. So what does all this mean? Here is the takeaway.

The takeaway is the Spirit-called, filled, sealed Christian is a multi-faceted relationship with Christ as their Lord and Savior. I am a soldier. I am a child of God. I am a son or daughter of God. I am a part of the Bride. I am a steward. It is a multi-faceted relationship and this text tells you two of them – master servant and friend to friend. This is not new. James 2:23 says [23] *and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.* James didn't pull that out of clean air but he pulled it from the Scripture. It was fulfilled from Genesis 15:6 which says [6] *And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

Abraham was saved believing the promises of God. He didn't know everything about the Promised One but he believed the promises of God, that he was saved by God's grace, through God's promises and it was credited to him as righteousness. He wasn't saved by his righteousness but by the righteousness of Christ that was imputed to him and the Scripture was fulfilled. Everyone that is saved is the friend of God. He is not pulling that one out of thin air either for in Isaiah 41:8 God says [8] *But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, My friend.* When you are saved by His grace you become the friend of God in Jesus Christ.

There is another person in the Old Testament who is pointing to us and his name was Moses. Moses was called the friend of God. Exodus 33:11a says [11] *Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.* So do you. Moses spoke with God from the glory that filled the tabernacle and Moses spoke with God from the burning bush face to

face. You speak with God from His Word. His Word speaks to you and in prayer you speak to Him.

Yes we are a servant of Christ because we love Him who first loved us but it's glorious to be the servant of our Savior as our Master, but a servant is disconnected. Have you ever heard of the servant's courtiers? A servant is distant. A servant has limited knowledge for a task that they are called to do but He is taking you to another level for I am calling you My friends. Then He begins to flesh out this friendship.

First of all, He says that friendship is intentional. It doesn't just happen. I chose you. Secondly, friendship is trusting. Jesus entrusts to His friends His Word, the Gospel, the Great Commission to go to all the nations and preach the Gospel. He entrusts to us gathered worship. He entrusts to us a saved life, a mission, a message, covenant children, relationships in the body of Christ. Because we are His friend He trusts us. That is what friends do, they trust.

Thirdly, friendship is loyal because friends don't always act trustworthy. Who are His friends that He is talking to in the Upper Room? One will go away and betray Him. Another will deny Him and the other ten are going to flee. What will Jesus, the Friend, do? When He rises He says 'go tell My disciples and go tell Peter.' Jesus' friendship with us is not dependent upon us but upon Him. He is loyal to His friends even though we're not. Every single one of us can identify with Peter. We have been silent when we should have spoken and we've been intimidated and didn't say what we should have said but your Friend is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother.

What a friend for sinners, Jesus Lover of my soul! O love that will not let me go I rest my weary head in Thee! Here is a Friend who is intentional, trustworthy and loyal. He is not a thermometer friend but a thermostat friend. He doesn't reflect our relationship with Him but He makes our relationship with Him.

His friendship is transparent. I am giving to you everything that the Father has given to Me to make known to you. Fifthly, a friend invests. The most important investment you have in this world, the resource that is non-renewable, is that a friend invests time in other friends. Go check where Jesus spent most of His time in three years of ministry.

Sixthly, friends are sacrificial and self-denying. I lay down my life for my friends. Seventhly friendship is consequential because Jesus is your Friend you have assurance to the end. What a friend! There is another consequence. Because Jesus is your friend you'll have adversity to the end. The world He chose you out of will hate you and I want you to hate the world, not the people, but the world. It is that system that raises itself up against the glory and majesty of God. That is why James says that he who is a friend of the world is not a friend to God. When I say world don't think people but the system of rebellion against God.

So what about the people? Love them. You were there and He hated the world but He loved you out of the world. He died for you, not when you were His friend but when you were His enemy. Therefore we love His enemies out of the world to Him and some will respond to His Word. Some will respond to that love so that is what we want to do but we're no friend to the world. I hate every aspect of the world when it rises up against the glory of God, the state that says don't trust God – we're not under God for we are god, the prosperity Gospel when it infiltrates itself into the church – we hate everything that raises itself up against God in this world but we love the people in the world with the same love that He loved us, to love them out of the world and into Christ as the Holy Spirit would bless that which you do and how you do it.

You were saved by the grace of God at the cross. You became servants out of love to Christ because He first loved you and now you are His friend because He chose you, called you

and He has given you a love that will not let you go. You don't have to play a façade at a bar. You don't have to depend on how many friends you have on your list on Facebook but you can know a Friend who sticks closer than a brother.

I thought about this in light of this sermon. I miss my daddy so much. When I grew up two things happened between me and my daddy. Number one, my daddy got smarter the older I got. It was amazing. I can't tell you how dumb he was when I was a teenager but as I got older he got smarter. The second thing is that when I grew up my daddy became my best friend. The reason why was because while I was growing up he didn't try to be my friend for he was just my daddy and that's why we became friends. Do you see the multi-faceted relationships?

You have multi-faceted relationships too. You have one with Jesus. Yes I'm His servant. Yes I'm a soldier and I'm all those things that I want to learn from but I'm also His friend. By the way, you know a man by who his friends are and who his enemies are. If Jesus is your Friend then I will tell you who your enemy is... it's the world's system. The enemy is your enemy because Jesus is your friend.

There's much more I'd like to say on this but I'll just close with this. I needed Him as my friend but I didn't want Him. I kept trying to use bars, digital technology, television programs that are a façade and companions to use and abuse. I needed Him as a friend but I didn't want Him. He didn't need me as a friend but He wanted me and He chose me. He died for me. Hallelujah, what a Savior! What a friend to sinners! Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to press His Word to your heart. Let's pray.

Prayer:

There is a Lord, a Master who went to the cross to save you even though you are His enemy and when you come to Him He is also your Friend to the end which is the beginning of forever. Would you come to Him today? Please let's meet and let's talk. Father, for those who know Christ may they rejoice not only that they are soldiers of the cross, not only are they sons and daughters of Christ, not only are they servants, not only are they the redeemed, not only are they brothers and sisters in Christ and for Christ, joint heirs and so many other things in our multi-faceted relationship with You, but today we rejoice we have a Friend who sticks closer than a brother, Your Son, our Savior, who has made us His friends from the cross all the way to glory. Help us never be intimidated by the world and in our hatred of the world help us to love those who are under its dominion. Father, help us to love one another because everyone around us who knows Jesus is His friend and we, His friends, love His friends so let us love one another for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

LIFE TAKEAWAY

To grow upward, to move forward, to live outward; you must intentionally and dependently move downward and grow inward toward Christ.