

What a Friend we have in Jesus

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Preacher: Rob Attridge

[0 : 00] To be back. We very much enjoyed our time away. It was good. It was encouraging. But it's even better to be back. And we missed you all.

And we're just excited with what the Lord has for us as we continue to journey along in this next season ahead. Oh, thank you, Lisa. One person did anyway.

Thank you. Well, the last Sunday we were here, the last Sunday I was speaking was the last Sunday in June.

And that, of course, was the Sunday morning when Sarah Kinsella was getting baptized. And that was a great morning, you know, people getting baptized. That is always a morning to remember. But one thing that really stuck with me from that morning, along with Sarah's testimony, was when we as a church sang together Sarah's favorite song of praise.

[1 : 03] Or at least one of her favorite songs of praise. What a friend we have in Jesus. And you know what? That song just kind of stuck with me over the last couple of months.

And I found myself several times just singing away to myself, what a friend we have in Jesus. I was going to sing it, but, you know, it sounds more in tune in your mind often than when you say it out loud.

But those words, what a friend we have in Jesus, really kind of stuck with me. And they have been such an encouragement to me over these past months.

You know the way the Lord uses different things at different times to encourage us. Would he just use those words to encourage me? Because I think I have found these words to be freshly true. What a wonderful friend we have in Jesus. Folks, for our family service this morning, next week we're going to be starting to look through the book of Galatians.

[2 : 03] But for our family service this morning, I just want to encourage each one of us to freshly see, to freshly be reminded what a wonderful friend we have in Jesus.

In Scripture, the Lord Jesus calls his followers several things. He calls us his disciples. He calls us his brothers and sisters.

He calls us his children, his sons, his daughters. He calls us his heirs. He calls us all of these wonderful things and more.

Well, to add one more thing to that list this morning, he calls us friends. In John chapter 15, the night before Jesus went to the cross, he gathered his disciples, if you like, one last time to prepare them for the next day and to prepare them for all that was coming their way and coming his way. Well, it was during that last evening with them that Jesus said these incredible words. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing.

[3 : 34] But I have called you friends, for all that I've heard from my father I have made known to you. In this verse, we see that Jesus has now let his disciples in on all that is going on with his father.

Jesus has, if you like, let them in. He has shared with them. He has shared personally with them the plans of his father. He has let them in.

He has shared with them. If you like, he has opened up to them. And so they were no longer just servants, but now friends.

And the word that Jesus uses for friends here in John chapter 15 really is a fabulous word. This word in John chapter 15 that Jesus uses for friends, it points to a deep, intimate, caring, personal, loving relationship with someone.

With this word, Jesus is saying to his disciples that I have a deep, deep care. I have a deep love for you.

[4 : 58] We see his desire to have a sharing, personal relationship with them. Jesus called them friends. But what Jesus called his followers on that day is still what he calls us his followers today. Jesus calls us friends. We are his friends. Jesus is our friend. And you know, as believers, we are what he says we are.

He calls us friends. That is who we are. You know, it's part of who we are in Christ. It's part of our identity in Christ. We are friends of Christ.

If we were to draw up our resume or draw up our CV and we were to highlight who we are in Christ, there'd be so many wonderful things we could hardly put them down.

But one thing for sure to add to that list is we are friends of Christ. It's part of who we are as believers. Well, not only has Jesus called us friends, which is incredible enough, he has also demonstrated it to us that he is our friends, that we are his friends.

[6 : 24] Jesus demonstrated to us that he is our friend by what he did for us on the cross. Someone said the cross demonstrates, it shows Jesus's friendship to us.

In the very same chapter, in John chapter 15, Jesus said, greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

I just wonder, did you ever question, or do you ever question a little bit, if Jesus really is your friend? You know, does the Lord really kind of like you?

Well, if you're any bit unsure about that, the simple question to ask is, did he die for you? Did he lay down his life for you?

Because according to Jesus himself, that is, if you like, the ultimate proof that he is our dear friend. He laid down his life for you and for me.

[7 : 43] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. Folks, Jesus has called us friends, but he's also shown it.

He said it and he did it. He calls us friends. He laid down his life for us. What a friend we have in Jesus.

You know, no matter our age, from the youngest of us in here to the oldest, no matter where we're from, we all have a longing for friendship.

Even those of us who might like our own space at times, and we're all different, but even for those of us who like our own space at times, we all long for closeness with someone.

We all long for a bond with someone. We all want to feel like we're not alone. We all want to feel like we're not forgotten.

[8 : 48] You know, we all want to feel like we're not cast aside or dismissed. It's human nature to want to be known and accepted and wanted and thought of and loved by someone.

You know, one of the greatest examples of this, I think, in Scripture is the friendship between David and Jonathan. We see with David and Jonathan that there were times when they came to each other and were told they encouraged each other in the Lord.

There was a time when David was really kind of down and upset and we see in 1 Samuel 23 that Jonathan came and there was the wording of something along the lines of he strengthened him in the Lord.

You know, as believers, that really is what a true friend is. A true friend is someone who's there for us and who strengthens us and encourages us in the Lord.

That's a true friend. And yes, to have a friend like David and Jonathan, whether it be a spouse or a family member or a church member or a colleague, whatever it is, to have a friend like David or Jonathan is such a blessing.

[10 : 08] You know, it's such a gift. It really is. To even have one friend who cares for us and loves us and strengthens us in the Lord is such a gift and such a blessing.

It really is. But above that, hear me when I say I want us to know and be reminded that there is no friend that we could ever, ever have like the Lord Jesus.

There is no friend like Jesus because no earthly friend loves us like Jesus. No earthly friend knows us like Jesus. No earthly friend comforts us like Jesus.

No earthly friend will always be with us and there for us like Jesus. No earthly friend will never, ever let us down like Jesus. Don't get me wrong.

Earthly friends, we'll say, we call them earthly friends. They are a blessing and a gift. But even our closest friends can let us down.

[11 : 22] People are not perfect and we're not perfect. Everyone's not perfect. Folks, Jesus will never, ever let us down.

I just want to encourage us whether we have many friends or no friends. With Jesus, we have the best, warmest, dearest, kindest, most faithful friend that we could ever have.

There is not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one. No, not one. None else could heal all our soul's diseases. No, not one.

No, not one. Jesus knows all about our struggles. He will guide till the day is done. There is not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one.

No, not one. Folks, I want to just encourage us all to continue to press into the friendship that we can have with the Lord Jesus. I want to encourage us to continue to, if you like, lean into the closeness that we can have with him because the more we see him as our closest, dearest, kindest friend, the more strength and freedom and encouragement we will know in our lives.

[12 : 50] Jonathan Edwards was a man who knew this. Jonathan Edwards was not a perfect man but he was a man who God used in great ways.

Jonathan Edwards in the 1730s was a pastor in a church in the east coast of the states and it's said by many people that it was through his preaching in the east coast of the United States that the Lord used his preaching to really spark the great awakening that spread across the United States. Well, Jonathan Edwards was known for encouraging his people to enjoy the Lord. He was famous for urging his people to enter into a close friendship with Jesus.

This is what he said, let it be our first love to enter into an everlasting friendship with Christ that will never be broken. What a friend we have in Jesus.

He is our greatest, our most present, faithful friend that we could ever have. We don't have to earn his friendship, we don't have to perform for his friendship.

[14 : 11] Once we have his friendship, we, in a sense, will never lose it. It's an everlasting friendship. So let's continue to run to him and enjoy an ever-increasing and deepening friendship with him.

Just want to say in closing that, you know, someone might say, well, you know, wait a second, you know, hold on a second here. Someone might say, well, if we only see Jesus as a friend, there might be a danger that we get a little bit casual in our relationship with him.

You know, after all, Jesus is the King of Kings, he's the Lord of Lords, he's the creator of the universe, he is one to bow before with reverence and awe.

So is Jesus our friend that we can run to and embrace and lie in his arms? Or is he the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords that we bow before with reverence and awe?

I remember being somewhere once and there was folks debating this very thing and there was one side saying he's this and there was the other side saying he's that and they were really going at it, almost pulling their hair out.

[15 : 42] It was one of actually, ironically, it was one of the most intense debates I've seen people arguing about. Is Jesus our friend or do we come before him and do we bow before him with reverence and awe? Well, the reality is we don't need to choose which one he is because he is both and he is always both.

So we keep both in mind. Yes, he is our King, our eternal, victorious King of the universe that we bow before with reverence and awe and yet at the very same time he's our closest, he's our dearest, our warmest friend that we run towards, we embrace and we lie in his arms.

He's not one or the other, he's both. He's always both. So yes, may we know Jesus as our King but may we also know him as our dearest friend and may Jesus take that place in our lives.

May he take the place in our lives as our dearest friend and may we enjoy this wonderful friendship with him that will last forever.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you that you are our friend. Thank you that you not only said it, you showed it by laying down your life for us.

[17 : 08] And Lord, I pray that you would help us to know you in an ever increasing way as our closest friend. Lord, may we turn to you first. Lord, may we look to you first.

May we know your presence with us. May we know your help. may we know your health mam mam mam