

What a friend we have with Jesus

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[0 : 00] Turn with me to John chapter 15. John chapter 15. For those of you visiting, we've been doing a study through the book of Esther.

! When I decided to switch from Esther to this, I started looking around and looking at different things.

I read probably five or six different things having to do with friendship. And I came down with this title. It means we sang that song.

And look with me at John chapter 15, beginning at verse 12. John 15, verse 12. It says this. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Stop right there. We could just stop there and talk about that all day. He says, I want you to love one another, like I have loved you. We'll talk some more about how he loved us. Verse 13.

[1 : 10] Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Wait a minute. I'm only a friend if I do whatever you command me.

We're having second thoughts about that, aren't we? But look at verse 15. Henceforth, I call you not servants. For the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. But I have called you friends.

For all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. I call you friends because I'm including you in what I am doing. I'm including you in the planning that takes place.

I'm including you in being a part of it. You are my friends. So this morning I want to talk about friends. And if we're going to talk about Jesus being the greatest friend we've ever had, and if we talk about who we have as friends, I suppose we should start at the very beginning.

What's a friend? What's the definition of a friend? Let's have a word of prayer, and we'll take a look at that. Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that you would help us this morning to understand what true friendship is.

[2 : 22] That we would understand what it means to be a friend, to be a true friend. And then we'll look at the example of that true friendship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, thank you. Lord, I pray that you would just minister this morning. Help us to understand that what a friend we do have in Jesus.

He is always there, always watching, always willing to help. Lord, thank you for the friendship we have with Jesus Christ. Lord, minister now in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, when we think about the word friend and what it means, a lot of what we call friends today is kind of casual. More acquaintances than friends.

You ever, oh, this is my friend so-and-so. Well, are they really your friend? Or are they somebody you just happen to know? Oh, here's the UPS man and the FedEx man.

- [3 : 22] They're my friends. They show up in my house every day. No, they don't. But they're my friends. Well, they're acquaintances. They're people you know, but other than you have friends.
- People at the, Dustin works at Walmart. The people at Walmart. I have friends at Walmart. Or do I? I have people there that used to work there when I did 15 or 16 years ago.
- They're still there. One of them works for Dustin, Gary. Gary's a friend. Well, actually, Gary's an acquaintance. Gary's somebody I know. We don't hang out together. We don't do anything together.
- You know, but he's somebody I know. You know, what does it mean to be a friend? A British publication had a contest one time, and they asked, they were going to give a cash prize to the best definition of a friend.
- Here's one of them. See if you can figure out why this one wasn't the one that won. One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is invulnerable.
- [4 : 34] What? That last word, invulnerable. It means it's never easily broken, not broken. But you can see why that one didn't win, because nobody knew what that word was.
- I love the first part. Multiplies joys and divides grief. A friend will do that for you, won't they? They will be there to help. Another one that was in the contest.
- One who understands our silence. Ah. A friend knows when and when not to chime in.
- Remember Job's friends? Friends. They weren't really friends, were they? They just kept chiming in and all the things. Job, you're doing this wrong. You're doing this wrong. You must be doing this. You must have been doing that.
- They were not helping the situation at all. You ever have times when you can just, Bonnie and I do this. We talked about this a few weeks ago. We were riding up the Machias for the jail visit on Saturday.
- [5 : 37] We were just riding up there. We were just riding up there. It was a nice sunny day. It was gorgeous scenery with the leaves and everything in it. We just rode along and didn't say a word for a long time.
- We talked about the fact that we're comfortable enough with each other. We can do that. You don't have to be talking all the time. Sometimes you can just be in one another's company. It's like, that's enough.
- Just to know that they're nearby. How about another one? I'm not big on metaphors for stuff like this, but here's this one. A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down.
- A watch that beats true. Count on it. Boom, boom, boom. And it never runs down. That's a friend. The one that won, though, is this one.
- A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out. Ah. Friend who's always there. The friend who will always be there to encourage, uplift.
- [6 : 41] The friend who will be there in hard times. The other one who comes in when the whole world has gone out. Reminds me, Hebrews chapter 13, verse 5.
- You've heard me talk about this verse many times before. For he has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. You ever have times when you are going through things?
- And those of you who've been here have heard me say this before. But the times you're going through things and it's just really hard. And sometimes you just kind of, man, you can't believe what's going on. Or you're sitting in a chair and you're just kind of like, oh, man.
- You notice in both of those situations, this one and this one, you're looking at your hand. Hand. You carry it around with you always. And one of the great things about the hand, I will never leave thee.

I will never leave thee. I will always be there. Jesus says he'll be there. Dictionary definition of a friend is this.

[7 : 48] Friend is a person whom one loves and trusts. A person who gives assistance. A patron. A supporter. A friend is someone who's, you know, when the world just gives up on you, they're still there.

When everybody walks out, they're still there. I have a couple of friends that I actually met both of them when we lived in Fort Lauderdale.

We left Fort Lauderdale in 1992. Over 30 years ago. And we're still friends to this day.

Actually, we wound up in Dothan, Alabama together, all three of us, again at one time. One of them called me this week. You know, we're the kind of friends that we're not on the phone all the time.

We don't see other all that often because we live so far apart. But when we do get together, it's like we just pick up where we left off. It's just that kind of friendship. And one of them called me this week because just because he wanted me to hear from him that he was leaving the ministry that he was in and he was moving somewhere else in a different state and everything and what he was going to, let me know what he was going to be doing.

[9 : 09] He said, I want you to hear it from me before you heard it from anybody else. Just that kind of a friend. I want you to know from me. That kind of a friend.

It can always be there. And again, that's a friend from over 30 years ago. You know, friends, they're always there for you.

They're always looking out for you. They're always true to you. They're always looking out for your good. You remember when you were a kid in school or you have kids now and they're in school?

They go to school and they come back and they tell you about their friend. And they say, oh, your friend. Tell me about your friend. Well, we both like the same games.

We have such a great time playing those games. Or, we found out. How many of you here like fried bologna sandwiches? Mastin, good man.

[10 : 06] See, Mastin, Mark, Ian, those people can be my friends. I love fried bologna sandwiches. So, you know, you like the same food as things.

But are they really the friends? Somewhere along the way they learn that sometimes friends are not always friends. Somewhere along the line they learn that, you know, there's sometimes differences that happen and people are no longer friends.

We need to realize that not everybody is going to be your friend. When you're looking at friends, what do you look for? What are you looking at?

When I was working with Mike at the jail and Bonnie works with ladies at the jail, one of the things we asked them is, what's your plan when you get out? Well, you know, I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that.

No, no, no. Not where you're going to go and what you're going to do. What's your plan to not come back here? You know, a lot of them are in there for drugs, for alcohol, different things like that.

[11 : 14] What's your plan not to come back here? And we finally get down to, I need to find some new friends because their friends helped them get where they are.

You want friends who are going to uplift you, who are going to encourage you, who are going to put you in the right direction, who are going to help you to do what is right and not what is wrong. Most of the people we come in contact with could probably be better described as acquaintances or contacts.

Like I mentioned Gary. Gary and I are acquaintance. We've known each other since I worked in Walmart. Every time I'm in there, I try to make sure I talk to Gary and say hi to him and stuff. Those of you who remember Wendell, Wendell used to work at the door there.

The older gentleman used to work at the door in Walmart. Wendell and I always talked when I went in. We had an acquaintance. It wasn't a friendship, but it was an acquaintance.

We enjoyed each other, you know, talking and chit-chatting and stuff. It was an acquaintance. And then you, you know, oh, somebody says, I need to get my car fixed.

[12 : 17] Well, let me tell you about my contact. My friend, so and so. We have contacts and things and stuff. But a true friend, someone who's going to be there to lift us up, someone who's going to be there in the hard times.

See, real friends are a rare commodity. Finding a true friend is sometimes hard. So, let's change this definition a little bit.

What's the definition of a true friend? A true friend. They'll make the effort. They'll put in the time. They will want to be there for you and be a help.

You know, they love to help you out when you're going through tough times. They'll be there to encourage you and lift you up. They'll be there no matter what's going on.

They'll be there to look beyond the superficial and see what you truly need. They'll be there even in the tough times.

[13 : 20] Reminds me of the prodigal son. Remember the prodigal son? Left his father's home, took his inheritance with him, went to a far country it says, and while he was doing things there, he was spending money on people around him.

He had friends. Every time they had a party and things like, he had a party, they showed up because he was, there you go, let's buy this, let's do this, let's, you know.

And what happened when his money was gone? So were the friends. The friends were not there anymore. They weren't friends. They weren't true friends.

And when his, it came time to look for who's my true friend? He had the pigs left. A Jewish man with pigs.

Hmm, interesting. But the pigs were still around. What did he wind up doing? He wind up going home because he knew his family loved him. See, what does it say there in chapter 15, verse 13?

[14 : 21] Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends. That's the mark of true friendship. I'm willing to give to whatever you need.

I'm willing to give to help you out. A true friend displays love. A true friend knows how to put others before himself.

Jesus Christ came to this world. Why? To seek and to save that which was lost, it tells us in John 19, 10. He came to give of himself for you and for me.

He came to give his life that we might have salvation, that we might have him, that we might have an eternity in heaven. He came to do that.

You want to talk about a friend? There's a friend. Proverbs 18, 24 says, A man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

[15 : 25] Did Jesus show himself friendly? He came to give his life for us. That's why he came. And, it says, a friend sticketh closer than a brother.

when everybody else is gone, when everybody else is taken off, Jesus is still there. He will always be there with you. You know, it's so easy to attract people with kindness.

You watch and you hear stories, you know, Facebook's good for this. You hear stories about people, people, they seem to be one way when you see them, celebrities and stuff.

And then you read the stories about them, what they're like when you get them alone, away from the public eye. And you're going, they're so gorgeous, they're so beautiful, they're so handsome, they're so whatever.

But then you hear about their personality. Oh, I don't want to be around somebody like that. See, a friend comes in and they're concerned about you, not themselves.

[16 : 35] You see, finding people like that, that's why when you go on Facebook and you see these people, I've got 10,000 friends. No, you don't.

Most of those people in there, you have no clue who they are. You know when you get in there, people you may know, I don't have no clue who that person is. Never heard of them before in my life.

And then you find out that the friend of a friend of a friend. You know, I've never met them before. You may know them, they might be your friend. You know. And then your circumstances change and away they go.

They're off. Think about Peter. Peter was Jesus' friend. Peter was a disciple of Jesus.

He had followed him around for three years, hearing everything that Jesus said, watching Jesus and everything that he did, seeing all the miracles. And then came the night that Jesus was arrested before his crucifixion.

[17 : 45] And where was Peter? Peter. Just before that, remember Peter had said, I am with you, I'm going to be with you always, I don't care if I have to die, I am with you.

And then he saw the handwriting on the wall and what was going to happen to Jesus and Jesus was going to wind up dead. And Peter's like, well, you know. See, a true friend is right there all the time.

we don't want to be considered unpopular. We don't want to be considered strange.

We don't want to be considered whatever word you want to put in there. So we will talk about Jesus here. But will we talk about him there?

When we're out there with people. Mark 8, 38, what Jesus said, whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[18 : 59] See, a devoted friend is going to stick close by. A devoted friend is going to be right there. And what did we just sing? What a friend we have in Jesus.

he will always be there. Sometime, examine your list of friends. I've heard it said that most people, really good, good friends, you can fit in the palm of your hand, probably five or less people, are true, true, true friends that will always be there.

examine your friends. And hopefully on that list that you have there, Jesus is one of them. Jesus is the great friend.

You know, if you have Jesus on your side, the rest doesn't really matter. Romans 8.31 we shall, what shall we say then, let's try that again, what shall we then say to these things?

If God be for us, who can be against us? If you've got Jesus on your side, who's going to be against you? If you've got Jesus on your side, it doesn't matter if the whole world is against you.

[20 : 16] Dr. Bob Senior, when I went to college, used to say, you and God make a majority. You and God make a majority. You've got God on your side, you're all set.

He will take care of you. He will be with you. Which brings me to my third point. We talked about a friend, we talked about the death of the true friend. Let's look at the only example of a really true friend.

A true friend is Jesus. A true friend is Jesus. Never take your friends for granted. You know, a lot of times we do that.

sometimes people we call friends, they're good because they can help me with this and they can help me with that and they can get this for me and they can get that thing for me and they can take care. Don't take your friends for granted.

Be a friend to them as well. And here's Jesus. And Jesus is a true friend because he came as I said. He came for us.

[21 : 21] We didn't ask him to come, did we? We didn't ask him to give his life up. We didn't ask him. Matter of fact, most of the time people find out things about Jesus whether they, oh, get away from me with that.

I don't want to hear that stuff. But Jesus came and gave his life for us. 2,000 years ago he came not to condemn the world.

Those of you who were in Sunday school, we all know John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Verse 17, he came not to condemn the world but the world through him might be saved. He didn't come to condemn the world. We see Jesus and we say, he is just condemning.

He finds everything wrong with us. He finds everything that we're doing wrong and he punishes us and he takes Jesus didn't come to condemn the world.

[22 : 19] He came that the world through him might be saved. Do we understand that when he went to that cross, he was doing it for you and I?

He didn't have to do it for himself. He was doing it for you and I that we might have salvation. When he came off that cross and he stood before his disciples and others and he showed him those nail-scarred hands.

I did this because I love you. I did this because I'm concerned about you. Notice verse 15 again. Henceforth, I call you not servants.

For a servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends. For all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. And remember Jesus, all along the way leading up to the cross, he was telling them what was going to happen.

He was telling them that he was going to die. He was telling them why he was going to die. They weren't catching it. They weren't listening. How many times do we have friends and we don't listen to them?

[23 : 25] You know our world today, one of the things I'm finding is people do not listen. Have you noticed that? They don't listen.

You can tell them all kinds of things and they don't listen. I made an announcement a couple of weeks now.

I'm not picking on anybody who asked me this, Gabby, but people ask me these things and after I made the announcement again today they're going to say, when's the missionary offering? Next week, next Sunday, we'll do the missionary.

You know, sometimes you just, our mind gets busy and we get on other things and stuff, but we just don't hear things. I do the same thing, especially if Bonnie's telling me something. What?

What? What did you say? Anyway, we don't listen to things. God was telling his disciples, Jesus was telling his disciples, this is what's going to happen, this is what the plan is, this is how we're going to go.

[24 : 27] And they just didn't catch it until it happened. The Bible actually tells us after it happened they're like, that's what he was talking about. You know, even us as disciples, you kind of have to wonder about it sometimes, don't you, what's going on.

See, a true friend is always there. A true friend is listening. A true friend won't kick you when you're down. A true friend will always have your best interests in mind.

So let me ask you, do you need healing? do you need redemption from your sin? Do you need deliverance from things that are taking place in your life?

Do you need joy in the midst of sorrow? There are a lot of people who are facing a lot of things. There's people in this room, people we're acquainted with that may not be here today, that are facing all kinds of things in their life.

They are going through some really tough times. Do we care? Do we pray for them? Are we friends to them? Maybe you need that in your own life.

[25 : 43] Have you made Jesus your friend? Have you asked him to come into your life and be a part of your life? You know, you think about Jesus.

His disciples were in trouble and he stilled the waters and the waves and said, peace, peace, still. And he just calmed right down. They were in the midst of something.

They were scared about what was going to happen. They were scared that that boat was going to capsize and they were all going to drown. They forgot Jesus was in the boat with them.

Nothing was going to happen to him until he was ready. Nothing was going to happen to them. He calmed the waters. You know, do you realize that you don't have a friend like Jesus?

As we sang that song, I mention it often, we sing songs, especially songs we know well, songs we sung for a long time, and we just kind of sing them. Do you ever listen to the words of the song?

[26 : 55] Listen to the song again. What a friend we have in Jesus. all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

What a peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere? prayer? We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer. What a friend we have in Jesus. And if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you asked him to come into your life, you've asked him to be your friend.

You understand the comfort that comes from that. You understand the encouragement that comes from that. You understand the strength that comes from knowing that Jesus Christ is your friend.

[28 : 08] Now, are you his friend? Are you his friend? Are you sharing that friendship with other people?

Are you letting other people know about the friend that you have who can help them as well? The friend who can be there for them.

The friend who can help them. Are you telling them about them? You know, I think when we get to heaven, we all want to hear, well done thou good and faithful servant.

And we're looking forward to hearing that from him. You know, one of the other things I'm looking forward to is when we meet the other people up there, a song we sing.

Hey, you're Steve Morris. Steve, I saw Jesus in you. Hey, you're Hannah Southwick.

[29 : 11] I saw Jesus in you. Patty Jeffrey, I saw Jesus in you. We look forward to hearing that as well. We need to show them the love of Christ and the friend that he is to us so that they can know the friendship of Jesus Christ as well.

Take your hymn books, turn to page 513. 513. 513. do