

Jesus Our Friend ?

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us. As we come together to worship God, we pray for his blessing upon their time under the sound of his word.

We're going to begin by singing some verses from Psalm 34. Psalm 34. And at verse 8 to verse 16.

From verse 8 through to verse 16. O taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God who sins, none that in fear shall be with want oppressed.

The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their faith, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good. O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear.

Why shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear? What man is he that life desires? To see good would live long.

[1 : 15] Thy lips refrain from speaking guile, and from ill words thy tongue. Depart from ill. Do good. Seek peace.

Pursue it earnestly. God's eyes are on the just, as the ears are open to their cry. The face of God is set against those that do wickedly, that he may quiet out from the earth, cut off their memory.

And so on down. We can sing these verses of Psalm 34, from verse 8 to 16. O taste and see that God is good.

O taste and see that God is good, who trust in heaven.

Who trust in heaven is blessed, fear God is saved, and that in fear shall be For metre Travis, His share of prayer.

[2 : 38] May God is saved, And the name is redeeming Lord.

Are you born with God? May God is saved, may God is saved, may God. But to the truly seek the Lord, shall not make me good.

O children, have our day become and unto me, heavier, I shall get it to land.

How ye the Lord should be there, what man is he that life desires to seek a good world, live long, my lips refrain from speaking guile, and from the words I turn.

Depart from hell, good good, seek peace, pursue it earnestly.

[5 : 11] God's eyes sat on the just busyers, at all can hear their cry.

The face of God is set against those that do wicked me, that he may guide her from the earth, good of their memory.

Just trying to get that in prayer. O Lord our God, as we come into your presence with words of praise and appreciation upon our lips.

Also words that speak of our expectation that you are not only able to bless, but willing to bless, and to respond to the needs that are presented before you.

Help us before we articulate these needs to acknowledge the privilege that we have of being present before God, even a holy God, without fear and without any sense of regret that we are here.

[7 : 18] There will be a day when many will be summoned into your presence, and their heart will be overflowing with dread and bitter recrimination, that they did not anticipate that such an appointment would be kept.

But we are here as our worshipping people, able to recognise that you are worthy to receive from us, our worship, our praise, our thanksgiving.

Lord, that we are created in your image to come each and every moment of our human existence, and pay homage to the Creator God, and to acknowledge our dependence upon.

For it is in you that we live and move and have our being, even the breath of life, that we own as something that is ours of right.

There will be a day when that breath will cease, and the spirit that dwells within these frail bodies will return to the God who gave it.

[8 : 38] We acknowledge that you have given to us an instinct, an understanding, however willful we are in suppressing it, to recognise that we are beholden to God, and that we are answerable to God, and that we will at some point come face to face with that God.

And we acknowledge that there are many times when we would desire it to be otherwise, but we cannot rid ourselves of that which you have instilled within us as your creatures, more so than any of the other creatures that exist in this world with us.

You created man in your image, and you gave to him that capacity to worship, and to walk before you, and delight in your presence. We pray for some measure of appreciation of that even today.

So bless our gathering, bless those who gather with us, and each one may they know that God is able to bless her in excess of our asking.

That they may understand that whatever their need is today, that you have the potential to meet it and even exceed it. We give thanks that in the greater picture, the greatest need that we have is the need of our soul, because we are healthy serving sinners on the way to a lost eternity, if that is not dealt with.

[10 : 21] We know the outcome. You have declared it clearly within your word. And you remind us in that word of the need that we have to make our peace with you through the Lord Jesus Christ, that to be reconciled, and to be through him, and made your people, possess you as God, and become our Father, and be in the filial relationship that is necessary, where we can speak to you as our God and our Father.

So enable us to recognize our need and to declare it to you, and seek that you would answer that need through the passion of your Son, Jesus Christ, even through the Gospel.

So bless the preaching of the word here today. We give thanks that when we come, whatever of ourselves we include within that word, may it pre-eminently be the word of truth.

May we be the declarators of the truth. May we speak the truth lovingly. May we bring it to our own attention just as surely as we seek to bring it to the attention of others.

We pray that you would bless homes and families represented, remembering aged and in full, remembering the weakness of youth.

[12 : 00] We pray for all lives represented in whatever part they are in it, whether they are beginning that life or coming to the end of it.

Who knows? We may imagine that there are young people here today, and their life stretched before them, and yet we have no way of knowing whether that will be true or not.

And we know that there may be some who believe themselves to be in their dotage, and yet you may spare them long years yet. All these things are in your hand, and we pray that we would be reconciled to whatever you have for us.

Remember that the needs of your people, as a people who know Christ, and who by reason of their profession struggle daily with the realities of what it is, to live in a world that is opposed to Christ, and enmity to Christ exists within that world.

And we know that Christ himself in the world knew that enmity, and he declared it forthrightly to his disciples, that as he was despised and rejected of men, so too will they experience the same.

[13 : 19] We remember before you those who struggle in their faith, and we may foolishly imagine that once faith is imparted, that it will go on apace, that it will thrive and prosper, and that it will not know any hindrances to its development.

And yet the truth is a truth that declares to us that there will be tests and trials, and that there will be times of troughs and peaks in the experience of every believer.

Just as we look at the disciples and we see in their lives times of great exhortation and delight in the presence of Christ, such as was experienced by Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, great exhortation, so much so that they wish to dwell there.

And yet we know that the same Peter who enjoyed such a period of pleasure and delight, he denied his Lord and he went out into the night and felt that he was bereft of all comfort as he did so.

But the Lord had his eye on him, not just at that moment in the hall of the high priest, where it pierced to the soul of Peter, but beyond that, so much so that he spoke into his need and spoke to his disciples and Peter.

[15 : 02] And we give thanks for the measure of understanding that the Lord has, the needs of his people. So we remember all their needs to you today, thankful that we can bring them into your presence by prayer.

We pray for those who are yet unconverted, wherever they are with regard to Christ, may they not stop short of closing in with that Christ.

How many have stood at the very threshold of faith and yet they have not crossed it. There is the great fear that we may come to the point at which we have but one moment to take that step of faith and yet we do not take it.

There is the great mystery of life, that there are those who through the gospel know much about Christ and yet despite all they know, they do not know enough to cast their lot in with him.

So be merciful to any such that they may not hinder their own development by procrastination or by refusing to be obedient.

[16 : 19] Encourage them to come and trust in him whom to know his life eternal. We remember before you those who by their refusal to come to church even show that they are in ignorance of the true reality of what is important in this life that we live in the world.

Take away such darkness and pour out the light of your countenance into their experience of living so that they may know what true life is.

May you overcome the darkness of our generation and bring us to yourself once again. Remember our nation and all who form part of it, those who govern us and those who are responsible for our well-being.

Places of responsibility and yet they are accountable far more so than those who do not occupy these places. We pray for our king and his family and we pray for wisdom from on high to be imparted truly, that he may be diligent in fulfilling his vows, even these vows that he has taken as defender of the faith.

We pray that you would bless those who work with the gospel this day to the far corners of the earth, wherever their lot is cast. May they prosper in your name.

[17 : 46] Remember the afflicted nations of the earth, those who are afflicted by war. We pray for the Ukraine and we pray for the Russian armies that are in opposition to them.

So much is made of that bitter enmity that exists, and it is inevitably to increase. In the aftermath of it, who can know?

And yet, maybe there are many who are in the theatres of war who are there against their will. And they are perhaps there by reason of lies that are told, and whoever the perpetrator of these lies may be.

may be. We acknowledge that we are in your hands and we pray that you may bless those who go on even struggling after wars have ended and yet the aftermath of these wars is very much in evidence in these nations that are struggling with poverty and want.

So remember the world in which we live, a world that is sufficient in it to exist in perfect order and yet because of sin it is seen that it will out in a way that it is so obviously seen in the lives of many. We pray that you would remember us mercifully. Pour your spirit out upon us that we may learn what it is to sit at the knees of Christ and to learn of him and to be as he was, meek and lowly of heart and ready to receive a word in season. Cleanse from sin in Jesus' name. Amen.

[19 : 27] We're going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament the gospel of Jesus Christ according to John chapter 15 and we're going to read from chapter 15 verse 11 to the end of the chapter.

John chapter 15 verse 11 to the end These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you. 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.

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.

Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you.

[21 : 02] These things I command you that ye love one another. If the world hate you you know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love its own but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you the servant is not greater than his Lord if they have persecuted me they will also persecute you if they have kept my saying they will keep you also but all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake because they know not him that sent me.

If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also if I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law they hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father even the Spirit of Truth which proceeded from the Father he shall testify of me and ye also shall bear witness because he has been with me from the beginning.

Amen and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise. I believe boys and girls that you are going to begin a period if you have not already begun a period of study in the life of Joseph from the Old Testament.

[23 : 13] Many of us know the story of Joseph. He is a favourite character of my own. I remember many of the stories that are told about him.

But Joseph has many characteristics that are meant to remind us of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some people talk about Joseph as being a type of Christ because some of the things that Joseph had to experience had to go through were so very like the things that happened in the life of Jesus.

Now we are not saying that Joseph and Jesus were the same. Clearly they were not. Joseph was a sinner like yourself and myself. He was somebody who would do bad things just as surely as he would do good things.

But many of the things that he did were things that were necessary not only for himself but for his family.

[24 : 27] And Joseph's life begins with things that show us that he wasn't really as wise as he could be.

Because God spoke to Joseph through dreams. And maybe if he was wiser and more prudent he wouldn't have told these dreams in the way that he did to his brothers.

because what happened was and what you see happen is that his brothers became jealous of Joseph. And maybe if he understood that that is the kind of thing that would happen he would have been wiser not to share the telling of these stories to his brothers.

Because jealousy is something that is in the heart of every person in some measure or not. Maybe we don't quite see it as we ought but it's there. We can envy people we can be jealous of their success and we can decide it for ourselves.

And Joseph's story God told him what was going to happen in his future. And Joseph perhaps didn't fully understand what would happen if he told this story.

[25 : 43] But one outcome of it was and this is one thing that's true about the story of Joseph how God the sovereign God is in charge God is in control in many ways far much more so than we can ever begin to understand in the life of Joseph.

Because even in the thing that Joseph did that maybe wasn't wise in telling the story the response of his brothers was that they sold him into slavery.

They sold him into slavery and if they hadn't been jealous that wouldn't have happened. And if he hadn't been sold into slavery he wouldn't have ended up in Egypt and if he hadn't ended up in Egypt he wouldn't have done all the things that he later did.

But they weren't to know that. But sometimes God works if not all the time it's difficult to say that because there are so many things that God does that at the time we cannot see that he is doomed.

But looking back we can understand it was God that did this. And Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery.

[27 : 11] That reminds you of how Jesus was sold by somebody that was as close to him as his family was by Judas one of his own closest friends.

He had 12 close friends and one of them betrayed him. And here we have Joseph with his family you would think he would be safe with his family but his family betrayed him.

Now again we see how God is in control. Instead of what was to happen Joseph being killed and some of his brothers wanted him dead.

And if that had happened that would have been the end of his story. The story would have ended that. Joseph was going to be buried in a grave that nobody would know where it was.

But one of his brothers spared him and sold him so that he wouldn't die. And because he didn't die the rest of the story became what it was.

[28 : 28] So these are two things that you will find throughout the story of Joseph and in many ways they correspond they are so alike what was true about the life of Jesus.

Very early on in the life of Jesus people wanted to kill him. They made a point of wanting to destroy him and yet he was not allowed to be killed until and in the way that God appointed.

That might be something that we can't understand why it was like that but what we can say and we are not ashamed to say it is God is clearly wiser than we are.

So I hope that you think of Joseph being put in the place where God was to use him for the good of his brothers even though his brothers wanted him dead.

And Jesus in the background as it were his story so like the life of Joseph as you go through it.

[29 : 45] I hope you'll be reminded of that. Well as you go out to Sunday school we're going to sing verses from Psalm 15. Psalm 15 we're going to sing the whole psalm.

Within thy tabernacle Lord who shall abide with thee and in thy high and holy hill who shall dwell at peace the man that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and as he thinketh in his heart so doth he truth express.

We'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise. Within thy tabernacle Lord who shall abide with thee. within thy tabernacle Lord he shall abide with thee and in thy high and holy hill who shall and wif be the man that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and as he thinketh in his heart so doth he truth express who doth not slander with his tongue nor his strength doth hurt nor yet against his neighbor doth take upon upon his report in his eyes while men are despised by those that

God to fear he he on earth and change not though to his heart he swears his kind put not to his heart to his heart take reward will he against the goodness may God last shall never may be we we we are going to turn back now to the gospel of John chapter 15 and we can read again from verse 13 greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends you are my friends if you do whatsoever

I command you henceforth I call you not servants for the servant knoweth not what this Lord doeth but I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you I think I can say quite safely that a passage that speaks of a great love should be of interest to each one of us particularly a passage that suggests to us that there is no love greater I think that's important it's one to have a topic that is speaking about great love but a topic that is at its heart speaking of the greatest love of all and

[35 : 20] I think we can attempt to understand something of what that topic is about who is it speaking of what love is it referring to well if we refer back just a few chapters to the beginning of chapter 13 there we find these words now before the feast of the Passover when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world into the father having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end it sets the scene Jesus is conscious that his death is imminent that the reason for his being in the world is now come about the cross is standing before him and he is conscious of it and he is more than ever if you can actually say that about

Jesus conscious of the love that is in his heart for the people for which the cross is necessary and the interesting thing for me is that he demonstrates that love for his people by doing something that is in the eyes of many so menial and clearly so demeaning to the place that he should have that they find it so difficult to appreciate what he is really doing but what he is doing is expressing his love in a physical way in a visible way when they look to the cross they might not see God when they look to the cross they might not see love when they look to the cross they may just as many were be horrified by what they see but nevertheless

Jesus speaks to them into the context of their perplexity and says this is my love this is God's love and this is how my love for you is going to be displayed and when you think about it again what he is doing here in chapter 13 washing the disciples feet you've got to bring your mind to bear upon what is happening here we have the Bible description of him as the only begotten son of God God the second person present in their midst physically in the in the passion of the Lord Jesus someone who throughout his experience from the beginning of creation whatever he created was created for his glory because as

God he is created and as creator everything owes its origin to him and what originated with him was created for his glory and that glory involved them in lovingly responding to him as their creator so even before the creation of mankind we believe that the angels were created and these angels existed for the glory of God and they worshipped God perfectly and they served God perfectly and they did all that God expected of them willingly and I mention that because Christ would be the focus of their adoration and their love and their perfect obedience and everything that that entailed but here he is we are told he humbled himself and became a man he came into the world and there he is as a man dealing with his servants not as a master would deal with a servant but as their equal and serving them by washing their feet well we can't say that there isn't mystery there we can't say that there wasn't horror on their parts looking at what Jesus was doing and in awe of it but then again

I'm sorry to take so long meandering my way into what I want to focus on but I think we need to understand the privilege that the believer has when they know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and their Saviour because those who are his those who have put their faith in him those who have experienced and understood his love and responded to it are those who discover the reality of what that love means you know that there are those I believe who came to know the Lord Jesus Christ and who felt themselves to be the most unworthy recipients of his affection or his attention they felt themselves just like the Samaritan woman that Jesus met at the well and who was the subject of his attention and he unveiled her heart to her and he revealed to her the knowledge that he had of her heart and yet at the same time he was willing despite the knowledge that he had of her past to speak to her to relate to her to draw her to himself nobody would need to tell that woman that she was unworthy of the affections of Jesus or the love of

[42 : 23] Jesus she knew that herself there are others who need to go on a different journey because they may think themselves well I'm one of those people and Jesus really I'm doing him a favour by becoming his follower and Jesus has to deal with them differently and Jesus has to teach them that the heart of man is desperately wicked they have to learn that they're not really as pristine as they might imagine themselves to be that whatever the church is made up of and you'll say you'll hear people say this and often you just have to say nothing and say the church is full of hypocrites the church is full of bad people pretending to be good when they're bad and unfortunately that may be the case but the church is made up of people that God has taken to himself by way of Jesus

Christ and his intention for each one of them that he takes to himself is to make them like himself and to work in them until they discover the true beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ and to discover something of the love that he has for them that they should have for him now in chapter 15 he returns to talk again of that unique love and those who are the beneficiary of that love and he calls those who are the beneficiaries of that love his friends and that's the one thing I want to major on today for all that long preamble I want to focus on one thought and that one thought is that those who are the beloved of Jesus they are the friends of Jesus and he is their friend and when

I say that to you I can say to you as somebody I hope that understands what a friend is I sincerely hope that there is nobody here who would say that they have no friend we often hear people say he didn't have a friend in the world and if that was remotely true your heart goes out to such a person why because you know what it is to have friends and to have perhaps maybe one friend over and above other friends but you understand what it is to be a friend and to be friended you understand what it is at critical times in your life when a person that you know and trust and you are able to speak to and able to speak to you what a true friend really means so when

I speak to you about Jesus being a friend I would think well you've got a head start you know what that means you understand it in some way but what does it mean when we speak of Jesus being our friend you know one thought that came to mind when I was working through this was Abraham was God's friend that's amazing that any person any living person could be regarded as God's friend and that's what was said about Abraham and probably it was said by those who saw the kind of relationship he had with God that he was somebody who was close to God that he was somebody who spoke to God that he was somebody who walked with God whose knowledge of God was quite intimate maybe that's why he was called the friend of God but we'll begin discussing our friendship with the

Lord Jesus if we have one or if we would decide it by insisting that this friendship is based on love we already set it in a loving context if you like but I know that we've really got an uphill struggle when we use the word love in our modern context because it is the most abused and despised word it is used inappropriately and it is used in ways that have no right for it to be spoken in the context in which it is used the love of which this book is a love that is perfectly innocent and perfectly whole there is nothing in it that is inappropriate very often you hear the word love used and it is used perhaps to do with the physical part of relationship or the erotic part of relationship or the sensual part of relationship but it has nothing whatsoever to do with love there are some people and they say they love one another and really when you analyse what they say that is loving it is nothing of the kind because what is necessary for love is lacking and what is necessary for love is truly for them to be respectful of one another to be trusting of one another to be dependent upon one another to be honest with one another and if you look at what is spoken as a loving relationship it is none of these things greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends he says well without going into it and it is a wonderful verse it is a very filling very full matter that speaks of the nature of the love of Jesus

[49 : 43] Christ as he gave himself on the cross it is a sacrificial love is what it is saying so clearly I think this is something that belongs to the love of the friend that there is a sacrificial element in it that it is not selfish that it is not the kind that says well I will be your friend if if you do this for me or if you be this to me I think genuine friendship is devoid of that kind of of thinking equation equation I suppose is the wrong word for it but sometimes we use it you know there are relationships that are symbiotic that means that they exist because one depends on the other and they exist perfectly well and perfectly healthily because the dependence is an interdependence and I suppose you could argue that within the bounds of friendship that exists but it's never either or it's not if you do this for me then I will do this for you no there are collaborations that are mutually satisfactory but they are not based on friendship or vice versa we can cooperate with others in order to achieve ends that we have in view but they're not based on friendships you can have business collaborations that are not based on friendships and so on but Jesus speaks of a friendship based on love and in his case his love is the deciding factor his love which is described as covenantal binds him to his people and what is at the heart of that declaration is that he will never betray that love that he has for them and he will never betray those that are in that bond you know we spoke to the children about what is a betrayal on the part of

Joseph's brothers within the confines of a family there is an honour system is there not your family your blood ties you would defend with your life those that you are bound in within the family and in the experience of Joseph these brothers of his should have had that affection for him the last thing on their mind would have been to sell him but unfortunately that was the case when he came to Jesus the most closely bound within were the disciples but one of them betrayed him for twenty pieces of silver there is a bond there is a relationship that is trusting and that is lasting through friendships like that

Jesus if he is your friend will not cannot and would not betray his friendship with you and those who are his know that they cannot say the same about themselves they cannot say that they have not stretched that friendship to the point that they think it's bound to break and if Jesus were like them it would but because he's not the friendship remains let me expand the thought a wee bit further there is that trust a mutual trust there is the ability to trust and not betray that trust the ability and the will to share your burden with someone who will not judge you but at the same time this is the critical thing you know many counseling courses would speak of a person's ability to hear what it is that is troubling you and as they deal with you they will say we will not judge you we want you to be honest but we will not judge you at what point does it benefit that relationship as far as

Jesus is concerned what he does is he encourages honesty and integrity within that relationship in order to bring to their attention and his own the very things that jeopardize the nature of the relationship so he will bring to the attention of our conscience the things that we need to be reminded of that are not the way he would want them to be and the reason he would not want them to be the way they should be is because of the harm they do ourselves now we forget that sometimes people would put Jesus in a way where he sits in judge and he's judged he's just wanting his own way he wants you to do what he wants and there's no regard for anything other than this is the kind of relationship God is

God and he wants you to be his his servant he wants you to do what he wants and there's no good reason for it now that is wrong because there is always reason for what God wants you to do or doesn't want you to do there are always reasons why it is wrong for you not to be honest why it is wrong for you not to be scrupulous in the way that you deal with him or the way that you deal with your own activities in the world we have an example in the Bible of David and Jonathan they were friends and the friendship that they have is quite difficult to describe but we are told that Jonathan listened to David speaking to Saul Jonathan's father and as a result of what

[57:18] Jonathan listened to we are told the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul his soul was knit with the soul of David and he loved him as his own soul well that's a very strong love the Puritan Richard Sibbs puts it quaintly in friendship there is one soul in two bodies I wonder if you were thinking here of David and Jonathan one soul in two bodies but what it says to you about the nature of friendship is the intimacy of it the power of it you couldn't you couldn't think of anything more more dramatic than having two made one is that not what we're taught when we speak about marriage that two will become one unfortunately it doesn't always work out like that but that is the idea that's the scripture picture of what through marriage is in friendship it is every bit as strong as that it's interesting when you think about

Christ you know if you want to know what a person thinks about Christ just listen to what they say about him if they are being honest or not if they are being genuinely observant about who Christ is I know they very often don't even know him well enough to say anything about him so the second best thing is to get at his people and point the finger at his people but in in the Lord's day he had first of all he had John the Baptist come before him to proclaim his coming and John the Baptist was a unique character I remember Bishop Ryle speaking about this he said John the Baptist you know he appeared on the scene of time and he was dressed you know like a wild man he was dressed with animal clothes and he he lived in the wilderness and he ate wild honey and you know he was quite an extreme character and an odd body if you like and people were critical of him because of the oddity of his passion because he his austerity was an offence to them so when

Jesus followed John the Baptist he was quite different to him but you know that didn't commend Jesus to the critics of John because if Jesus was not austere they accused him of being a wine bubbler and a glutton they accused him of being a friend of sinners publicans and sinners you can't have it both ways you know if it was wrong for John to be austere and to separate himself from society and when Jesus came he did the exact opposite he visited the sick he was with those who were ostracised in society he spoke to the people that others wouldn't speak to he befriended those who were friendless he did everything the exact opposite and yet he was criticised for that but he was a friend and that was the thing and the only way they could become his friend was drawing near to him and allowing him to be their friend people such as

Levi the person who in his everyday life was a tax tax and exciseman or Zacchaeus the same people liked the woman of them well who was considered not worth to be spoken to well he said very easily and easily understood I hope the only way to be a friend or to have a friend is to be a friend and that is exactly what Jesus was he was a friend to the friendless he was somebody that people could go to and trust and believe that what he was going to do for them was never selfish it was not for his own gain that he was dealing with them I think we have the essence of friendship in verse 15 hence forth

I call you not servants for the servants 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 to you you know there are there are relationships and if you're wise you will judge the relationship on the basis of that relationship the scripture reminds us that we are to guard our words and we should not treat everybody the same you know we can't unburden ourselves to everybody we can't share our fears with everybody we can't share our deepest secrets with everybody we have to know them and we have to believe that they know us and when that is not kept when that integrity is not upset when that relationship is in any way lopsided it infects the friendship and it makes it something that it's not that will never and does never happen with

[64:17] Jesus and here what he is saying is because of his relationship with them he is able to speak to them about things that they would not otherwise know were it not for the friendship that he has with them I think that's in the heart of what he is saying all the things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you there are truths there that I can speak of which I cannot share with others because they would not understand them there are truths concerning my purpose and my passion and my personality which would be something of an offence to others but as he says in one of his parables you don't throw your pearls before swine people have to understand first of all who I am and what I'm saying and why I'm saying it and for them to be in that relationship where they can believe what they're hearing

Jesus is like no other he always speaks to his friends and the way is open to his friends to speak to him they are always able to speak to him we speak to him and he speaks to us by way of prayer by way of reading his word and when he speaks to us the thing is that we know we recognize his voice there is a hint that came to my mind when I was preparing this and it's familiar to many of you it's called what a friend we have in Jesus and I'll read the first two verses we're not a hymn singing church but it doesn't mean that we're ignorant of hymns and we haven't heard them and read them but the first two verses go like this what a friend we have in

Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer oh what peace we often forfeit oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer these are words that are very full of meaning but often when I've been reminded of hymns like that I want to find out where did that come from what is the source of that hymn and if you google his hand if you go to google you'll find out the person who wrote it if you go to a hymn book you'll see the name of the person and the person is probably the person who set the words to music or who adjusted them in such a way that they could be used as a hymn but the origin of the hymn it was actually a poem and the poem was composed by a person called

Joseph Scriven he was an Irish man and he was quite from a well off family his father was a soldier in the British army and it was his intention to become a soldier like his father but when he attempted to join the military his health was not sufficient to allow him to do that so instead he became a teacher I'm not sure when he became a Christian when he came to faith but I believe that he was a believer quite early on but after being a teacher for a while he met and intended to marry a young woman and they were both deeply in love but the night before the marriage took place she was sadly drowned and not not sure of the circumstances of her drowning but it took place the night before the wedding and he was driven to

God because of that but it left him very disconsolate and he emigrated to Canada and once he went to Canada he met another young woman and again it was their intention to marry and fortunately the same thing well not the same thing a few months before their marriage she became terribly ill and after a few weeks or months she died as a result of her illness and this again drove him to the Lord and as a result of of the time spent trying to figure out his providence he came to the conclusion that he wanted to leave everything he had in the world and to live his life for God so he took a vow of poverty more or less he sold his property and he gave away all his wealth to the poor and he lived his life from then on doing that doing the best that he could for others because he felt that

[70:13] God had treated him so well it seemed strange but at a later point he got word that his mother in Ireland was unwell and because he was poor he had no wealth he couldn't go home to see her so he was lying in his bed at night and he decided to write her a letter and as he wrote the letter the words of the poem came to mind and he just sat up and wrote the words of the poem and that's the poem that somebody discovered after his death and set to music it goes on 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 are we weak and heavy laden cumbered with a load of care precious saviour still our refuge take it to the

Lord in prayer just a question do you think this man knew Jesus as his friend do you think he did I believe that this poem couldn't come from the heart of anyone who discovered for himself the friendship of Christ and many many have followed in his footsteps before him after him they have discovered for himself fair weather friends may fade friends that we thought would stand by us no matter what they're nowhere to be seen but oh what a friend we have in Jesus my wish for you is that you would be able to say that for yourself may

God bless his word let's pray Lord God in heaven we give thanks for the love that there is none like it for the friendship that lasts and the friend that sticketh closer and a brother bless us in his name may we rest in the provision made for us in his name forgive sin in him amen the closing psalm is psalm 145 psalm 145 and the first version of the psalm from verse 17 to the end the Lord is just in all his ways holy in his works all God's near to all that call on him in truth that on him call he will accomplish the desire of those that do him fear he also will deliver them and he that cry will hear the

Lord the Lord love but he all those that wicked are will utterly destroy my mouth the praises of the Lord to publish cease shall never let all flesh bless his holy name forever and forever these verses psalm 145 the first version of the psalm the Lord is just in all his ways the Lord is just in all his ways holy in his works all goes near to all that call on him in truth that on him call he will hear the lista

Pleasure to shine of those that do in fear.

[75 : 04] He also will deliver them, and hear their cry with the air.

The Lord preserves all in love that not condemn the night.

But he, O Lord, that wickedness will utterly destroy.

May my mouth the priestess of the Lord.

To publish this shall never. Let your flesh bless his holy name forever and forever.

[76 : 50] Amen.